

## Chapter Six: "Karma's Woodpile"

## Panel 365

EXT – the village outskirts, Morning, light snow, big flakes drifting down like lace doilies. Tin walking up a sandy two-track with a big manly ax over his shoulder and wedge in his other hand. He's wearing his cover-all Carharts and his blue suede shoes.

## Panel 366

EXT – Karma's cabin sits in a small clearing in the pines. It's a humble, cedar-shake affair with a raised deck and main floor above a walkout basement tucked into a hillside that runs up into the woods. The cabin has a loft under a peaked roof. The front door is the basement door under the raised deck, chalet style.

Karma's oldish Jeep Cherokee sits next to the cabin. There is no driveway per se, just a sandy spot where the weeds have died under where Karma parks.

A few good strides away from the Jeep is a fair-sized wood pile, maybe about the same mass as the Jeep. Karma's wood pile is a big tumble of unsplit logs. A few chips around the chopping block (stump) , smallish ax, not nearly as big as Tin's, laying there with some snow accumulated on it.

Tin has walked up and is looking the pile over.

## Panel 367

EXT – at the woodpile, NEW ANGLE looking toward Tin bending into a log set up on the chopping block. He's a burly chopper, one swing to split the log.

## Panel 368

ZOOM IN on Tin's face. He's layang into another log, intense focus and concentration.

## Panel 369

ZOOM BACK OUT to see the pile, the jeep, and the corner of the cabin and the front door under the raised deck. Tin is walking over with an armload of split logs, bending to stack them next to the front door.

Panel 370

EXT – at the woodpile again, NEW ANGLE, chopping a few more. Tin’s face is neutral and content, just focused on the task, something he’s obviously very good at.

Panel 371

QUICK TAKE – the stacked logs by the door growing nicely.

Panel 372

INT Karma’s cabin by a window looking out over the parking area where Tin is chopping logs. POV from back in the combination kitchen – dining room looking at Karma from behind, so we don’t see her face while she watches out the window, holding one side of the curtain back with one hand. She’s in a navy blue U of M tee-shirt and jeans with a tie-died sash as belt, and bare feet. Her posture is casual, her figure youthful and fit.

Panel 373

ZOOM IN on Karma’s face POV from the side so we see her expression in the early December light from the window as she looks out. She has a sweet smile and a twinkle in her eye. Her gaze extends out to where Tin is working at the logs.

Panel 374

EXT at the woodpile, POV from the cabin basement front door. We see Karma from the rear, walking out in a wooly sweater and earmuffs, holding two steaming cups of coffee. Tin is in the background swinging into another log. A neat stack is forming up next to the jumbled pile now (the pile noticeably smaller).

Panel 375

ZOOM IN on Tin, head and shoulders as he's bending down to the chopping block to pick up the pieces of the log he just split. He's bare handed, big rough paws. His head is oriented to the logs, but he sees Karma coming from the corner of his eye. His expression is of mild surprise, like she caught him at something he feels shy about.

Panel 376

NEW ANGLE from the woodpile so we see Tin standing up, holding a log in one hand and the ax in the other, and Karma standing before him holding out a steaming cup to him.

KARMA (cheery smile)  
Well good morning, Tin.

TIN (shy looking)  
Morning Karma.

Panel 377

ZOOM IN POV Tin looking down toward Karma's face.

KARMA  
You don't have to do this for me, but it's so nice of you.

TIN  
Aw it's nothing, just a sort aw early Christmas present.

378

ZOOM BACK to see Tin and Karma standing drinking from their cups. Tin has one blue-sueded foot up on the chopping block, ax in his left hand by his side, coffee cup in his right hand up to his lips. Karma has her cup up to her lips with both hands. They are looking at each other over the rims of their cups. Tin looks a bit shy still.

Panel 379

QUICK TAKE – ZOOM IN on Tin’s face. He has his cup tilted back, draining it.

Panel 380

ZOOM BACK OUT – Tin is handing his cup back to Karma. His face looks like he wants to say something, but isn’t.

Panel 381

SAME – Tin has his free hand down by his side now. Karma is turning to go back into the cabin but her face is still turned toward Tin.

TIN

Thanks for the coffee, Karma, that was real good; I’ll get back to the wood now.

KARMA

Well, Mr. Sweet man, when you’re done out here, you come right inside for some lunch with me!

Panel 382

ZOOM IN on Tin to see him full length, head inclined down toward the chopping block, eyes up looking toward Karma. Big blush on his face. A kind of ‘oh golly’ look on his face.

