



# After The Last Time

By Wendy Arthur

## DISCLAIMERS:

This romantic drama is an Uber, however all characters are created by me.

All characters depicted, names used, and incidents portrayed in this story are fictitious. No identification with actual persons is intended nor should be inferred. Any resemblance of the characters portrayed to actual persons, living or dead is purely coincidental.

The registered trademarks mentioned in this story are © of their respective owners. No infringement of their rights is intended, and no profit is gained.

This story contains scenes of violence. Any readers who are disturbed by or sensitive to this type of depiction may wish to read something other than this story.

This story depicts a sexual relationship between consenting adult women. If such a story frightens you, you better click on the X in the top right corner of your screen right away.

\* \* \* \* \*

Many, many thanks to my beta-reader, Norsebard. Your help is very much appreciated and continues to be most welcome.

And thank you to all of my readers. Your feedback has been most helpful and encouraging.

This is the next installment in a series of stories, 'After Montana' which can be found at <http://marshallcarson.wordpress.com> . To understand and enjoy the characters and situations fully, you should probably start at the beginning.

Comments and/or opinions can be sent to [stagefreakmusic@hotmail.com](mailto:stagefreakmusic@hotmail.com) or left at <http://marshallcarson.wordpress.com>

If you want to read more of the story that unfolded in San Francisco, it can be found in another X/G Uber fan fiction written by **Norsebard** .

“ **News From The Harrison-Starr Detective Agency** ” is most definitely worth reading and includes some fun moments with Kate Marshall while she is on location! It can be found at the Royal Academy of Bards.

\* \* \* \* \*

# Chapter 1

She was one of three women being transferred to the CCWF - Central California Women's Facility - when she broke her own thumb to squeeze her double-jointed hand out of the cuff. It was painful but she didn't care. She could do this with one hand. Slowly and silently, she released herself from the bar she was attached to and kept a very keen eye on the female guard who was sitting on the bench seat playing with her iPhone. 'Just one guard,' she thought. 'They underestimate me. Stupid bitch ... won't even see me comin' !'

Inserting her knuckles into the now free-hanging cuff, her six foot two frame leapt forward and she used the hard metal to knock out the inattentive guard with one blow to the temple, earning her a quiet roar of approval from the two other prisoners. Quickly checking behind her to the small portal window into the driver's cab, she unhooked the keys from the prone woman's utility belt and opened the back door of the prison bus. She climbed gingerly onto the small metal step and closed the door from the outside, knowing that her two weaker prisoner friends did not want to follow her. And anyway, they were cuffed like she had been, secured to the iron bar on front of them. Taking a deep breath and pausing for a few seconds to gather her wits, she leapt from the back of the bus at an angle, landing with a bone-shaking crunch on the dirty ground by the side of the freeway. The vehicle continued to speed north on Route 5, its driver no doubt completely oblivious about the state of his passengers... or lack thereof.

About fifty miles from Bakersfield, California, Alison Timmons crawled away from the freeway on her one good hand and two sore knees. Once she was sure that no other cars had stopped to intervene, she stood up and limped through the undergrowth, her dark gray prison clothes camouflaging her impressively. She was free again. Free to go and torture that FBI bitch.

\* \* \* \* \*

It had been two months since Shannon and Lucy Carson arrived at their new home. Those first weeks had been filled with much love and a few ups and downs. Thankfully, they were mostly 'ups' and the children were getting to know their new parents better every day - and vice-versa.

Shannon stood now, leaning her forehead on the top rail of the fence in the back yard, peering through the mesh at the two horses trotting towards the house. CJ and Kate were on the horses and had gone out for an hour's riding together. Lucy sat on the back porch with Tony, having an imaginary tea party with the driver, Barney and Piglet.

Shannon focused her attention on CJ and Kate, who were laughing as Nevada and Idaho slowed to a walk. The girl had noticed they smiled and laughed a lot.

*' Mommy never laughed. Daddy used to laugh sometimes but he always worked hard and we never got to spend much time with him. Mommy got angry quite a lot and never played with Lucy or me. She just bought us toys and took us to some play dates. We weren't allowed animals or anything, and we were never allowed to make any mess in our old house. I just read my picture books and did drawings in my room to keep busy.'*

Shannon scratched her nose then continued to think about it all. *' But here I've got animals, smiling grown-ups and new friendly people who take care of Lucy and me. Alice is a nice lady who stays at the house while CJ and Kate go to work and she always brings her children, Sarah and Melissa. They're twins. I help to take care of them - I like to be helpful -and Alice told me I'm a very clever girl. And Lucy too!'*

Sometimes Lucy and Shannon made a mess when they were being creative but they didn't get into trouble unless they were being very naughty, which was rare.

*' Kate even made a mess with us last week when she made a picture from glitter! That was exciting!'* Shannon giggled at the memory and got lost in her thoughts, her blue eyes out of focus as she stared at the dusty ground. Her small face was now squashed against the mesh and she suddenly realized that CJ was standing in front of her.

"You okay, sweetheart?" the tall woman asked gently.

"Mm-hmm."

"You sure?" CJ said, raising an eyebrow.

"Yes, CJ. Can I ask you about some things?" Shannon requested a little nervously.

"Of course, honey. I'll put Nevada away and be right in, okay?" At her daughter's nod, she tilted her head. "Could you go get me and Kate some lemonade? We're very thirsty."

Shannon suddenly perked up. She loved to be helpful and the agent knew it. "Yes. I'll put them on the table!"

"Take Tony and Lucy in too. We'll be there in a flash."

"Okay," the girl squeaked excitedly. She ran over to Tony and her sister. "Tony... I have to get lemonade for CJ and Kate. You have to come with me!"

Tony grinned at the look on Shannon's face. He decided that she was way too giddy about lemonade, but thought it was too darn cute to resist. "Okay. Let's go," he said, taking Lucy's hand to pull her to her feet.

The smaller girl trailed behind him; her bear, Barney, curled inside her arm as usual. She didn't let go of Barney much and she hadn't spoken yet, but after her first two weeks in her new home she had settled down well and was sleeping though the night easily... with the help of her Dry-Nites training pants, which she finally agreed to wear because CJ told her that they had very awesome pictures of horses on them.

Shannon's comfort had been immediate and she'd helped her sister through her worries and taught CJ and Kate some of the smaller girl's hand signals, explaining what Lucy wanted when she displayed them. All in all, it had been an adjustment for the new family but it was so very worth it. Shannon started to feel secure for the first time in quite a while and was turning out to be a big help in every aspect of their home lives. She had settled well at her new kindergarten but still spoke with her best friend Sarah on the phone. And it was almost time for her to start first grade!

\* \* \* \* \*

"Well, I'm having a good day. Anyone else?" CJ asked as she dropped her body on the couch.

Four separate hands went up in the air and Kamali wagged his tail, not wanting to be left out of the conversation. The dog was lying at the end of the coffee table just under Lucy's swinging feet as she perched on the couch. Kamali had an unspoken bond with the girl and it was amazing to watch. He slept outside Shannon and Lucy's bedroom door most nights - they still shared a room for now - and he would follow the tiny girl around the house, almost like he was her guardian angel. He was especially attentive when she would navigate the large staircase, even when she did it on her butt, which was her favorite way to descend from upstairs.

Kate blew out a breath. "What say we leave our visit to the mall until tomorrow, huh?"

"But you're going to work tomorrow, Kate," Shannon said with conviction, and a little disappointment.

“No, sweetie, I don't have to go back until Tuesday. How cool is that?”

“Yay!” the taller girl cheered.

“Aaaand...” the actress added dramatically, “I have three months off work soon!”

CJ and Kate smiled as Shannon put her lemonade down quickly on the coffee table and yay-ed again, this time able to bring her hands above her head. Lucy copied her, making Tony grin too.

“Okay,” the driver said, slurping the last of his drink, “I'm going to get this food list and pick up your mail, Kate, then I'll come back with the car. Anything else you need me to do while I'm out?”

“I don't think so, Tony. Thanks for watching the girls today. We enjoyed our ride,” CJ smiled.

“I'm glad you had fun. We had fun here too, didn't we?”

“We did!” Shannon said. “I drew a picture!”

“Excellent. Can you show me?” CJ asked.

As Tony left, Shannon got up from her spot on the floor and grasped the agent's hand. “Come see. It's upstairs.”

“Bring it down so I can see it too,” Kate said with a smile. The actress took Lucy to the bathroom after the agent was led away by Shannon. The blonde was in love with her new children just as much as CJ was, and even though the last few weeks had been a big change to their lives, they had managed it all pretty well.

When they were done with the usual biological necessities, Lucy followed Kate back into the living area and crawled onto the actress' lap after she'd sat down. Barney was close by, but this time Lucy decided she didn't need him and sat facing Kate, playing with her necklace.

“You like that, huh?” the blonde said, watching her younger daughter with so much love, she thought her heart might burst.

The little brown-haired head nodded, making the natural curls spring around the chubby cheeks. Lucy looked up to Kate and a tiny hand came up to pat the actress on the face. The little girl did that a lot and when Lucy opened her mouth, Kate's heart leapt into her throat in anticipation, but no sound came. However, Lucy's lips looked like they were trying to form a word. The concentration on the child's face was intense. Kate smiled as the infant sighed and went back to playing with the necklace then snuggled down into her chest. She wrapped her arms around the tiny body and felt the contentment wash over her... but she couldn't wait to hear Lucy's voice.

\* \* \* \* \*

CJ was dragged all the way to the children's bedroom to see the drawing. Once Shannon was satisfied that the agent wasn't going anywhere, she went to her brightly painted desk and picked up the piece of paper.

“Look, CJ,” she said shyly, handing the drawing to the tall woman.

CJ tilted her head to the side as she studied the artwork. “This is beautiful, sweetie. Tell me who everyone is...”

The girl sat on the edge of the bed and leaned on the agent's thigh. She pointed to the paper as she spoke. “This is me... and that's Lucy. Kate is sitting on the chair and you're next to her.”

CJ felt her heart melt. It was the first time Shannon had drawn them as a family group. "It's a very good drawing, Shannon. I love it," she added, squeezing the narrow shoulders with a long arm.

The little girl's demeanor changed. "CJ?"

"Yes?"

"I know Daddy's not coming back..."

"Who told you that?" CJ asked gently, moving to kneel in front of her daughter.

"Aunt Helen said it. And we won't see Craig and Simon again..." Shannon stated, looking down sadly and taking the woman's hand that reached for hers.

"Honey, look at me," the agent whispered, lifting the small chin. "You can ask me anything and I'll do my best to explain things to you."

"Will I see Mommy again?"

CJ took a deep breath. "No, Shannon, that's why Kate and I want to take care of you. How does that make you feel?"

"I... I don't know. It's sad because I know Daddy died. Does that mean Mommy died too?"

CJ had been dreading this conversation. She thought for a moment and decided that she had to be honest with Shannon and deal with her response the best way she knew how. "Yes, honey. Sometimes bad things happen and we don't see the people we love anymore."

A few tears escaped from the child's blue eyes. "Will bad things happen to you and Kate?"

CJ mentally kicked herself for not wording things correctly. "Oh, Shannon, we're gonna be around for a long time. Try not to worry about stuff like that. I'm sorry you lost so much already, but we're gonna stick together now. How does that sound?"

Shannon just nodded her approval while trying to stifle her now fast-flowing tears. "So... I'll have two Mommies, like Sarah at my last school," she said, leaning forward to slip her arms around CJ's neck.

The tall woman took the child into her embrace. She loved these children so much already. "Yes, sweetie," she replied, kissing the girl's head.

"That's... good..." Shannon stumbled through her shaky sobs.

CJ held the little body for quite some time. She wondered if Shannon would ever feel comfortable calling her Mommy. CJ frowned and decided to live in the moment. That was Kate's motto these days and it was a good idea.

She thought the girl had fallen asleep on her shoulder but Shannon yawned widely and pushed back to look at the agent. "Is it dinner time yet?"

CJ grinned slightly at how quickly her daughter returned from the upsetting thoughts. "I'm sure it must be almost time. Are you hungry?"

"Yes. Tony just let us have one cookie each when you were out on the horses," Shannon nodded.

“Well, that's good 'cause you need to keep space for dinner. Can you imagine if you were filled with cookies? There'd be no room for... hmmm, I wonder what we're having tonight...”

“I hope its chicken,” Shannon blurted, getting to her feet.

“Let's go find out.” CJ took the small hand and they headed downstairs.

When they got to the living area, they found Kate and Lucy napping on the couch - the infant using Kate as a full-body pillow - and both agent and daughter put their hands over their mouths to stop the giggles. CJ positioned Shannon's drawing on the coffee table and pointed to the kitchen. Shannon nodded and followed her, tip-toeing in an exaggerated fashion over the large rug. They made a start on dinner, the tall woman chopping the vegetables while Shannon set the table, one item at a time. Kamali lay in his bed and supervised the proceedings.

\* \* \* \* \*

After their chicken dinner, the family snuggled on the couch for a while talking about all kinds of things - Shannon's ever-changing topics keeping the two women on their toes. Lucy sat with them and watched intently as each person spoke. CJ was convinced she was going to talk soon... she just wondered what her first word would be.

Once the girls had their bath, pajamas were chosen and teeth were cleaned. Then they all made their way downstairs again for a little chilling out on the couch before bedtime. The next hour passed at a lazy pace with the four Carsons sprawled out in various comfortable positions. CJ lay back on the couch with her feet up on the coffee table and a dozing Lucy on her lap; Kate sat cross-legged at the corner of the cushions at the opposite end to the agent and Shannon was upside down in between them with her small feet up on the back of the couch. The girl was chattering constantly about things that happened at school in the past week.

“... And that's when I told the teacher that Billy had eaten some of the sand,” Shannon finished with a grin.

“Well... it's good you did. It's really not something he should eat. He'll get a sore tummy,” Kate nodded with a chuckle.

“Did I talk too much?” the older girl asked.

“Absolutely not, honey. I love hearing your stories,” the actress beamed. “And I hope we hear Lucy's stories someday too.”

“Maybe...” Shannon trailed off. Her mood seemed to change and CJ wondered if she should ask her daughter about Lucy.

“What are you thinking about, Shannon?” the taller woman prodded.

“Lucy. She's scared to talk,” the six year old replied frankly.

“Why do you say that, sweetie?” CJ asked, looking to Kate who was as concerned as she was.

Shannon just shrugged and Kate lowered her hand to touch the girl's face. “Hey... it's okay to tell us, Shannon. You're safe here,” she said gently, correctly assessing Shannon's uncertainty.

“Well...” the child began, “Lucy is scared to make noise. She didn't used to be.”

“Did she talk before?”

Shannon shook her head. "Not really. But she cried and laughed and made sounds."

"Why did she stop, honey?" the blonde nudged.

"I... 'cause..." Shannon played with her fingers nervously and Kate grasped her small hand softly. The girl looked up with a worried expression crossing her small face. "Uncle Steve was gonna hurt us if... if she didn't stop crying."

CJ and Kate felt their stomachs drop heavily at the mention of Steven Coburn's name. The Davenport case - where CJ had met these precious children - was an absolute nightmare and Coburn had been the killer. But 'Uncle Steve' had been around the girls for a while before he was caught... maybe even years... and that made CJ and Kate feel quite sick.

The taller woman took a deep cleansing breath. "Shannon, please try to tell us what happened. What did he say or do, sweetie?"

Shannon held Kate's hand tightly while looking at CJ. "We were in our room one night. Mommy and Uncle Steve had beers... and Mommy didn't come when Lucy started crying. Daddy was away working in another country." The girl sniffed loudly before continuing. "Uncle Steve came in and he was angry. He... he grabbed Lucy and picked her up like this..." Shannon pinched her own upper arm.

"Did he pick her up with both arms?" CJ asked, trying to hide her horrified feelings.

Shannon nodded. "Then he shouted really loud... at her face. He... he said that if she ever made another sound he would hurt us... but she kept crying after that and he came back and did it three times. I was scared and so was Lucy. She stopped crying after he hurt her arm and she didn't make noise after that," the child ended with a few tears.

Kate carefully pulled the dark-haired girl from her upside down position on the couch and took her into her arms. "It's gonna be okay now, sweetheart. He won't hurt you girls again... ever! Do you hear me, Shannon?" she whispered at the girl's ear.

The little head nodded. "Yes, Kate."

Kate rocked back and forth a few times with her daughter snuggled into her shirt. The actress turned to look at her wife who was forcing a loving smile, but Kate could see the tears stinging the agent's blue eyes.

CJ thought for a moment. "We'll tell Lucy that she's very safe and it's okay to make a noise now. Will you help us to make her feel safe, Shannon?" she requested.

"Yes. I'll help," the girl smiled through her tears.

"Good... because we love you both very much and we want you to be happy."

Shannon looked at CJ. "Well... I think we're happy now but Lucy's just stuck. We need to unstick her."

CJ stifled her grin and nodded her head. "You're very smart, Shannon. We'll all help to unstick her. Then there will be even more noise around here, right?"

"Right," the girl agreed, laying her head back on Kate's chest.

The actress gazed at her wife and once CJ had kissed the top of Lucy's head, she met the blonde's eyes.

“I love you, CJ.”

“Love you too, honey.”

“I love you too, Kate. And CJ too,” Shannon mumbled from her warm haven.

Both women felt their hearts melt yet again.

“And we love you, Squirt. We love you both,” Kate said into the dark hair tucked under her chin.

Shannon giggled. “You called me that because of the bottle of glue.” She sat up and looked at CJ. “I squirted the glue on Kate's picture and it made a funny sound,” she explained, covering her mouth with both hands.

The agent smiled. “Oh my... so that's your new nickname, huh?” Shannon and Kate nodded in unison and CJ laughed, making Lucy stir. “Well, hello sleepy head,” the tall woman said, kissing the infant's curly hair.

Rubbing her eyes and taking a deep, shaky, sleepy breath, Lucy wriggled round on CJ's lap to see everyone. Once she had taken stock of her family, she laid back down on the agent, facing the other two.

“I think it's time for bed. Who wants a story?”

Two small heads nodded and all four climbed the staircase together. Kamali followed and lay down outside the bedroom door as usual, and both women fussed over him on their way back out about twenty minutes later. CJ took Kate's hand and led her back down to the living area for a chat about what they had learned.

\* \* \* \* \*

“So, we're both off tomorrow. Maybe we should have a fun day with the kids and really encourage Lucy to make noise when she wants to,” CJ said as she settled with Kate on the couch.

“Hmm, yeah,” the blonde replied, slipping her arm around her wife and listening to her heartbeat. She turned her head to kiss the bare skin at the low neck of CJ's shirt. “I did say to Shannon we could go to the mall though.”

“We could do both. How about a trip to the mall before lunch then we can spend the rest of the day at home?”

“Sounds like a plan.” Kate sat up a little and looked at her wife. “Want to talk about what Shannon told us?”

CJ sighed. “I guess we should. In one way, I don't even want to think about Coburn and I don't want to let him affect our family anymore. On the other hand, it's good to know the possible reason for Lucy's silence.”

“Well, at least we can try to make her feel as safe and loved as possible and let her know it's not wrong to make sounds,” Kate said quietly, enjoying the caress of the slender fingers through her hair.

They sat for long moments, just enjoying each other's touch and thinking about what Shannon told them. CJ finally broke the silence. “We have two amazing children out of such tragedy,” she pondered aloud. “I never thought for a second that the Davenport case... which was one of the worst I've ever known... could be the start for something so incredible for us. Two children... crazy, huh?”

Kate smiled. “Yes, two amazing children. And no, I never thought that either. It was such a horrible time... the facts of the case notwithstanding... but back then was one of those times when I knew nothing could beat us, CJ. We're pretty amazing too, you know?”

“Yeah,” the agent whispered, kissing her spouse's hair.

Kate turned her head again to capture CJ's lips. The kiss was soft and delicate but soon deepened into something much more involved. When Kate broke the contact and stood up, the look on her face was unmistakable. CJ immediately rose from the couch and switched off the lights around the living area. She returned to her smiling wife's side, giving a half bow and spreading her hand out to allow Kate to lead the way. The actress laughed and headed for the staircase with an eager FBI agent on her heels.

\* \* \* \* \*

Closing the bedroom door fully - something they always made sure to do now to give them a little heads up should a child awaken during the night... although that hadn't happened for some weeks now - CJ eyed her wife as Kate began to disrobe slowly. The agent's deep blue eyes watched intently as the shirt slipped from firm shoulders and landed on the floor in a soft puddle of cotton around Kate's feet.

Once the actress had removed her pants, she stood in front of her hungry spouse in her underwear, grinning at the taller woman. “Your turn...” she purred.

CJ glided towards her wife, her clothing flying toward the general vicinity of the couch against the wall. She swirled her white panties around her finger a couple of times before adding them to the pile. Kate giggled but she couldn't ignore how incredibly sexy her wife looked with that mischievous smirk on her beautiful, naturally tanned face. CJ knelt in front of the actress and immediately kissed the black silk that covered her spouse's intimate area. Kate inhaled deeply, feeling the anticipation pulsing through her body.

The agent's long arms reached up and deftly unfastened her lover's bra, the blonde shrugging the straps off her shoulders to let it fall to the floor. CJ concentrated on the panties now. She focused her eyes, her hands and her mouth on what lay beneath the thin material. Kate was gasping, almost feeling the lust dripping from every part of CJ's body.

The tall woman slowly slid her fingers under the thin elastic, making sure to tease and play with her wife as much as possible. She leaned in to gently grasp the front of the panties with her teeth, drawing a moan from Kate's mouth. CJ dragged the material down slightly and tortured her spouse's soft swollen skin with her nose, inhaling the scent of the actress' arousal.

The agent whimpered. It seemed that she was just as tortured by the painfully slow foreplay as her spouse. Kate's hands grasped the dark head and pressed it against her a little harder.

“What do you want, baby?” CJ purred, letting the panties go.

Kate wet her lips. “You. I want you to make me come...”

“With pleasure...”

“Yes... yes, lots of pleasure...” Kate growled pulling her wife up to kiss her. “On the bed... now.”

CJ pushed the blonde onto the bed on her back. She hovered above Kate on her hands and knees then straightened up to finally remove the panties in one smooth movement. The agent sunk down into the mattress. She wanted to taste Kate... to make her wet... make her come... make her moan. The actress watched as CJ kissed over her mound and abdomen, before a graceful hand came up to tickle and tease across her breast.

“Oh... yeah...”

Keeping her lips against Kate's skin, the agent whispered between kisses. "I... love... you..."

The blonde didn't get a chance to respond as her wife hungrily licked down to her inner thigh. Kate couldn't breathe, waiting for CJ to cover her clit with her tongue. It seemed like it was taking forever and the smaller woman pushed her hips off the bed. CJ took the bait and devoured her spouse, sinking her mouth into the eagerly offered flesh. Kate let out a muffled scream as the agent suckled on her wetness.

The raven-haired woman inhaled gustily, the scent of her wife making her so very aroused. Kate was so close and she couldn't stop the rise and fall of her pelvis. CJ stilled her tongue against the engorged bundle of nerves since Kate was doing all the work, and the agent opened her eyes to watch the display. She was gonna come with Kate... she knew that, and judging by the quickening of her wife's thrusts, she was going to climax any second. '*Good God, she turns me on ...*' CJ thought as her eyes rolled back in her head.

The actress pushed onto the soft tongue with her center as her orgasm burned inside her, the increased friction doing its job perfectly. "Oh baby... I'm coming... in your mouth..."

That did it. CJ climaxed... hard... once again astonished at how her wife could make her come without even touching her. Every nerve ending in her body sparked and her taught form did its very best to stay still so that she could continue to drive Kate through her orgasm.

"Yesssss..." the blonde hissed, feeling the aftershocks pulse through her.

CJ licked her wife's swollen ridge one more time, before laying her head on the mattress between Kate's legs. "You're amazing."

"Right... back... at ya..."

The taller woman chuckled weakly and opened her eyes, seeing a smooth, creamy thigh right in front of her nose. She wasn't sure what happened next but she was suddenly underneath the tight little body of her wife and Kate was straddling her with a very dangerous look in her eye.

CJ smiled smugly. "What you thinkin'?"

"I'm thinkin' it's time for you to do what you're told," the actress husked.

The agent breathed deep, making her breasts rise impressively, and the intense look in the green eyes that watched them made CJ's nipples stand to attention immediately. "Do what you will, my darling," she drawled.

Kate rose up, showing her entire torso to her appreciative wife. She then moved her own hands over her body, covering both breasts then holding them out to CJ like a delicious offering. She released them after making sure her nipples were erect, for her lover's pleasure as well as her own. Kate slipped her right hand down over firm abs and pushed her finger into her drenched folds. CJ was drooling by this point, watching the alluring display with baited breath. The agent's mouth opened and her tongue dampened her dark lips, as if she desperately needed to taste what Kate was touching.

The blonde gave a sultry smile and brought her hand up in front of her. She leaned on her right elbow, holding herself over CJ to bring their faces mere inches apart. With her finger between them, she gazed at her lover with dark, hooded eyes. "Taste it..."

CJ was so turned on she thought she might have a heart attack. She was sure her pulse had never gone so fast. She opened her mouth to take the offered, wet finger between her lips, savoring the desire that copiously covered the digit.

“Mmmm,” Kate hummed, before starting her journey over her wife's body. She nibbled along CJ's collarbone with her teeth, which in turn forced the agent's eyes to close in rapture. She sought out a full breast with her mouth and teased the hardened point maddeningly with her tongue and teeth. She twisted the other nipple between her thumb and forefinger, making CJ moan and clench her stomach, feeling the glorious torment to her very soul.

After taking a leisurely journey over her wife's abdomen, Kate finally settled between CJ's legs. Ceasing all contact for a moment, she waited for the taller woman to look down at her. When CJ did that, the blonde grinned. “Give me your hand,” she demanded in the huskiest voice the agent had ever heard.

CJ did what she was told and Kate took the hand in hers, guiding it onto the agent's very sensitive center.

“Oh!” CJ gasped.

“Touch yourself,” Kate whispered, watching as the agent's fingers slowly manipulated the tender clit.

The agent decided she might die of sheer arousal before her hot little wife was done with her. It was too much and she knew she couldn't last much longer.