TIN

Okay.

Panel 383

INT Karma’s Kitchen, new age, crunchy kind of place. Karma’s wearing her blue U of Michigan tee-shirt over low cut jeans with a tie-died sash as a belt, has a belly ring. She’s standing at the cutting board on a counter with some vegetables and a knife, gracefully chopping veggies.

Panel 384

EXT at the woodpile. Tin is chopping through logs like a real lumberjack. The neat stack has grown hugely, the jumbled pile shrunk accordingly.

Panel 385

INT Karma's kitchen. Karma is bent over retrieving something from the fridge. We see her from the rear, one hand holding the fridge door, the other deep in the fridge looking for something.

Panel 386

QUICK TAKE – Karma's hands at the cutting board with a knife, slicing and chopping through something looking like parsley.

Panel 387

QUICK TAKE – Karma's hand reaching to the volume knob on a small, solar powered radio sitting on the bright windowsill over the kitchen sink (this window looks out over the yard behind the cabin, so just pines to the north, Tin and the woodpile are out the dining room window to the west).

SOUND ( from the radio)

And That's the half of this tough , tough football game. Michigan 14, Iowa 17!

Panel 388

INT POV from the kitchen looking toward the table in the dining room. Karma is setting out plates and forks and napkins. Past her through the window we can see Tin swinging the ax. Karma's head is oriented toward the window, looking out watching Tin.

Panel 389

EXT at the woodpile. Tin has an armload of logs and is using his other arm to stack them neatly. Looks like a professional job. The logs remaining to be split are gone, only wood chips where the pile was.

## Panel 390

POV from the woodpile looking toward the cabin. Tin is disappearing through the door to the basement level.

## Panel 391

INT the stairway leading up to the main floor, POV from the top of the stairs looking down as Tin ascends. He looks tentative and sheepish. A wool rug with Indian design is hanging on the wall coming up the stairs. A bicycle is leaning against the landing at the bottom of the stairs, seen behind Tin.

## Panel 392

INT the combination kitchen dining room, POV from in the kitchen area looking toward the top of the basement steps. The door is wide open and Tin is entering the room, looking sheepish like he's sneaking in somewhere.

KARMA (off panel)

There you are! Come in and take a seat here. Lunch is almost ready.

## Panel 393

POV from the kitchen area looking toward the table. Tin is seated at the table in front of a plate and a bottle of beer. As we look at the table from the kitchen, Tin is on the right. Karma is standing next to him with one hand on his shoulder, sticking her chest out slightly, subtly so that you don't notice it unless you're sensitive to such things. Tin's eyes are turned all the way to the side sneaking a peek at her belly ring, fully exposed as her shirt rides up. His expression is of mild surprise, and he has a nice blush going.

## Panel 394

QUICK TAKE POV Tin – close up of Karma's belly ring, a silver wolf's head. We can see the shirt top and the tie-died sash too.

Panel 395

ZOOM IN on Tin's face, now looking somewhere else in the room, taking in the new surroundings.

TIN

Nice place you got here, Karma.

Panel 396

QUICK TAKE – University of Michigan pennant with some artwork on one pine paneled wall.

Panel 397

QUICK TAKE – woven baskets on a shelf with some houseplants, rows of books on a shelf underneath. Tapestry hanging on the wall next to the shelf, kind of hippy looking.

Panel 398

QUICK TAKE – the kitchen window, wheat grass growing in a pot on the sill, the solar radio, and a crystal hanging in the sun, sending small rainbows here and there.

Panel 399

POV Tin at the Table. Karma is standing at the cutting board working on pita bread.

KARMA (looking toward Tin)

Thanks Tin. I guess you haven't been in here before have you?

Panel 400

QUICK TAKE – the radio on the kitchen sill.

SOUND ( from the radio)

...brought down by Sullivan just shy of the twenty yard line!

Panel 401

ZOOM OUT POV from the side so we see Tin at the Table and Karma turning from the cutting board to bring sandwiches.

TIN

Football game on?

KARMA

Oh, yeah. I never miss it when my wolverines are playing. Big game against Iowa. Hope you're hungry. I made pita pockets with tabouli.

Panel 402

QUICK TAKE close up of the corner of Tin's face so we just see his eye with the eyebrow raised.

Panel 403

AT THE TABLE, Karma is standing putting a sandwich on Tin's plate and holding hers with the other hand.

KARMA

So Tin, you root for Michigan or State?

TIN (looking like he's answering a very important question.)

Aw, Michigan

KARMA

Good boy. I thought I was starting to get outnumbered over at Lews. Seems like everyone's Spartan fans. You like tomatoes?

Panel 404

QUICK TAKE close of Tin's pita pocket on his plate, sprouts coming out of it, sliced apple, cheese.

Panel 405

ZOOM IN on Tin's face, looking funny down at his plate.

TIN

Say, what are these?



Panel 406

POV Tin looking at Karma across the table. She's seated now with a bottle of beer in front of her and holding her pita. She is laughing lightly.

KARMA

Oh, those are alfalfa sprouts, really yummy, good for you too.

TIN (off panel)

Huh, I never seen those over tah Edna's.

KARMA

Nope, I get those in Traverse City on my way home from work. Try 'em.

Panel 407

POV Karma looking across at Tin. Tin is taking a healthy bite of his pita and has the expression of someone who has discovered something good.

Panel 408

ZOOM OUT to see the two of them at the table, Tin with his beer bottle to his lips.

KARMA

How's your project?

Panel 409

POV Karma looking at Tin. Tin has both hands in the air in front of him, "this wide", to gesture how wide his banner is. He looks suddenly lit up due to the turn of subject.

TIN

Good. Real good! The King is coming back soon. I feel it. I'm sewing a wide banner says "Welcome Home Elvis" on it.

Panel 410

NEW ANGLE on Tin. Animated and gesturing.

TIN

We need him now more than ever we did, Karma. If he don't come back soon, and bring back those kinder times with him, this world 'll be paved over and bought and sold faster 'n a fish can jump, n' everybody'll just be trying to get one over on the next guy. No one will be out to lend a helping hand anymore ...

Panel 411

ZOOM IN on Tin, face very sincere, concerned.

TIN

...everybody just always tryin' to get more; nobody just appreciate what's already here.

Panel 412

POV Tin looking at Karma. Karma is tucked into her pita but with eyes up at Tin, eyebrows up in agreement (rather than surprise or skepticism).

Panel 413

POV Karma (head low over her plate) looking at Tin. Tin holding forth.

TIN

When he comes back, it's gonna be like it was back in the old days, and before that, those simple times when people weren't so greedy and only thinkin' about themselves, weren't tossing their trash all over...

Panel 414

POV from the window side of the room so we see the table with Karma on the right and Tin on the left, kitchen and living area in the background.

TIN

...kids'll be out fishin' again 'stead of playing video things on the couch, get some fresh air, appreciate what's outside!

KARMA

That sounds so lovely, Tin. I hope it happens the way you're seeing it.

Panel 415

ZOOM IN on Karma's face. She looks concerned, but holds it back to let her imagination be in front.

KARMA (thought bubble)  
Should I be encouraging this?

KARMA  
Why can't this happen unless Elvis comes back?

Panel 416

ZOOM IN on Tin's face. Woeful look, as if confronting an unfortunate reality.

TIN  
Well, people have the 'can-do', but nobody's got the 'WILL-do.'

Panel 417

NEW ANGLE on Tin's face. Beseeking look, trying to convince Karma of this vital truth.

TIN  
We need the King for his magic. He's the one can make it come out all right.

Panel 418

ZOOM OUT to see the table and Tin and Karma. Karma's plate is empty, her beer mostly gone. Tin's beer is dry, still a hunk of pita pocket on his plate. He's reaching to pick it up.

KARMA (thought bubble)  
What a dear!

KARMA  
Well, I love listening to Elvis, and I'll help you welcome him back. Sounds like fun.

Panel 419

POV Karma looking at Tin across the table.

TIN (surprised and pleased)

Really? You'll help? Aw that's great! I gotta room all ready for him to stay too, while he gets settled somewhere! Only I still need a bed for him. Just gotta chair yet.

Panel 420

CLOSE UP of the radio on the kitchen window sill.

SOUND (from the radio)

...and Flanders is IN THE END ZONE. MICHIGAN TIES THE GAME WITH THREE MINUTES TO GO!!

Panel 421

POV Tin looking across at Karma. Karma has leapt from her seat and is doing a two-arms-up cheer. Her shirt rides well up, and her belly ring sparkles at Tin.

Panel 422

QUICK TAKE of Tin's face with a healthy blush on, his expression like he saw something he wasn't sure he was supposed to.

Panel 423

POV from behind and to the side of Karma as she's putting the dishes in the sink, her attention on the radio.