Kate gasped audibly. “So hot,” she breathed, mirroring CJ's exact thoughts. “Now... go inside yourself, baby...”

“Unnggg...” CJ tried to speak but failed miserably. She entered herself, just as Kate lowered her head, bringing her green eyes even closer to her spouse's aching flesh.

Kate watched the long fingers slide inside her wife's body and couldn't stop the whimper of empathy that passed her lips... lips that would now cover that incredibly swollen flesh and suckle it until her lover climaxed. She slid her tongue back and forth over the sensitive nodule with a medium pressure, and as her cheek moved against the agent's wrist, it pushed CJ over the edge.

The agent's mind exploded at the feeling of her own fingers inside her and Kate's warm, skillful mouth on her sensitive clit. Her orgasm burst through her entire being with all the subtlety of a tidal wave and volcano combined. With her fingers stilled inside her in a vice-like grip, she thrust her hips off the bed to press harder against Kate's mouth. The actress responded by swirling her tongue around the entire area, touching exactly the right parts of CJ, knowing what her wife liked and needed at that moment.

CJ eventually collapsed on the mattress feeling totally, completely and absolutely spent. Her body ached with exhaustion. “Katie...” That was all she could manage before tears welled from her eyes.

Kate was slightly concerned and crawled up the long, quivering body, taking the quilt with her. She settled over her wife in a warm cocoon. “Baby, are you okay?”

“Yes...” was the only response, but the blonde could see the tears running down the beautiful cheek bones, even though CJ had covered her face with her arm.

Kate kissed the arm, and when it moved she kissed the salty cheek. “What...” she said quietly.

“I just couldn't stop them... the tears. I have never, ever experienced anything like that in my entire life. The anticipation *and* the orgasm were so intense I thought you might just kill me... but what a way to go...” CJ murmured with a smile.

“That good, huh?”

“Hell yes. You just get hotter every day, honey,” the agent said, trailing her fingers through her wife's blonde hair.

“You like it when I tell you what I want, don't you?” the blonde smirked.

“Oh yeah... and you seem to be enjoying it too... you're becoming quite the domineering type in bed,” the agent said, wiggling her dark eyebrows.

Kate laughed out loud. “I wouldn't say domineering, but my God, CJ, I didn't think it could get any better. Remember what you did to me the other night in the study?”

CJ's mind wandered briefly, recalling the night in question when she had bent Kate over their desk and made her come many, many times in a variety of ways. The actress had ended up on her hands and knees on the smooth surface, CJ's breasts pressed against her buttocks while the agent made love to her. It was incredible. “Mmm, yeah.”

The actress smiled again and kissed CJ on the lips. “I love you, Ciara...” she husked.

“Oh no, don't ‘Ciara’ me... I couldn't have another one... seriously, my clit is taking a temporary leave of absence,” CJ winked. “Do *you* need something else, my darling?”

Kate stuck her tongue between her teeth. “No, honey, I'm fine.” She settled on top of CJ, using the agent's breasts as her pillow.

The taller woman submerged her fingers in her wife's hair, enjoying the weight of Kate's body on her, making her feel so very safe, loved and cherished. After a few languorous moments, a faraway noise could briefly be heard down the corridor. “Katie?”

“Yeah?”

“Did you hear something?”

“No... why? Do you think one of the girls is up?”

“Don't know...”

Once Kate had moved off her, CJ got up and grabbed her robe. “I'll just check on them, honey,” the agent said, opening the bedroom door.

“Holler if you need me.”

CJ nodded and left, tip-toeing along the hallway towards Shannon's room. Kamali lay peacefully outside the door so CJ knew there was nothing wrong. He had a new bed there now, since he refused to sleep too far away from his new family members. “Hey boy,” CJ whispered, approaching the slightly open door. Hearing one of his humans' soft tones, the dog dropped his head back down on the plush bed. The agent could hear Shannon's gentle voice inside the room and peaked through the gap.

The tall woman's heart burst with love at the sight that greeted her. Shannon had moved onto Lucy's bed and was quietly telling her a story to help the infant get back to sleep.

CJ entered the room. “Hey, you two, is everything okay?” she whispered.

“Yes. Lucy had a bad dream, I think,” Shannon said kindly. “I usually read to her when that happens.”

CJ was starting to think that nobody had truly taken care of these girls' emotional needs before. She sighed as she sat on the edge of the little bed. “Why didn't you come get me or Kate?”

“Uhm,” the older girl thought about it. “I never got a grown-up before. I can help Lucy if it's just a bad dream,” she explained.

“Okay, but you know that we love you both very much. If you need us, we're just along the hall.”

Shannon nodded. “We know. And Lucy always got up in the middle of the night when we first came here. But we're much better now, right Luce?”

CJ was warmed by the closeness of these two siblings. It seemed Shannon had taken it upon herself to care for her sister and the agent just couldn't believe how sweet it was. Lucy nodded to the older girl and climbed up to hug CJ.

The tall woman returned the hug and did the same to Shannon. “Are you sure you don't need me to stay for a while?”

“I'm sure. I'll just finish my story then we'll go back to sleep. Is that okay?” Shannon asked.

“Of course, sweetheart. Night, night,” CJ replied lovingly.

The tall woman went back to the master bedroom, leaving the door ajar, and told Kate what happened. As they lay together, wrapped in the quilt and each other, Kate pondered what CJ had said.

“It seems they've been a little independent unit for a while and Shannon is more grown up than she should be at six years old. Still, it's just amazing how they've coped with everything.”

CJ sighed. “Yeah.”

The actress snuggled into her wife's side for a few moments, until she remembered something. “Oh, I forgot to say, I have a guest role to do in San Francisco soon. One episode in that series ‘Riley's Law'. Should be quite interesting.”

“Oh yeah? What's the part?”

“I play the bad girl.”

“When are you going?”

“End of next week.”

“How long will you be away?”

“Just a couple of days...”

“What happens to your character?”

“Uh, she gets killed.”

“Doing your own stunts?”

“Some...”

“On location?”

“Yep.”

“Am I asking too many questions?” CJ said, raising an eyebrow.

Kate laughed. “No. Want to know anything else?”

“If I think of anything, I’ll let you know. Just be careful. You’re very precious.”

“Awww, ya big softie,” the actress chuckled, kissing her wife’s breast.

“Only with you.”

“Uh huh.”

“But seriously, be careful. And call me when you can. I’ll no doubt be filling my time with some stupid, boring FBI detail. Work is so the opposite of loud, right now,” the agent winked.

Kate knew not to say the ‘Q’ word when it came to CJ’s work as it almost always jinxed it. “I’ll call you every spare minute. How’s that?”

CJ snickered and squeezed her beloved wife. “Perfect.”

After two declarations of love, both women dozed off. In the kid’s room under the gentle glow of a Piglet-shaped nightlight, Shannon slept soundly at her slumbering sister’s side and the whole house descended into a peaceful night.

## Chapter 2

On Monday morning, Assistant Director Mark Mulrone was already in CJ’s office when she arrived with the good coffees on one of those cardboard cup holders. As she placed the tray down on her desk, Ethan and Mikey grabbed a cup and with a silent nod of thanks, they went to their own seats. Mark sighed and CJ knew something was up.

“Out with it...” she said while inhaling her coffee. She wanted to savor the delicious flavor before hearing what she was sure was bad news.

The AD cleared his throat. “Well, I’m not quite sure how to tell you, exactly. I can’t really believe it myself.”

“Try me, Sir...”

“We have a convict on the run... broke out of a secured prison bus during transfer to the CCWF,” the tall man said sullenly.

“And we have the case...?” CJ faded out as she realized who the convict was. “Shit... Timmons?”

“Yes.”

“We need to catch her, Sir... sooner rather than later,” the agent stated firmly.

“Oh, I know, CJ. But she’s gone to ground... laying low. No sightings of her since she escaped and the roadblocks have turned up zilch. The other two female prisoners on the bus have been questioned and all they could get out of

them was that she cracked her hand and ripped it free from her cuff. But it's our case and I need you to go to the hospital to question the guard who was attacked by Timmons.

“There was only *one* guard in there with them?” CJ asked in disbelief.

“Yes. It seems when we write ‘EXTREMELY DANGEROUS’ on a report, some people still underestimate the severity of the warning,” Mark sighed, rubbing his forehead fretfully.

“Where is Agent Green?” CJ had an unsettling feeling in her gut. It wasn't like Timmons to go into hiding .

“It's her day off, but I was thinking it would be better if she was at work,” Mark said quietly. He could see Ethan and Mikey trying to join the dots. They still didn't know everything about Jamie's long-standing connection to the case.

“Can I go pick her up, Sir?”

“Yes, CJ, go now then take her with you to question the prison guard.”

\* \* \* \* \*

As Agent Carson left the LA field office, she quickly called her friend, finding out that Jamie was at her own apartment. Once she had hung up the call, she took a deep breath and sighed in relief. She pulled out of the parking garage, the Bureau sedan's tires screeching on the smooth concrete as she turned onto the street.

Arriving at Green's place a short while later, CJ smiled in relief again as Jamie walked down the path towards her vehicle. The blonde sat in the passenger seat and looked at her tall partner with concern.

“You sounded really weird on the phone, DM...”

“I know. Sorry. But I have some disturbing news. I just had to get here and see you,” the raven-haired woman said, leaning over to hug the blonde.

When Jamie released her colleague, she frowned. “Talk to me, CJ. What's going on?”

“She escaped, Penfold. Alison Timmons... broke out of a prison bus on Friday morning. No sign of her since...” CJ said, gulping back her displeasure.

“Oh fuck,” Jamie sighed despondently.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Oh Dad, honestly... the kids are gonna love you, just like everyone else loves you. Quit flapping,” Eddie Junior said as he signaled to exit the freeway.

“Oh! But you know what I get like. I'm just so excited!”

The younger man laughed and shook his head at his father's usual, overtly flamboyant manner. After moving permanently to San Francisco, Eddie Junior had arranged with Kate to pick Dad up from LAX on their first visit to meet the new family members. He was kind of excited to meet the kids too. His crooked grin remained on his face as he listened to Dad babbling on about the gifts he had bought for everyone.

When they arrived at the house, the sun was shining and everything looked even more beautiful than Eddie Junior remembered. He unloaded the gift bags - which were stuffed to bursting point - from the trunk and ushered his father up onto the porch.

After ringing the bell, he swiped his father's hand away from the bags. "I'll manage, Dad. You just hug your daughter..." he said as Kate opened the door with a slightly shy Lucy attached to her hip.

"Oh, sweetheart! She's adorable," Eddie Senior tried to say calmly.

"Hey, you guys... c'mon in. It's great to see you both," the actress replied.

Once the men were inside, Kamali greeted them then trotted off to find Shannon in the back yard.

"Hey, Sis, is this little Lucy?" Eddie Junior gushed in a baby-talk voice.

Kate smirked at her brother's cheesy smile. "Eddie, you'll scare her with that face of yours," she teased. "Hi, Dad," she added as her father hugged her warmly.

"Hey yourself," he responded distractedly, reaching out two hands toward Lucy. The tall, kind man raised his eyebrows at the infant. "Can I have a hug?"

Lucy seemed to tense momentarily and Kate was about to tell her father to wait, but the little girl suddenly smiled and reached for her grandfather.

The petite blonde was astounded but very happy that Lucy was comfortable enough around her family to go to them so quickly. She watched as her Dad took Lucy into his arms and handed her a flower that he had picked out front. The little girl took the offered foliage and they both headed into the living area.

Eddie Junior cocked his head to the side and narrowed his eyes playfully to look more closely at Kate. When his sister frowned, he grinned and pointed to her neck. "Is that a hickey?" he asked, twisting his mouth to prevent laughter.

"Eddie! Quit that..." Kate retorted, slapping his hand down.

"It is! Oh, Sis, that wife of yours is wild."

"Shut up, Eddie, and come meet your other niece," Kate ordered, winking at her brother.

The man stopped her as a more stern expression crossed his features. "Seriously, Kate, how are you? I mean... I'm sorry about what happened to you," he said, taking his sister into a bear hug.

"I'm really okay. It's given me a new outlook on life. I'm not gonna take any moment for granted anymore. It's quite refreshing actually."

"Any after effects? Anything you forgot completely?" he asked hesitantly.

"Not that we've come across so far. Don't worry, Eddie. CJ and I went over all the things we could think of and I remembered everything. If anything has fallen by the wayside, it can't be too important," she said, reassuring her brother with a gentle arm squeeze.

He let her go and smiled. "Okay, good. I was worried about you." He took a deep breath. "Right... where is my other niece?" he said, dragging his sister with him into the living area.

They entered the large room and found Lucy and Shannon sitting at the dining table, absolutely riveted to Eddie Senior's stories about Kate when she was a child. Eddie's melodious voice seemed to have the girls entranced. The actress rolled her eyes as she listened but was overjoyed to see her children smiling at their grandfather. Her heart skipped a beat as she headed to the coffee machine while her brother introduced himself to Shannon.

"I spoke to you on the phone," the girl said to her uncle.

"That's right, you did. I was moving house when I called that time," Eddie said, recalling the conversation.

"Come sit here," Shannon smiled, patting the chair beside her.

Eddie seemed to melt and Kate smirked as the younger man sat down and joined the rather animated conversation.

\* \* \* \* \*

She was standing on the ward tending to a patient when two FBI agents came in. She glanced briefly at their backs as they introduced themselves to a prison guard who had been brought in with a serious concussion. Her body stiffened when the tall, dark-haired agent said her name. The forty-nine year old nurse with shoulder length brown hair and blue eyes, turned to try and get a better look at this Special Agent Carson, who had a very familiar ring to her voice.

CJ was finishing up her interview with the injured guard when she became aware of the form loitering off to her right. She spun on her heels to face the nurse, who looked as stunned as she felt when their eyes met.

A wave of impossibility washed over CJ as she looked at the slightly shorter woman who was the spitting image of her Mom. Not exactly the same, but there were so many similarities, it was uncanny. Brushing her suit down with her hands and straightening her shoulders, she composed herself into the cool agent persona once more.

The nurse couldn't stop staring at the woman in front of her. Even though she hadn't seen CJ since she was three years old, the resemblance to Alyssa Carson was quite evident in this grown woman. And their voices were very similar. The nurse cleared her throat. "I'm sorry. I... are you Ciara Jane?" she asked nervously, tears welling in her eyes.

CJ was floored again, only noticeable by the slight tightening of her eyes but she retained her calm demeanor. "Why do you ask?"

"I... I knew your Mother."

CJ clenched her jaws at this woman mentioning her beloved Mom, but the agent couldn't deny the strange feelings she was having. "How did you know her?" she said, shuffling further away from the patients and signaling for the nurse to follow.

The woman bit her lips. "Alyssa was my sister."

CJ couldn't think. Her brain was telling her that her Mother never had a sister but her eyes were telling her this woman could be speaking the truth. "She didn't have a sister," she insisted.

"She never told you about me?"

"No."

“Oh.” The woman seemed disheartened. “Well, I guess I should've expected that. I just hoped that maybe you would know something... or remember me.”

“What's your name?” CJ asked, still suspicious of the woman's claims.

“Cecilia Carson. That's why I was observing you. I heard you introduce yourself and your voice was very familiar. You sound like your Mother when we were young.”

The agent clenched her jaws again and tried to ignore her heart battering against her ribs. She saw Jamie waiting patiently by the door. “I have to go. I can't do this right now. Sorry.”

Cecilia seemed to panic. “Wait! Please take my number. I have photos you could look at, and some family mementos. Please. It's up to you if you call me,” she added, scribbling with her pen and pushing a small piece of paper into the tall woman's hand. Her eyes were pleading as she held back her tears at seeing her niece after such a long time.

CJ nodded and left without another word. Her pulse was racing. Would her Mom have kept this from her? And if so, why?

\* \* \* \* \*

On the car ride back to the office, Jamie eyed her colleague from the passenger seat. CJ was quiet but seemed somewhat peaceful looking. The blonde wondered if her friend would talk to her about her thoughts.

“DM?”

A deep sigh issued from dark lips. “Yeah?”

“What are you thinking about?”

“This and that...”

“Talk to me,” Jamie tried.

“Just thinking... it sounds like Timmons broke her hand to free herself of the cuffs... and I'm also thinking how stupid that guard was for taking her eyes off the high-risk prisoners. Pisses me off,” CJ grumbled.

“I know. It kinda pisses me off too.”

“Sorry, Penfold. I guess I'm a little stuck in my head. How are you feeling about all this?”

Jamie pursed her lips in thought. “I'm not sure. I'm worried that she seems to have disappeared. I mean, are we gonna have to wait for a murder before we find her?”

“I hope not,” the raven-haired woman replied, turning the car off the freeway. “Can you contact Danny and ask him to tell us immediately if any missing persons come in?”

“Sure. But why missing persons?”

“I have a weird feeling about Alison. She doesn't go to ground. In fact, she isn't your typical serial killer at all. First of all, she traveled over thousands of miles attacking her victims over many years... then killing... not a typical profile trait. And now she completely changes that by going to ground... or so we believe.” CJ bit her lip in thought and Jamie watched her friend thrash through it. “There's an APB out on her and we have pictures now. We know exactly what she looks like, so we need to be ready for her perhaps wearing wigs like before or hoarding her victims somewhere... although where, I don't know. There may not be any bodies for us to find to begin with. Either way, I don't like it and I want to catch her before anyone gets hurt.”

When CJ stopped talking at continued to stare straight ahead, the blonde could see concern on her face. “Are you worried she'll come for me?”

“She could come for either of us, Penfold. She seems to hold an extreme and long-standing grudge against her old girlfriend, so I would think her grudge against us is still fresh in her mind. It's making me a little edgy.”

Jamie pondered that for a few moments. She turned to her friend. “What did that nurse want?”

CJ grimaced slightly. “She just thought she knew me.”

“And... did she?”

“It's personal... I'd rather discuss it with Kate first. Sorry...”

“No apology necessary, DM. I understand.”

The rest of the trip back to the office was made in silence. CJ's mind was buzzing, mostly about the case and whether her precious family would be in danger, but also about the woman she'd met who bore an amazing likeness to her Mom.

\* \* \* \* \*

Alison Timmons winced as she strapped the makeshift splint to her hand. A few broken bones were nothing to her but still, she couldn't deny the pinching pain and the fact that it was a hindrance. She had broken into a store in the cheaper part of town at 2am on Sunday morning. Now she had the clothing she needed and the knife she wanted, and she was ready to go out and make her money on some well-chosen street corners. The blonde wig would do for the first night but she also wanted a red one, just for variety's sake.

The clothing she had chosen was so trashy, but that was just right for the job. She knew this town.... in fact, she'd been captured here. Returning to Bakersfield had given her a buzz. She was sickeningly happy to 'practice' here and make some money before going to LA to exact her revenge. She would need to steal a car soon, and buy a gun before she could carry out her plans. Making a decent amount of money was necessary before she could obtain a weapon with a silencer. It had to have a silencer.

\* \* \* \* \*

CJ rubbed her eyes as she waited for the ringing in her ear to stop.

“*Hello?*”

“Hi Katie, it's me,” CJ said in her dulcet tones.

“*Hey, you, what's wrong?*”

The agent's face twitched at her wife reading her mind... as always. "How do you know something's wrong?"

"*CJ, I know you very, very well. Tell me...*" Kate requested.

A deep sigh issued from the tall woman's lips as she leaned her elbow on her desk. "I'm gonna be late tonight. We have an escaped convict."

"*Aww, honey. I'm sorry you're having a crap day,*" the blonde empathized.

"What's happening there? And what *is* that noise?"

"*Uh, that would be Dad swinging Shannon around... and she's squealing with delight,*" Kate stated plainly.

CJ smirked. "Can't believe I forgot he was arriving today. Is Eddie there too?"

"*Yeah... they're all getting on like a house on fire .*"

"How long are they staying, honey?" CJ asked, thinking it would be good to have extra people around the house until she caught Timmons. She knew the killer didn't know where she lived, but she would not underestimate a woman who could elude the police for years and escape during a secured transfer. The agent's worst fear was her family getting hurt but she couldn't lose her focus because of it.

"*I think Dad's here for the week and Eddie, for a couple of days. Do you want me to ask?*"

"No. That's great. I'll see you when I get home, Katie. I gotta go. Tell them all I love them."

"*We love you too, CJ. Call me later if anything changes, okay?*"

"Okay baby, bye."

"*Bye, hon .*"

She didn't want to worry Kate with the details of the convict. She'd tell her tonight. The agent hung up the phone at the same time Jamie finished her call.

The blonde came over and balanced on the edge of CJ's desk. "Danny's gonna send me any missing person files. He says he has a few but they're from last week. I doubt they're anything to do with Timmons."

"Yeah... can't imagine she'd be straight to 'work' on Friday. Doesn't hurt to rule them out, I guess," CJ responded.

"Coffee?" the blonde agent queried.

"Yeah. Thanks, Penfold."

CJ stared at the thick folder in front of her. She never thought she'd have to go through the Timmons file again.

\* \* \* \* \*

The kids were in bed and Eddie Junior was reading them a story. Both girls had bonded well with him, most likely because he was still a big kid himself. He could be quite goofy when he was with his family.

Downstairs, Kate sat with her father on the couch. He was catching up with many things, including the visit Kate had from her mother.

“Oh, honey, that sounds just awful. But it sounds like you told her off good,” Eddie Senior gasped, using his hands to emphasize his aghast reaction.

“Yeah. I’m glad I told her never to come back.”

“Oh but sweetheart, your mother is-“

“She is *not* my mother. Just call her Elizabeth if we must talk about her,” the actress interrupted.

“Sorry, darling. Elizabeth is not one to take things lying down. I’m afraid you got your stubborn... I mean, determined nature from her,” he replied, covering his mouth to signify his regret at his faux pas.

Kate sighed gustily. “I hope you’re wrong, Dad, but I guess I should be open to the possibility that she’ll try again.”

“Oh, honey.” Eddie hugged his daughter and she leaned her head on his shoulder. “We’ll just focus on *your* wonderful family instead... much happier things. So, tell me about the tiny one. Are we thinking she’ll talk soon?”

“I’m pretty sure she will, Dad. Shannon told us a possible reason for her silence.”

Eddie Senior almost cried as Kate recounted the conversation with Shannon. “Oh sweetheart... all I can say is, thank the heavens you have them here. You and CJ are so fabulous and I know those girls will have all the love in the world now.”

“We’re doing our best to be good parents but you’re right... we sure ain’t short on love,” Kate grinned, trying to cheer Dad up again.

Her father smiled, the blonde’s beautiful face doing the trick. He looked to the door. “Hello, son... the girls asleep?”

Eddie Junior flopped down on the couch next to Kate. “Lucy’s asleep. Shannon promised to fall asleep right after I left.”

“Well, Uncle Eddie, you sure did a good job,” Kate said, nudging her brother’s arm.

“Uncle Eddie. I like the sound of that,” the young man said, leaning his head on the actress’ shoulder.

“How about a nice cup of tea before I turn in for the night?” Eddie Senior suggested.

“Great idea,” Kate agreed. She watched her father bustle off towards the kitchen then turned to her sleepy brother. “What are your plans tomorrow, Eddie?”

“Hmmm, not much. I plan to spend some time here with my nieces, if that’s okay?”

“Absolutely. I’ll be at work until about 6pm... early finish tomorrow. There’s a plot line running right now that gives me a little freedom, which has been a blessing really. Just a few more weeks and I’m off for three months.” Kate let out a groan, signifying the three weeks couldn’t pass quickly enough for her.

Eddie grunted in response. “I’m only here for a few days this time but since I live closer now, how about we try and talk Dad and Jeffrey into Christmas at your house this year?”

“Oh that's a great idea. Let me talk it over with CJ when I get a minute with her. She sounded slightly stressed about work when she called. We can organize it over my vacation time, though.”

“Sounds good,” the young man yawned.

Eddie Senior arrived back at the couch with three mugs of tea and they had a quiet discussion about the possibilities of a Christmas together.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Tall, skinny, drunk and high. Just the way I like ‘em,” Alison muttered to herself, standing on the dark street corner.

Flicking her fake blonde locks over her shoulder, she wandered into the seedy bar, following her target. She'd made a few hundred bucks already by selling her body. Now she needed another kind of release. As she entered the dank, smoky environment, which was expertly accompanied by the sound of some ridiculously unpopular tune belting out from the jukebox, she zeroed in on her prey and watched the woman standing on three-inch red, shiny stilettos under a tacky neon sign advertising cheap beer.

*‘ Yeah. Put a wig on that and she'll look just like her ,’* she thought, daydreaming of whom she *really* wanted to hurt.

The unsuspecting victim slurped down her bright blue shot of something that would no doubt add to the extremely glazed look in her eyes, never knowing that the diabolical liquid would probably be her last drink.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was late when CJ arrived home and she was a little remorseful that she hadn't been able to see Eddie and Dad before they went to bed. She sighed as she came in the front door, not thinking for a moment that her wife would be awake. She knew Kate was working tomorrow and figured the actress would be snoring peacefully by now.

Of course, she should've known better. As she headed to the kitchen for a glass of water, she saw her cute, little spouse, curled up on the couch in her pajamas, watching TV.

The blonde looked up with tired eyes. “Hey, honey.”

“Aww, Katie, you should've gone to bed. I'm sorry I'm so late,” CJ replied, her body collapsing next to her wife.

Two arms wrapped around the agent at the same time as two lips kissed her temple. “I wanted you home before I went to bed. So, who is the escaped convict?”

The taller woman sighed. “Right on the ball, as always, Agent Carson,” she jested. But then another sigh passed her lips. “Alison Timmons busted out of a prison bus.”

“Oh crap. How the hell did she manage that?” Kate asked, squeezing her spouse gently.

“Broke her own hand to rip it out of the cuffs, then attacked the guard... jumped off the bus while it was moving on the highway. I tell you, she's a nutcase... a dangerous nutcase.”

“I'd have to agree.”

“Katie, I was thinking I'd stay in the city until we catch her,” CJ said calmly, looking at her wife.

Kate's green eyes bore into CJ's worried blue ones. The actress was reading her wife perfectly. “You think she might come after you.”

“It's possible and I can't-“

“CJ... what you *can't* do is live like this every time some crazy person is on the loose. I bet you didn't even bring the truck home, did you?”