SOUND (from the radio)

...hawkeyes will take possession on their own twenty yard line ...

Panel 424

POV from behind Karma as she's facing the dining table. Tin is coming into the kitchen bringing the empty beer bottles. He has a tentative expression.

KARMA

Say, Tin. Do you mind helping me move a dresser in the bedroom? I've been wantin' to get it on the other wall for months now, but it's way too heavy.

Panel 425

INT the bedroom. We see the end of the bed with a blanket folded on the foot and some random clothes tossed around there. (Karma isn't worried about appearances). Tin and Karma are poised on either side to lift a four-drawer dresser that sits against the far wall.

KARMA

Listen for cheers. If the crowd goes up, we have to set this down fast and get out there to hear what happened.

Panel 426

NEW ANGLE. They've moved the dresser to the opposite wall and are setting it down.

Panel 427

POV from the kitchen, Karma, followed by Tin, is exiting the bedroom and striding back into the kitchen.

TIN

Whelp. Thanks for lunch, Karma. That was real good. Ill be getting' on now, I guess. I hope you didn't mind me tellin' ya about the King and all.

Panel 428

CLOSE UP of the radio.

SOUND (from the radio)

the referee's digging through the pile..YES, Michigan has recovered the fumble!

Panel 429

QUICK TAKE Karma's face, surprised glee.

Panel 430

BACK TO the radio

SOUND (from the radio)

...only four seconds to go. This fieldgoal would be Carmichael's longest of the season at forty-eight yards...

Panel 431

QUICK TAKE Karma's hand grabbing a bunch of Tin's sleeve.

Panel 432

QUICK TAKE Tin's face, looking toward her hand grabbing his sleeve, expression of wonder.

Panel 433

BACK TO the radio

SOUND (from the radio)

And there's the snap, OH! It looked like he BOBBLED IT, but it's down, now the kick, it's up, heading toward the goal posts! YES! It's GOOD, the Wolverines WIN by three!

Panel 434

POV from the basement door looking toward Tin and Karma standing in the kitchen. Karma has leapt off the floor and is hugging Tin around the neck and planting a big KISS on his lips. His eyes are wide open in alarm.

## Panel 435

NEW ANGLE Karma is smiling up at Tin, and giving him a friendly whack on the back. Tin looks shell-shocked.

KARMA

Oh dear, sorry Tin! I get carried away when football's involved. Giggle giggle.

TIN (flustered)

Aw, well, aww, golly, aww...

## Panel 436

POV the kitchen looking toward the basement door. Tin is standing there preparing to leave, has an aw shucks expression. Karma has one hand lightly on Tin's shoulder and has an easy smile.

KARMA

and THANK YOU for doing all that work on my woodpile. That is such a NICE gift!

TIN

aww, well, choppin' wood, ya know, aww, fer Christmas, aww...

## Panel 437

SAME Karma is standing at the basement doorway looking down the stairs. Tin has started his descent and is not visible.

KARMA

Hey, see ya around Lew's, okay?

## Panel 438

EXT the two-track driveway leaving Karma's place. POV from the village end.

Tin is striding down the drive with his chest noticeably puffed out. Little red hearts are popping around him. The sun is shining from his chest, and the snow flakes are melting there but nowhere else. He has a distracted smile on his face.

Panel 439

INT Tin's bedroom. He's asleep under his black and red-checked wool blanket.

TIN (dream bubble)

Tin and Karma are driving a shiny-new convertible (Sally) with the top down along a pine tree-lined country road.

Panel 440

EXT wide shot of the village with a light snow cover on the ground in early morning, clear skies, chickadees on bare tree branches, cotton-ball snow on the pine boughs.

Panel 441

INT a living room in one of the village houses. A grandma is with a little girl by the living room window opening the 24 window on an advent calendar. The living room window has frost patterns on it. The grandma is sitting in an arm chair, and the little girl is reaching up to open the advent calendar flap.

Panel 442

QUICK TAKE close up of the advent calendar window being opened by the girl's fingers. The picture in the window shows a Christmas tree and candles lit on it with the '24' visible.

Panel 443

INT the dining room table at Ray's and Norman's house. The table is set for Christmas eve dinner. Ray's girlfriend, Susie, is there putting a serving dish on the table; Norman is setting down glasses. Ray is visible in the kitchen. Susie's sister, Jeanie, is there with her two kids (seated at the table) a boy and a girl a bit younger than Norman (who is eleven-twelve).



## Panel 444

EXT – a car driving on a highway with snow on the sides. We can see an old couple in the front seats wearing winter coats driving along with relaxed expressions.