The agent almost smirked at her intelligent wife. “No. You're right, I didn't. It's under lock and key at the Bureau. I'm gonna stay on Jamie's couch. I drove her home tonight in a sedan after taking many diversions to make sure we weren't followed and I did the same thing before I came home. We'll use a different car each day, but I can't risk it again...”

“Don't you think that's a bit much?” Kate said, raising an eyebrow.

“You know I don't. Nothing in this world is more precious to me than you and the girls. I can't risk even the slightest possibility that Timmons is watching me. I think I should stay in the city.”

Kate felt a little frustration but pushed it away because she really could see why CJ would feel like this. But the children would miss her terribly, and so would she. “I don't like it. I want you here, not staying with Jamie. But if you think it would be best, I guess I could explain it to the girls.”

“Please don't be mad at me, honey. I'll be working long hours until the killer's caught anyway. I couldn't be home to protect you all. It would be better if I didn't take the chance of leading her here-“

“I'm not mad, CJ,” Kate interrupted. “You know I'll be crazy with worry about *you*, and if I don't see you every night, I'll worry more.”

“I promise that every moment it's safe to do so, I'll text or call you. Jamie and I sticking together makes more sense since Alison could come after either of us. It's less likely that she'd succeed with the two of us present.” She paused. “You're not worried about-“

“Oh for goodness sake, CJ, I know what you're gonna say... and no, I'm not worried about you and Jamie. I trust you, remember?”

“I know. I just want to make sure you know what the plan is and that you're okay with it. I can't take the chance that Timmons could follow me home to you and the girls... I couldn't stand it if... if... oh God.”

“It's okay, honey. Don't think about that. I'm not happy that I won't see you but I understand that this is best. Just catch her fast, please?”

“We will. I'll be working around the clock to end this,” the agent promised.

Kate gazed at her and swallowed hard. “And you won't be going anywhere solo, right?”

“Absolutely not. We'll always be in pairs at the very least. Mark has all of us working on it again to make sure we get her as quickly as possible. I'll stay safe. Scouts honor,” the agent assured, saluting to Kate.

“Please don't joke, CJ,” the blonde said, wrapping her body around her spouse. “Nothing can happen to you... nothing... so be extra careful. And that means, no being distracted or worrying about us. I'll take the kids to work if I have to... and I know where the spare gun is.”

“I know you can take care of things here, honey, but you don't have to take the kids to work. Dad, Alice and Tony will be here, and I've managed to get two agents covering the house but I wanted to okay it with you before they got here.”

“Oh.” Kate thought for a moment. “They won't be *inside* the house, will they?”

“No. But they will be just outside, on a twenty four hour patrol of the grounds, which is why Mark has hinted at me that I need to catch Alison as soon as possible, before his budget is sky high.”

“I bet you had a perfect response to that,” Kate said knowingly.

“Uh, yeah. I was gonna tell him where to stick his budget and that my family were more important than any amount of money, but he gave me one of those looks and I shut my mouth like a good girl,” CJ fake-sneered.

“I see. Well, do what you have to do to catch Timmons and get home as soon as you can. And as much as I'm exhausted right now, I need to take you upstairs and make love to you before you leave.”

“Hmmm, I can't argue with that... but where are Dad and Eddie sleeping?”

Kate chuckled weakly. “Dad will be out for the count already... nothing but a bomb will wake him 'til morning. Eddie is at the other end of the hall. So... let's go to bed.”

\* \* \* \* \*

CJ was still packing her bag when a yawning blonde shuffled out of the ensuite. Kate plopped her tired body down on the bed, but saw the agent watching her so she changed her flat out exhausted pose to a sultry, come-hither look. The taller woman stuffed the last bundle of clothes into the bag and zipped it shut rather hurriedly.

“I should have a shower first...” CJ drawled as she approached, knowing what Kate's response would be.

“No. Come here,” the actress replied promptly, stifling another yawn.

“Why don't I do all the work tonight? You're such a tired baby,” CJ purred as she covered Kate with her body. She moved a few strands of blonde hair from her wife's face and kissed her long and lovingly, slipping her tongue into the actress' mouth.

The smaller woman returned the kiss, her hands running up to grasp the back of her lover's head. She curled her fingers through the long, dark hair and pulled gently, breaking the contact between them. “Why don't you stay right where you are... and kiss me senseless while I come?” she husked, eyebrow raised. “Touch me, Ciara...”

CJ flared her nostrils and slipped her hand between them. She sunk down to suck one of her spouse's velvety nipples into her mouth while her fingers sought out the tender, wet flesh between Kate's legs. A low moan left the agent's throat as she felt the sensitive point hardening in her mouth and Kate's center pushing against her hand. She brushed her finger along the length of Kate's clit, feeling her wife shudder at the touch. The agent suckled harder on the nipple then let it go, turning her attention to its twin. She added a little more pressure to the sensitive ridge that was now fully engorged beneath her fingertips.

“Oh baby, you feel good...” CJ gasped as she moved from Kate's breasts back up to her mouth. “Your clit is so swollen... and you're so wet for me... so deliciously wet...”

“Oh... oh...”

“Yeah... come for me,” CJ whispered before thrusting her tongue into her spouse's mouth, her fingers matching that action as she entered Kate.

The blonde couldn't hold back the onslaught of her climax. She felt it rushing to her core, the heat spreading out to fire up every nerve ending in her body. But then, CJ stilled her hand and opened her eyes, continuing to kiss Kate passionately. She closed her eyes again as the actress clung to her.

Kate pulled her mouth away for a second. “Do it, Ciara... fuck me.”

CJ plunged her fingers back inside her lover's hot, drenched opening and curled the digits upwards to find that smooth, stimulating spot, sending the blonde over the edge. As the agent continued to pump in and out, Kate's screams were muffled by the taller woman's mouth. CJ's desire was getting the better of her as her wife thrust up against her hand to get the most out of her orgasm.

Kate's tongue now explored CJ's mouth with renewed vigor. The blonde knew her wife would be ready to explode and wanted to keep the momentum going. She pushed the agent back a little and CJ rose up on her elbow, her other hand, still inside her wife.

The petite woman licked her lips seductively. “I want you to sit up... and I want your hot, wet clit on mine. I... want you to come... all over me,” she purred.

CJ groaned loudly - completely unable to hold it in - and withdrew her hand before rising up to straddle her lover. She was about to reach between them when Kate stopped her. The actress pulled back her own soft hair and aching flesh to reveal the intimate nodule to CJ's appreciative gaze.

“Your turn...” the blonde breathed.

“Mmmm...”

CJ matched her wife's movements, pulling her outer lips back, allowing Kate to see how incredibly aroused she was. The actress smiled seductively then dropped her eyes back to CJ's center to watch the agent lowering the sodden skin onto hers. They both moaned as they made contact and instead of CJ's leaning down over Kate, like she usually did, the taller woman remained upright and took both of her breasts into her hands, squeezing and molding them. She chaffed the nipples, then twisted and teased herself. She hadn't begun to rock her hips yet and the display was driving Kate insane.

The blonde grabbed her wife's butt cheeks and pushed her groin into CJ. The agent took the hint and began to move back and forth, sliding over Kate's clit easily, lubricated by the desire that was flooding out of both of them. Kate decided to torture CJ by copying her actions, remembering what it did to the agent the last time. She brought her hands up to massage her own breasts, licking her lips then pinching and pulling at her nipples.

“Oh God...” CJ groaned, watching the movements closely. She continued to thrust but her hips were beginning to move erratically.

“Yes... come on me, Ciara... all over me.”

CJ couldn't have stopped her orgasm if she'd tried. It burned through her entire being like waves of lightning. She squeezed her breasts tightly as the spasms took over and Kate quickly cupped the agent's butt cheeks once more to urge her on. Pushing herself hard against CJ's still-rocking hips, Kate focused on the wetness that was now running out of CJ and down over her clit. She felt that wetness trickle inside her then slide down between her buttocks, and it was all she could take.

“Yesssssssss...” Kate hissed as she came again. Her body ached with each throb and when the pulsations finally died away, she could feel her center twitching pleasantly. She sat up and wrapped her arms around CJ's waist, resting her head between the two beautiful breasts. The agent pulled her wife impossibly closer and held her tight. They remained like that for long moments; the tall woman's mouth rested on Kate's hair and the actress' ear pressed against CJ's heartbeat.

CJ didn't want to leave her wife but she knew it had to be done... just until she concluded this case once and for all. She enclosed Kate more tightly in her arms and the blonde looked up slowly.

“You okay, honey?” she asked.

“Yeah. That was so amazing... so amazing,” the agent whispered, kissing the smooth forehead in front of her.

“It really was. I can honestly say you came inside me,” Kate retorted with a mischievous grin.

CJ's stomach flipped. “You are so frickin' hot, do you know that?”

“Right back at ya, baby,” the blonde winked.

They both chuckled, and after another long, luxurious kiss, they lay down. Wrapped around one another under the quilt, Kate thought about how she would cope while CJ was away. ‘ *Well, it's just another of life's learning experiences for us. And I know how good an agent she is... and how careful she is... stop worrying, Kate* ,’ she mentally chastised.

“Penny?” CJ slurred.

“Just thinking about the next few days,” Kate replied honestly.

“I really will be careful, Katie. Try not to worry too much. I'll text you every spare minute... promise.”

“I know.”

“Let's change the subject. Tell me all about the girls meeting Grandpa and Uncle Eddie?”

Kate giggled quietly and proceeded to give her wife the full run down of the day's events. They drifted off a short time later, each one worried about how safe the other would be over the coming days. It was going to feel like forever.

## Chapter 3

Four days had passed and CJ was grumpy as ever. She was pissed that she never even got to see her brother-in-law, having left home early that first morning and never being back since. And they hadn't gotten much further with the Timmons case since Alison was lying low, and it was irritating CJ no end. The agent was missing her wife more than ever, and Jamie, Ethan and Mikey had learned pretty quickly to say as little as possible to her when she started pacing the office... much like she was doing right now.

“Why isn't anything turning up? I mean, no missing person, no body... not that I want anyone getting killed... but I need to find Timmons. She broke out of custody... so she'd need clothes... oh, but there will be tons of thefts. We can't pin down which one would be her.”

The three other agents watched CJ as she continued to wear away a path on the floor. They had realized that when she started voicing her random musings, she wasn't talking to anybody in particular and that they should just let her get on with it.

The dark-haired woman tapped on her forehead with her finger. “I want to know where she's hiding out. I wonder if she acquired a car... oh, but she's smart, you know? Real smart... she wouldn't steal it from the town she's hiding in.” CJ looked up and stopped pacing. “Would she?” She looked at the expressionless faces around her.

Ethan opened his mouth. “Uhhh...”

Jamie stood up. “It's worth getting the list for later, DM. I'll do it,” she said, exiting the office with a fleeting smile.

CJ looked at the two young men, who were waiting for her to say something else. “At ease, guys. Just ignore me if I start again...” she smirked humorlessly.

“I'll uh... just get on with this then,” Mikey nodded, pointing to his desk.

Ethan bit his lips at the weird and sheepish expression on Agent Ryan's face. Mikey wasn't as accustomed to CJ's ‘ways’ as he was. “Coffee, CJ?”

“Hmm yeah, Ethan, thanks,” she replied distractedly, heading to her computer.

\* \* \* \* \*

A few hours later, their stolen car search was going nowhere. There were way too many auto thefts for today alone to figure out if one could be Alison. While Ethan and Mikey continued looking for markers and cross-referring missing persons with the locations of stolen vehicles, Jamie went over Alison's file again and CJ got her map out and pinned it to the wall. She marked where the prison bus had left from and the approximate spot where Alison was suspected to have escaped. CJ marked the point on the highway where it met the boundary of the Los Padres National Forest. She wondered if Timmons would head that way for cover, but then decided that Alison was more likely to be drawn to civilization... bars, sleazy hangouts and somewhere within easy reach of stolen goods.

The agent knew from the reports that Timmons had exited the bus about an hour after it left LA. She figured Santa Clarita or Lancaster would be where the killer was hiding out. Surely she wouldn't go all the way to Bakersfield? CJ didn't rule it out, thinking that Alison might want to revisit her last high. It was all a lottery at this point, until they got some clue as to where to look.

The tall woman stared at the wall a little longer before returning to her desk with a heavy sigh.

After another hour passed with no significant leaps forward, Jamie thought it was time for a break and dragged CJ out for a drive to Olympian Studios, since the raven-haired woman was beginning to crawl out of her skin. Agent Green decided a little Kate-time was required, as she knew her friend hadn't seen her wife for more than sixty hours and she couldn't go home. That might not seem like a long time for some couples but for CJ it was a lifetime, especially when she was stressed out.

After an argumentative trip across town - CJ not wanting to take time out of the investigation but secretly overjoyed that Jamie was forcing her to see Kate - they arrived at the studio gates. A few moments later, Jamie pulled the Bureau vehicle into the secured lot and switched off the engine.

“Go see your wife, DM. I'm gonna pop in and see Sam, then I'll come find you.” At CJ's ‘about to protest’ face, the blonde wagged a finger. “Go! We're safe in here. I'll be fine.”

CJ gave up resisting and got out of the car. She headed directly for Kate's studio and found out her wife was actually on a break. ‘*Score!*’ she thought to herself. Outside Kate's trailer, CJ's hands fidgeted and she hopped from foot to foot in anticipation. The door opened and the sight that greeted the agent made her heart pause and her eyes pop open wide. The shock settled over her but was quickly dissipated by the blonde.

“It's make-up!” Kate exclaimed, seeing the look on her wife's face.

The actress had a huge gash across her forehead and down her cheek. CJ let her panic go completely when the words sank in, and her shoulders drooped. She smiled sheepishly with relief and a little embarrassment. ‘*Well done, Cyn*,’ the agent thought. Kate pulled her mute wife inside and closed the door.

“To what do I owe the pleasure?” Kate murmured at CJ's ear as she kissed her spouse's neck then quickly devoured her mouth.

Of course, the tall woman couldn't respond in words. She craved Kate's touch and was too busy slipping her tongue into the sweet, wet cavern between her partner's lips. When they parted, CJ couldn't see straight and had to take a few deep breaths to focus. “God, I missed you,” she gasped.

“Oh, I know. I missed you too. And you picked a hell of a day for a visit, honey.”

“How so?” CJ asked with her arms still firmly round her wife's waist.

“Well, apart from me being ‘attacked’ on the show...” Kate said, putting air quotes around the word, “Alice's mother had a fall at home and she had to go help her...”

“Is she okay?”

“She seems fine. But it does mean that Dad, Tony and the girls came to see me after they picked Shannon up at school... I think they're in the cafeteria right now,” the actress smiled.

CJ leaned her forehead against Kate's. “I think Jamie's timing is impeccable. She made me come visit you.”

“Were you getting so hard to deal with?” the smaller woman teased.

The agent closed her eyes and shook her head gently, still leaning on her spouse. “No. She just knows I was missing you so bad and that it would alleviate the tension.”

“Well, I have another half hour free. How about some coffee and family time? The girls have been missing you too.”

“Sounds like the eye of my storm,” CJ said, finally standing upright.

Kate grinned and led her wife by the hand. When they entered the cafeteria, CJ spotted Jamie and Sam in the corner. She smiled, but it was nothing compared to the full, toothy, whole face smile that crossed her features when Shannon saw her and jumped up from her seat.

“CJ!”

“Hey, Squirt!” the agent squeaked, hugging her daughter.

Lucy slid off her chair and wrapped her little arms around the agent's thigh. The tall woman reached down to pick her up. "Hey Little One. I guess I have been missed after all, huh?"

"Oh yes, CJ. We all missed you," Eddie said, standing up to hug his daughter-in-law.

"Hey, Dad. It's good to finally see you. Sorry I can't be home right now."

"Oh sweetheart, Katie told me all about it. I think you're doing the right thing. Safety first!" he said emphatically.

"I'm glad you agree. But man, it's hard to stay away from my three girls," the agent winked.

Eddie grinned. "I know. But don't worry about them. We've been having fun making things for you."

"Oh really? What have you made?"

Shannon propped herself on CJ's free thigh when the tall woman sat down, and handed a half-sandwich to Lucy. "We made drawings and cookies and paintings," the girl said proudly.

"Sounds like you've been very busy."

"Well, I was at kindergarten but I was busy when I got home and Lucy made you pictures while I was out," Shannon responded while nodding.

"Very good. I can't wait to see them."

"When will you be home, CJ?"

"Soon, sweetie. I just have a lot of work to do first. I'll get home as soon as I can. I miss you all so much."

Kate arrived with the coffees and sat down opposite the agent. Lucy smiled at the actress' make-up, having had it explained to her earlier. CJ couldn't take her eyes off her wife and when Eddie asked her a question, she had to ask him to repeat it.

The man rolled his eyes. "I said... did you come here alone?"

"Oh... no..." the tall woman replied, still looking at the blonde, "...my colleague is just over there," she added, giving a vague nod over to Jamie.

"What are you like? Honestly CJ, it's only been four days," Eddie chuckled.

CJ broke out of her stare at Kate and cleared her throat. All she could think about at this moment - which seemed highly inappropriate - was having her wife's body wrapped around her. And Kate knew it, judging by the blush that was creeping up her face.

The actress gave an exaggerated cough. "So, distraction required. Have you guys made any progress with the case?"

"I don't really wanna talk about it here, honey. How about... uh... you guys tell me what's been happening at home?" the agent suggested, raising an eyebrow to her wife.

Kate bit her lips and smiled as Shannon began to tell the agent about something funny that Kamali had done yesterday. As Tony arrived and joined the group, CJ tried to relax and enjoy her small reprieve from work.

\* \* \* \* \*

Alison tried the long, blonde wig on her victim. Then she tried the black one. She scrunched her nose and mouth, and sighed. The young woman struggled against the tape that bound her then winced at the pain in her shoulder.

Timmons had to change her methods since her hand was broken. She lured the inebriated woman back to the little house she was holed up in and as soon as they got through the front door, she shot her... only to wound. She needed to perfect the torturous waiting for death. She wanted that FBI bitch to suffer for a while. She wanted the fear to shine from her eyes. Now all she had to decide was... which FBI agent she was going to target.

Timmons snorted. "Doesn't matter which one I get first. The other will follow anyway. Oh, it's going to be so much fun." Pulling the black wig from the woman's head, she hung it carefully on the back of an empty chair and picked up her knife. "Don't worry, honey. This won't take long," she sneered as her victim tried to scream. Alison's hand came down roughly over the woman's mouth.

The last thing the glazed, blue eyes saw, was the sight of pure evil looking back at her as the knife reached its destination.

\* \* \* \* \*

After another long day of no leads, Agent Green handed the mug of coffee to CJ who was lying back on the couch with her feet up on the coffee table. Staying with Jamie hadn't been so bad but the raven-haired woman was desperate to get home to her family. She let out a heavy sigh just as Jamie sat down next to her.

"How you coping?" the blonde asked.

"Coping? I'm fine."

"I just mean, with not going home and having so little to go on with Timmons. I know that it's frustrating me..."

CJ turned her body a little to face her friend. "Yeah. It is frustrating. Something will come up on Alison soon enough but I hate not being home."

"We all know how protective you get with your family, DM. I get it. But you don't need to be so protective of me. I have the same training as you and I'm not going to hide from this crazy woman. I have complete faith in us... we'll get her."

"I know, Jamie, but don't underestimate her. Timmons has deviated so far from the 'norm' when it comes to serial killers. And I don't like unpredictability," CJ stated plainly.

"Well, I don't either. You just don't need to mother me. I'm a big girl."

"Uh huh... just humor me, okay?"

"If I snap at you, don't kick my ass. I'm not used to someone looking out for me and I feel a little claustrophobic," Jamie warned.

"Noted, Penfold."

Both women slurped their coffees and thought about tomorrow. First thing in the morning, they had a meeting with their team, the Assistant Director, another four agents who were assisting them and their Deputy Director, Julius Mitchell. Only Mark had met the Deputy Director so far. He had come to the job from another state after DD Francis

was killed. Now that their Specialist Unit was permanent, they were under his control. CJ was curious about the man. She'd heard he was a fair, straightforward, no-messing kind of guy who had commendations from many years of service.

“Oh hey, it was nice to see the kids at the studios, huh?” Jamie said, breaking CJ from her musings.

“Yeah,” the agent said dreamily. “They're such sweethearts.”

“Has Lucy spoken yet?”

“Nah, not yet. I'm sure it will be soon though. She is really watching us every time we speak and her little mouth forms all kinds of shapes. And she understands everything we say. I guess she will play catch-up pretty fast once she starts,” CJ rambled.

“Aww, look at you... all Mommy-like and soft-centered,” the blonde teased. That earned her a playful kick on the ankle and she grinned. “Okay, I'm gonna hit the hay. If you need anything, gimme a shout, DM.”

“Sure thing, Penfold. Sweet dreams.”

After Jamie went to bed, CJ sat for a while longer, missing her wife like crazy. An idea formed in her mind and she smirked mischievously to herself. She jumped in the shower real quick before heading to her little guestroom. Closing the door, she set up her clothes for tomorrow, took off her robe and slipped into a tiny tank top with nothing but spaghetti straps holding up the thin material. A pair of soft cotton matching boxers covered her voluptuous buttocks and she crawled into bed with her cell phone. Still grinning, she dialed Kate's cell, knowing her wife would have it next to her at all times.

The agent began rubbing her hand over her belly while she waited for her spouse to pick up. After seven rings, she started to think her plan was going to backfire. Finally, the actress answered the phone.

“*Hey, honey,*” came Kate's loving tones across the line.

CJ shut her eyes and breathed deep. “Hey, you. What took ya so long?”

“*I was in the ensuite. When ya gotta pee, ya gotta pee.*”

CJ chuckled. “That's true, my darling. How was today?”

“*Well, after this hot FBI agent came to see me at work, I did a few more hours then went home to our precious children. How about you... any breaks in the case yet?*”

“No... not yet. How are the kids?”

“*Missing you like crazy... and so am I,*” Kate husked.

“I miss you all so much. So who's this hot FBI agent, huh? Should I be worried?” CJ smirked, eyebrow raised.

“*Har-dee-har-har.*”

“Soooo, what are you wearing?”

“*Why do you wanna know, Agent?*”

“Because I want to do things to you.”

“ *Well, it's a shame you're not here... although, I am in bed ,*” the actress teased.

“Good. Are you going to do what I tell you?” the tall woman asked, hearing her wife's breathing quicken.

“ *I might...*”

“No, no, no. There's no ‘might’ about it. Are you going to do what I tell you, Mrs. Carson?”

A deep breath issued through the phone. “ *Yes...*”

“That's more like it. Now... use your free hand to touch your stomach...” CJ began.

After making Kate trail her hand all over her body - with CJ doing the same to herself - both agent and actress were incredibly aroused and beginning to sweat a little.

The taller woman continued her instruction, making Kate whimper breathlessly. “Put your finger in your mouth and wet it... taste yourself. Now put it back on your clit. Imagine my tongue... licking you, tasting you...” CJ gasped, seeing the image in her mind and almost smelling Kate as she imagined doing these things to her.

The actress was breathing heavily through the phone. “ *I'm so... turned on...*”

“Yeah. Now, slide your fingertip down... and sink it inside yourself... just a little...”

“ *Oh God ...*”

“I'm doing the same, you know... touching my throbbing clit, imagining you're doing it to me. So you just keep imagining my mouth on you... the tip of my tongue, flicking, swirling over you... your finger is my tongue, baby. And I'm gonna suck on you real soon... when you come in my mouth...” the agent purred deeply. She was touching herself harder now, and knew that when she heard Kate come, she would be right there with her.

“ *Damn it, Ciara... I want you here... I'm gonna come ...*”

“Yeah, keep touching your clit... I want to hear you moan... now... listen to me... it's time for my tongue to go deep inside you...” CJ paused to try and calm her racing heart. “Do it now...”

Kate moaned through the connection and as her orgasm began to burn, she almost dropped the phone. “ *Yes... now baby, yes ...*”

CJ let herself go, her hand rubbing her hardened ridge faster with every breath Kate took. “I'm coming... with you...”

“ *Oh! Yessss ...*”

CJ climaxed with her wife. It ended quite abruptly as the need to be with her spouse took over. “Oh God... I want to hold you... right now,” she said, trying not to get emotional.

“ *I... know. I want you too ,*” Kate said, not feeling anywhere near as satisfied as she would be with CJ. “ *Get home quick... please .*”

“I will, baby. I love you.”

“*Love you too .*” After a few moments of silence - both women bringing their breathing back to normal - Kate swallowed back her emotion. “*Well, that was good... as good as it can be without you here. You okay, honey?*”

“Yeah. I promise I'll work as hard as I can, and get home to you soon. I miss you all. This really sucks.”

“*I know, CJ, and as much as I thought it was a lousy idea at first, I know now that you're doing the right thing... and for the right reasons. Our home is our haven and it's good that it stays that way and feels safe. Just be very careful. You're very precious to us ,*” Kate begged.

“I promise. And you've no idea how much better that makes me feel.”

“*What?*”

“That you're with me on this whole ‘not taking a chance’ thing.”

Kate sighed. “*Honey, I was with you from the start. It seemed a little extreme and I just didn't like it much... still don't... but I realize it's the best thing to do .*”

“Good. Nothing is extreme to me when it comes to my family's safety, honey.”

“*I know .*”

After a few more words of reassurance and love, CJ hung up the phone and felt her heart lurch. ‘*After all this time, how can I still miss her this much? I can't believe how much I need and want her ,*’ the agent mused. Of course, those thoughts made her think about why she was doing this in the first place. If anyone ever hurt her family, she wondered if she would be inclined to commit homicide herself. She shook away those thoughts and replayed the phone call in her mind. Hearing Kate's voice in her head calmed her, and she decided to try and catch a few hours sleep.

## Chapter 4

Another three, slow, uneventful days passed and it was a sunny afternoon when CJ and Jamie headed to LAPD headquarters to pick up some new files from Danny. The raven-haired agent had been on edge all day and Jamie thought it would be good to get out the office. Little did she know that Timmons had been watching them and had tailed them sporadically over the past few days in two different cars. The killer needed them to split up, but they just wouldn't separate. As time progressed, Alison was getting more and more desperate. She sat in the driver's seat with her dark red wig on... waiting. If she didn't get her chance soon, she'd have to go away and find another ‘replacement’ to torture and kill.