## Panel 445

INT Deputy Bob's dining room table. His family is seated at the table raising their glasses to Christmas Eve. (Bob, wife, three kids, Grandma and Grandpa who were driving the car in the previous panel). Christmas tree visible in the panel corner or in the background.

## Panel 446

INT the Throckmorton's living room, extended family (visiting from downstate) sitting around the Christmas tree. (Thurman's younger brother and his family with two late teenage boys, one aged parent – Thurman's mother). Presents around the tree. Snack trays, drinks.

## Panel 447

INT the Burgoyne's kitchen table, set for Christmas Eve dinner. Card table set next to main table to make it bigger. The boys and Pop are there seated with a couple, man and wife, who are older than the boys but younger than Pop. They all have their heads bowed in grace over their plates.

## Panel 448

INT Lew's bar. A couple tables are slid together and Christmas eve dinner is in progress. Lew is wearing a green and red holiday sweater instead of his apron and presides at the head of the table. Edward, the little gray schnauzer is sitting near the table looking up at the people and a hand is extended giving him a tidbit from the table. Edna, Tin, and a bunch of other villagers are there. Doc, wearing his official priest collar, is sitting to the right of Lew. A middle-aged guy wearing his UPS drivers uniform is at the table. Edna is telling a story and everyone is looking her way with smiles, a few are laughing. A couple teenagers in the background are playing darts.

## Panel 449

EXT the village, twilight, oblique aerial view showing the main buildings around the village center (Lews' Edna's, Ray's garage and house, Tin's cabin, a church and a few smaller shop-like buildings, barber shop attached to the church building, on the other side of Ray's from Edna's, other village buildings filling in the gaps) plus a couple short streets of humble ranches and one-and-a-half story small houses to the other side of the church. Smoke curling up from all of the chimney's in the village streets.

## Panel 450

EXT the row of cottages along the shore to the north of the village park POV looking north along the beach so the water, not frozen but glass calm, is on the left. Wooden dock sections and boat hoists are stacked and set on the beach, snow covered. The cottages are all dark except on near the center of the scene. From a distance, a couple kids are building a snowman in the cottage front yard in the cone of light from the cottage front door light. Silhouettes of people inside the lit windows. Smoke from the stone chimney. We can see part of an SUV sticking into the panel parked next to the cottage.

## Panel 451

EXT – somebody's front porch on a village street. A small, wrapped package with bow is set on the porch. We can see an old couple exiting the panel, their footprints leaving the porch steps where they just left the package.

## Panel 452

EXT – the porch at Edna's. ZOOM OUT slightly so we can see the whole porch. A package is there by the door with a tag that we can make out, says "EDNA" on it. The package is the center of the scene, but we have to look to see it.

## Panel 453

EXT – a village street. A mother and young son are walking in the twilight with their winter coats. The mother is holding a package in one hand and her son's hand in the other. The boy is looking up at the stars. The mother is looking ahead down the street.

## Panel 454

EXT – another village street POV from the other side of the street. A small group of carolers (men, women, children) is silhouetted in front of a house with porch light on and old couple poking their heads out of their front door. The man is holding open the door. The woman is holding a tray of Christmas cookies and is stepping onto the porch through the door.

SINGING (from carolers)

...Si-A-lent nighhht; Ho-A-ly nighhht. ALL is calm, all is quiet...

## Panel 455

INT Lews bar. The assemblage is out of their seats. Some are helping Lew clear the table. Some are standing talking and slapping backs.

## Panel 456

EXT Lews bar. Tin is exiting with a content look on his face.

## Panel 457

EXT Tin's cabin. Tin is approaching his front steps and sees a small wrapped present on his top step. A light dusting of snow is on it. Tin's expression is both surprised and pleased, like a kid, but not over the top

## Panel 458

CLOSE UP of the present. The label says "Love, Karma"

Panel 459

INT Tin's cabin at the table. Tin is standing with the box, removing the lid. The wrappings are on the table.

Panel 460

CLOSE UP of the open box. Inside we see dark glasses just like Elvis would wear. The tag has a small picture of Elvis in his signature jump suit, so it's obvious that these are in fact Elvis glasses.

Panel 461

INT the cabin bathroom, Tin standing at the mirror. POV from behind Tin. He's leaning in to the mirror slightly and has the glasses on, his hands holding them on both sides having just put them on. He has a HUGE grin that we see in the reflection.

END CHAPTER SIX