Inside the building, the two agents found Danny and gave the files a quick glance over. These specific missing persons were all female, tall, slim and quite young; two in their late twenties and one in her thirties. They went missing from different places between LA and Bakersfield. CJ rubbed her head fretfully as Jamie patted herself down, searching her pockets for something.

“What's up, Agent Green?”

“Damn, I think I left my phone in the car. I'll be right back.”

“Wait! We won't be long here. Just need Danny to check the distinguishing marks on this latest one then we'll be gone,” CJ said with a frown.

Jamie continued to search. “Yeah but I just realized the time and Sam expected me to call her ten minutes ago. She'll be worried like crazy. Be right back.”

CJ opened her mouth to protest but Jamie was gone. “Damn it,” the tall agent muttered. She cursed herself for being so over-protective and edgy, and shaking her head, she turned around to flick through one of the files.

Danny walked back into the room and smiled at her. “The latest one doesn't have any scars or anything. The only one with any distinguishing marks was from the other day. This Dawson girl has a tattoo...” he began.

\* \* \* \* \*

Jamie scanned the street and decided it was clear, not seeing the inconspicuous figure hiding in the back seat of an old, beat-up Mazda. She walked across to the sedan and leaned inside to find her cell phone. She smiled as she finally found it in the foot well and noted a text message from her beloved Sam... and four missed calls. Sam and Jamie were on the same setup as CJ and Kate, thinking it better to limit Jamie's contact with loved ones until this horrible business was over. It was pretty tough on them all.

Uncurling her slim frame from the car, she stretched out her back, intent on reading the message once she got inside the building. She had just pushed the phone into her inside jacket pocket when a painful stinging sensation bolted straight through her shoulder blade. Jamie was under no illusions; she had been shot before and knew what it felt like. With the bullet going through her right side, she couldn't reach for her gun. An instant sweat appeared on her brow and a wave of nausea invaded her senses - accompanied by a faint whiff of an unfamiliar perfume - before she crumpled ungracefully to the ground. She wasn't unconscious just yet, and felt herself being dragged only a short distance along the sidewalk behind the parked vehicles. She tried to scream out but it seemed to catch in her throat and vocalize as a croaked gurgle. Timmons pulled her into the back seat of a car and the nausea made Jamie throw up in her mouth. She spat it onto the rear foot well before beginning to phase in and out of consciousness.

Not five minutes later, CJ exited the LAPD office cursing herself - and Jamie, for going out on her own - and strolled purposefully across the small patch of grass to their parking bay, expecting to find the blonde apologizing to Sam on the phone. When she saw the empty car, her gut heaved. Her blue eyes searched erratically around the area. Pulling the car door open, she looked around the inside of the vehicle and when she slammed the door shut once more, she examined the sidewalk. Two small spots of blood were all she found. “Fuck!”

\* \* \* \* \*

It was late afternoon when Eddie Senior, Tony and the children got home from shopping. Eddie had called Jeffrey and told him he would be staying a little longer to help out. His partner was missing him but said everything was under control at their restaurant in New York City, making the older man feel more relaxed about his extended visit.

Tony made a quick call to Alice to check up on her, but got her machine and left a message telling her he would call back tomorrow. He was such a caring young man and Eddie was impressed with his daughter's choice of employees.

As the girls settled down, Eddie decided to put his chef hat on and cook them dinner. Tony took the dog out for a walk and Lucy decided she wanted to go too, tugging on the driver's sleeve as he left. Shannon had other plans. She wanted to talk to Eddie about all sorts of things.

Climbing up onto the tall barstool, she swung it round to face the counter. “Can I help?” she asked the tall, kind man, who had begun to prepare dinner.

“Of course you can, sweetheart. Let's see... ooh, I'm going to make Banana Splits for dessert so you could start by peeling five bananas, then put them on this plate,” he smiled as he set the necessary equipment in front of his granddaughter. “This knife is blunt and you can slice the banana for me too, if you want.”

“Yes. I'll be careful. How do I cut them?”

“You mean, what way? Well, let's just have chunks. That's easier and it still tastes the same, right?” he replied, showing her one or two cuts.

Shannon nodded. “Yes. How long are you staying with us?”

Eddie blinked but he was getting used to the inquisitive girl's topic changes. “Well, honey, I'll be here for another few days then I have to go home again.”

“Do you live far away?”

“Yes, I live in New York. I have to go on a plane to get home.”

“Do you have a wife?”

Eddie smirked and turned to the girl, who waited expectantly for the answer. He walked over and leaned on the counter with his elbows. “I have a husband,” he said with a smile.

“Oh.” Shannon thought about it for a moment. “So... sometimes ladies can have a wife, like CJ and Kate... and sometimes a man can have a husband?”

“Yep. And you know what the most important thing is?”

“What?”

“That they love each other very much. As long as two people love each other, it doesn't matter if they're with a man or a woman.”

“I know,” the girl said, starting to peel her third banana. “CJ and Kate love each other a lot and they laugh a lot too. They're happy.”

“Isn't that wonderful?” Eddie said, seeing why his daughters loved these kids so much.

“Yes!” Shannon exclaimed. “So... you're Kate's Daddy?”

“Of course, honey,” the man replied, getting back to his preparations.

“But CJ calls you Dad too.”

“That's right. I love CJ a lot and when she met Kate, I could see how happy they were. I like that she calls me Dad,” Eddie said, chopping some herbs.

Shannon was silent for a few moments. “I think I should call CJ Mommy.”

“Is that what you want to do?”

“Yes. But I have two Mommies now. I need to think of a name for Kate too. I can't call her Mommy or we would get mixed up,” the girl chuckled.

“That's very true. Can you imagine? You'd say Mommy and they would both answer and get all confused. Oh!”

Eddie chuckled and Shannon began to laugh louder. Once they had giggled themselves out, she returned to her task and continued to keep Eddie very busy until Tony and Lucy came back with an exhausted dog. They had played vigorously in the back yard, since the agent outside wouldn't let them go for a walk. Tony accepted the restrictions easily, but wondered how much longer Kate would cope with them.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was only forty minutes after Green had gone missing and already CJ had the street cordoned off and cops crawling over every inch of it. The blood spots and Bureau sedan were being examined and a search of the surrounding area was carried out. CJ had thought about calling Jamie, thinking that perhaps the agent had just gotten distracted. But she knew in her heart that her colleague would not do that and also, if Timmons *did* have her friend, there was no way CJ would call and perhaps blow Jamie's chance at using her phone later.

She ground her teeth as she entered the LAPD office once more, intent of checking the street cameras around the precinct. After a rather heated discussion with Lieutenant Johnson - as he tried to explain to an agitated CJ that the street cameras were controlled in another building downtown - he took her to the security room where they viewed the cameras that were attached to the LAPD building. Due to the work being done on the road outside, most vehicles could be seen passing the precinct, but there was no way of identifying which one was significant, if any.

CJ scratched her head in frustration. “Are there any other cameras around-“

“Look!” Johnson interrupted. “Simpson, rewind that,” he said to the cop sitting in front of them. When the man had done as he asked, he pointed to the screen. “Is that her?”

“Damn it! Yes,” CJ muttered, watching a woman with an obvious wig on, walking slightly crookedly along the sidewalk. But what made CJ feel ill, was the agent she was trailing along behind her, only occasionally visible between parked cars. CJ wanted to cry but she kept her level head, as always. “I need that footage seized... wait, does it show what car she went to?”

“Not all of it, Ma'am,” Simpson said.

CJ watched the screen, seeing Timmons' elbow moving at the edge of the picture as she bundled Agent Green into the back seat of a red Mazda. The plate was almost readable from this angle. “Gotcha! Have that license plate enlarged and enhanced. I want to know what it is and where it was stolen from,” she barked.

The Lieutenant just nodded but the cop didn't like her tone much. However, he knew his job and with a grunt, he got on with the task while CJ paced the floor impatiently and spoke with her boss on her cell phone.

\* \* \* \* \*

As Agent Carson waited for more details to come through, she felt her phone vibrate inside her suit. With a heavy sigh, she fished it out, only to discover it was Kate asking how her day was going. CJ really, really needed to hear her wife's voice but couldn't really take the time out of the investigation. She looked at all the cops, who were running around or on the phone, every one of them going about their tasks with haste. Satisfied that she was just waiting for the vehicle information, she decided to call her wife very quickly since she was not going to be available now until Jamie was found.

As the phone was ringing, her mind was still running around with any and every Timmons scenario. She was slightly distracted when her call was answered.

“ *CJ?* ”

“Oh... sorry, Katie. Hi,” the agent said, shaking her head.

“ *What's happening, honey?* ”

“Oh, I'm just gonna be real busy for the foreseeable future so I thought I'd give you a quick call. What are you doing?”

“ *I just got home .* ”

“But it's only...” CJ looked at her watch and her eyes popped open wide at the time it displayed. “Wow, sorry, I thought it was earlier. How are things at home then?” she asked, wanting to hear something normal.

“ *Well, like I said, I just got in. Dad and Shannon made a wonderful dinner and we're about to sit down and eat it. I wish you were here ,* ” Kate sighed.

“I know. I'm sorry-“

“ *Don't apologize, CJ. It can't be helped. Now can you tell me what's wrong ?* ”

“What do you mean?” the agent asked, hearing Kate's irritation and knowing her wife could sense her every mood.

“ *Honey, I can hear the stress in your voice. Please just tell me?* ”

CJ blew out a gust of breath. “Jamie is missing... but please don't call Sam. Give me a chance to find her first.”

“ *Oh God. What happened? And when ?* ”

“Katie, I can't talk right now. I'll tell you everything when I get home. I have to go find her, okay?”

“ *CJ, please be careful. I know you can't tell me everything but if Jamie is missing then that means you could-* ”

“Katie, don't! I'll be very careful. I'll call you when I can. I love you.”

“ *Damn... I love you too.* ”

“I gotta go. Bye, honey.”

“ *Bye .* ”

CJ could hear the combination of panic and defeat in Kate's voice, and it killed her. She wanted to go home right now but she couldn't. The agent shut out her own needs and wants and focused on finding her Penfold... and Timmons.

\* \* \* \* \*

Kate paced the floor in the living area for a few moments, trying to get her anxiety under control before entering the kitchen and facing her loved ones. Looking to the ceiling and taking a few deep breaths, she swallowed her fears and headed in to eat dinner.

Eddie spotted the change in his daughter immediately. "Everything okay, Katie?"

The actress smiled. "Yes, Dad." She gestured to the girls, who were tucking in to their meal. "I'll talk to you about it later," she added, eyebrow raised.

"No problem, sweetheart." The loving man was very aware that everything was not okay but it wasn't for his granddaughters to hear, so he would have to wait.

\* \* \* \* \*

A couple of hours later, Special Agent Jamie Green was dragged unceremoniously from a car into a small house. With her hands bound behind her back, she took in as much detail as she could on her short journey. The road signs and street seemed familiar. She could see them over the fence of the backyard. She racked her brain trying to put the pieces together while she was pulled through the back door of the house, which from the outside, could have been mistaken for a very under-maintained but habitable home. But inside was a different story. It was derelict and had been vacant for many years. Everything had taken on copious layers of gray dust - including the formerly white sheets that covered some furniture - and it smelled very musty. But what worried Jamie was the other smell... a smell she'd experienced too many times before. The smell of death invaded her nostrils and for some reason, it sparked something in her mind. Recalling everything outside and the few snippets she had viewed from the car, she realized she was back in Baker Street... in Bakersfield. She remembered driving around this area in the Bureau van. ' *We're not that far from the damn nightclub. Shit!*' she thought angrily.

The blonde agent was pushed through another door and into the basement. She was shocked to find that Alison slammed the door behind her, leaving her alone for a few precious moments. She quickly navigated her way into the room, looking for something to cut the bindings with. The fragmented light from a barricaded window, high up in the wall, gave her the necessary illumination to see parts of the room. The rest of the space was filled with shadows. The stench was stronger now and Jamie's mind reeled at what hid in the dark recesses but a huge, old water tank that was positioned against the wall distracted her. But what was more important was the ragged piece of metal sticking out of its side. Jamie quickly went to it and began filing away the thick tape that covered her wrists, ignoring the hot pain in her shoulder, which was progressively becoming numb.

It wasn't long before her hands were free and she searched her body to see what Alison had taken. No surprise that her gun was gone; that would be the first thing for the killer to remove. But she was elated to find her cell phone was still firmly in place, against her breast. She fished it out of the pocket, praying it had a signal. Listening to heavy footsteps for a couple of seconds, she determined that Timmons was still upstairs and when she saw one bar of service on her phone, she hit the speed dial for CJ. This was her only chance.

After the phone rang a couple of times, the basement door flew open and Alison stormed down the steps. Jamie had to think fast. If she told CJ where they were, Timmons would just take her someplace else... or kill her now. As the tall woman came towards her in a rage at seeing the phone - never mind the fact that Jamie had freed herself so quickly - the agent thought of a clue. It was vague but she had no time left... and Alison had her gun. She screamed out her cryptic message just after Timmons punched her across the face, sending the phone flying across the room. Jamie was sure she heard it smash, but any doubt was erased when Alison moved to stomp her foot over it.

Still pointing the weapon at the agent, Alison growled angrily. "What the hell did you just do? Sit in that chair right now and shut that trap of yours!"

Jamie debated whether or not to follow her orders, but when the woman fired a shot into the wall about a foot from where she stood, she complied. Alison bound her to the rough wood with a set of handcuffs used around each wrist, locked onto the arms of the chair. Then she bound her ankles so tightly to each chair leg that the blonde thought her circulation might be cut off. Jamie tried to ignore the fear that was beginning to seep through her veins and silently prayed that CJ had somehow got her message.

\* \* \* \* \*

Meanwhile...

CJ had everything done that she could think of at the LAPD office. They had established the license plate number of the red car and discovered it had been reported stolen in West Hollywood. Two agents had gone to see the owner. The raven-haired woman had a gut feeling that Alison wasn't in that area. The killer wouldn't have stolen a car then holed up nearby... she wasn't that stupid. CJ began to worry about how long Jamie had left, and her stomach churned unpleasantly at the thought of losing her friend.

Agent Matthews arrived to collect his colleague and take her back to their office. "You okay, Agent Carson?" Ethan asked as the tall woman got into the car.

"No. I think I should just-" CJ was interrupted by her cell phone. She whipped it from her pocket, thinking it might be Mark, but her heart jumped into her throat when she saw 'Penfold calling' on the display. Signaling to Ethan and hitting the speaker phone button, she answered it immediately... but cautiously. "Hello?" All she heard on the other end of the line was an angry growl and a thud, which sounded like the phone being hit by something. Then she heard a partial, screamed word - 'Sh--lock!' The line went dead and CJ frowned, her face twisted with worry. It was Jamie... it had to be.

"That was Jamie's voice," Ethan confirmed.

"Yes. And she sounds terrified. Shit!" CJ decided getting angry was better than getting upset so she ground her teeth together and thought of Alison, not her friend.

"Did you understand what she said?" the young man asked.

"It was a little broken but I'm workin' on it," CJ replied through clenched jaws.

Ethan switched on the emergency lights and shot through the traffic, heading towards the Bureau. He was sure CJ would figure it out and she'd want to do her usual pacing the office while she did it. Mark had called them in for a full briefing anyway. And the young man knew their time was running out.

As CJ sat in the passenger seat of the sedan, she replayed the call over and over in her mind. 'Shit? Lock? Sh-lock... Sherlock?' she silently mused. Tapping her finger on her nose, she narrowed her eyes and turned to Matthews. "Ethan... I think she said 'Sherlock'."

"Sherlock? Like, no shit Sherlock... or?"

"Don't know yet. I'm thinking."

Agent Matthews concentrated on the road as various vehicles moved out of his path. He knew if CJ needed to voice her thoughts, she would. Until then, he remained silent, his admiration and respect for the agent clearly evident. It was not long before they were rushing through the corridor of the FBI building, towards Mark's office.

\* \* \* \* \*

As they entered Mark's office, CJ took in the tall, dark-skinned and very handsome man who was casually leaning on a filing cabinet. She quickly surmised that this was DD Julius Mitchell. They hadn't been able to have their meeting the other morning due to various things cropping up, as they always did in the FBI. Now, the tall woman approached Mark's desk with Ethan standing beside her. She glanced at Mitchell again, thinking he would surely want an immediate update since one of his agents was missing.

Mark looked back and forth between all three and decided he should do the introductions. "Agents Carson and Matthews, this is Deputy Director Mitchell."

CJ nodded to the man, who seemed to be quite young to be a Deputy already. His skin was almost as dark as his deep brown eyes that held a fierceness and kindness at the same time. He was well muscled, well dressed and well groomed. CJ blinked to break her thoughts and actually talk. "It's good to meet you, Sir."

Ethan found his voice and said the same thing. The Deputy Director came over to Mark's desk and propped himself on the edge of it.

He nodded to Agent Matthews and then looked to the tall raven-haired agent. "Agent Carson, I've been reading a lot about you. How is the case coming along?"

For some reason, CJ felt like she was being scrutinized... and it made her a little uncomfortable. "It's frustrating so far, Sir. We're doing our best to track down the killer and find our agent."

Julius nodded. "Yes... I read about Timmons too. She's quite a woman, and not in a good way. What's your gut feeling on her whereabouts?"

CJ knew that Mark and the DD had been talking about her. "I'd say she would take Agent Green out of town. She might want to relive some previous high, but that could be fulfilled by simply taking this particular victim. If you've read the file, you'll know why, Sir. I want to find her as badly as you all do."

"Oh, I know, Agent Carson. And according to the AD here, we'll go with whatever you come up with. I'm willing to trust him on that but I expect to see some progress soon," the burly man said, eyeing CJ as her cheek twitched... no doubt with anger.

"Yes, Sir," she said briskly.

When Mitchell didn't say anything else, Mark proceeded to obtain his update from both Ethan and CJ before they were dismissed.

\* \* \* \* \*

After the distraction of the briefing, CJ paced the floor, then sat down... then paced again. They had only been back in their own office for around five minutes and she was obsessing over why Jamie shouted Sherlock.

"Why would Penfold shout 'Sherlock'?" she pondered aloud, scratching through her dark hair. "Sherlock... Holmes? Sherlock Holmes, Penfold? Seriously?" CJ frowned for a few seconds, wondering how that could be a clue and why Jamie would think she would get it... until a light bulb popped on in her head. "Oh my God! Penfold... Dangermouse... Sherlock. Ethan! Let me see the map!"

Agent Matthews jumped up from his desk and grabbed the piece of folded paper the tall woman was pointing at. "Here, CJ. What were you talking about?"

"You know how I call Jamie Penfold?" CJ said as she straightened out the map.

“Yeah...”

“Well, it's from an old British cartoon. She calls me DM... Dangermouse. Anyway, Sherlock Holmes is what I think she was shouting about.”

“And?”

“Dangermouse and Penfold lived under a mail box on Baker Street... and Sherlock Holmes lived on Baker Street... there!” she said, pointing to the map.

“You think she's back in Bakersfield?” the young man asked.

“Yes. And it wouldn't surprise me if Alison chose where she had been caught to store her new victims. I know there are other Baker Streets but I have a strong hunch about this. C'mon... we need to see Mark.”

About twenty minutes later, two FBI fleet sedans flew up the highway. Mark was more than willing to go on CJ's gut feeling. *More* than willing. Her track record was flawless. He just hoped it would continue to stay that way and he could report back to his superior with good news... and with a hint of the pride he held for his team.

\* \* \* \* \*

As the evening settled over the ranch house, Kate and her Dad sat on the back porch watching the girls playing with Kamali in the yard. The sun was low in the sky and veiled in a hazy mist.

“Beautiful view from here, Katie,” Eddie said, taking a sip of his tea.

“It really is. I'm so glad we decided to live out of town,” the actress replied distractedly.

Eddie slipped an arm around his daughter's shoulder. “Want to talk about it, sweetheart?”

“Oh Dad, I don't know. Its CJ's work, you know? I can't really say much but I do know she is very stressed out about something and I worry about her when she's in danger like she is right now. I get the feeling she's about to go into battle and it scares me when I'm not there... but when am I ever, right?”

“Oh honey, she's a tough and clever girl. She'll be home soon. I'm sure of it. And you *were* there once or twice, remember? And it didn't get any easier.”

Kate turned to her father. “That's true, but at least I knew what was going on. Right now she has a dangerous killer on the loose and I won't know how she's doing or if she's all right until she calls again... *if* she calls again,” the blonde said, feeling tears sting the back of her eyes.

“Hey! None of that talk. My daughter-in-law *will* be home later. Never think like that, Katie,” the man said sternly.

“I know. Sorry. I don't usually think like that but... oh, I don't know.” Kate wanted to tell her father why she was so worried and she knew he wouldn't repeat a word of it. “Dad... her colleague has gone missing. I know she thinks the killer has taken her. But what scares me now, is that this particular killer was caught by them both... CJ *and* her friend. If she has come after one, she may want the other too. Maybe I'm just being over-sensitive.”

Eddie squeezed the actress tighter. “CJ will be home, honey,” he said quietly.

Kate put her hand on top of her Dad's and nodded. The phone began to ring inside the house and she got up to go answer it.

“Hello?”

“*Kate? I didn't know who to call ,*” said a frantic voice across the line.

“Sam?”

“*Yes. Do you know where Jamie is?*”

Kate closed her eyes at how terrified her friend sounded. “I really don't, Sam. Why are you worried?”

“*She wasn't answering her phone. And now it doesn't even ring!*”

“Are you at home?”

“*Yes, I just got here and I'm pulling my hair out. It's bad enough I haven't seen her for more than ten minutes in five days, but now her cell is dead. It's not even ringing!*” the redhead repeated. “*Kate, if you know something, you need to tell me!*”

Sam sounded quite agitated and very scared. Kate took a breath and decided it would be best if the producer was here with her. “Sam, can you please calm down a little and drive over here? Bring an overnight bag and just come over here... please?” she pleaded.

“*And you'll tell me everything you know, right?*”

“Well, I can't-“

“*You'll tell me everything you know, Kate !*” Sam repeated, louder.

“Yes,” Kate submitted. “Just get here please.”

“*I'm leaving now .*”

The line cut off and Kate blew out a frustrated breath. CJ had asked her not to tell Sam, but how could she not? If it were the other way around, Kate would be crazed with worry and would most likely want to kill Sam if she didn't tell her what she knew. ‘*Ugh. I'll just have to take the heat from CJ when she gets home ,*’ Kate thought.

## Chapter 5

“Why are you holding me here? It's not like you to wait around,” Jamie said, trying her very best to hide her fear.

Alison snarled. “Well, it's not like me to only kill women either. You know I really should thank Agent Carson for pointing that little detail out. I'll leave her a note... after I kill you. Although... hmmm, maybe I'll just kill her too... I mean, you gave her a little clue, didn't you? She'll most likely be here soon. But not soon enough.”

Jamie strained against her bindings and clenched her jaws together when they didn't budge. “Why did you come after me?” she asked, wanting to stall as much as possible.

“Why not? And we've met twice already... third time will be a charm, I'm sure. After you stuck your gun in my face and told me I should pay for what I've done, I figured I owed you, Blondie. Are you afraid?”

“Of dying? No,” Jamie lied.

Alison walked to the darkened corner of the basement. Agent Green didn't want to imagine what was over there, but going by the pungent and very familiar odor, she suspected there were bodies. It turned her stomach and she gulped for air. The tall, evil woman strolled back towards the blonde with something in her hands. Jamie suddenly held her breath in horror as she realized she was holding pieces of skin, cut in the shape of hearts. ‘ *Oh God!* ’

“Some trophies,” Timmons said proudly. “See... I've been busy since I escaped, even with a broken hand. These women were so easy and stupid... much like you when you were younger, I expect...” Jamie flinched but Alison didn't waver. “Promise them an orgasm and they follow like lambs to the slaughter. And slaughtered, they were. It's even easier having a house to bring them back to... and so much fun to see the fear in their eyes before they die. Again, your Agent Carson was right... what a feeling of power it is. I never really noticed it before. I do hope she comes looking for you. I'd like to see that fear in *her* eyes when I kill her. But I'll enjoy you first.”

Jamie froze as the killer leaned down towards her and pulled the front of her shirt open to reveal the agent's scarred flesh. She could feel the tears stinging the back of her fear-filled brown eyes but she'd be damned if she would let Timmons see them.

“Well, look at that. I really went to town on you, didn't I?”

“Why don't you just fucking kill me?” Jamie spat.

Alison suddenly grabbed the agent's face so roughly that Jamie thought the woman's nails would burst through her cheeks. Timmons' voice was gravelly as she spoke in a loud whisper. “I want you to *suffer*. I suffer, so why not you? But don't worry, Agent, I'll put an end to *your* suffering soon. And I'll cut a heart from your ugly marked skin and give it to your nice friend, Agent Carson, just before she dies. She'll like that, I'm sure.” She squeezed Jamie's face harder. “Want to see how you'll look once I'm done?”

The killer let go and walked away from the terrified agent, switching on a small light next to a bed in the darkened corner. Jamie let out a muffled cry of horror at the pile of female bodies on the bed, bloody heart shapes and stab wounds clearly visible. Her eyes widened as one of the women's hands twitched and she wondered if Alison knew they weren't all completely dead.

Alison turned on her heels to see a tear fall from the blonde's eye. “Awww, now you're scared. That's more like it.” She stalked toward Jamie again, taking her gun from her pocket. “Let me see those tears. I don't think you cried the last time... I can't really remember. You were just one of many,” she added cruelly, leaning down to clamp Jamie's wrists even harder against the arms of the wooden chair, causing the handcuffs to press painfully into her wrist bones. The gun hung from Alison's finger carelessly and Jamie wished she would accidentally shoot herself. No such luck and the blonde looked up to see the killer with a shit-eating grin on her face.

“Just do it... just kill me, you bitch!”

“I'll just let you stew for a while longer. I'm enjoying this way too much. The feeling of power is intoxicating. I'll leave you to think over what a slut you were. And here... you can have this heart. Then when you're dead I'll cut around it.” Timmons placed one of the pieces of bloody skin onto Jamie's scarred breast and the agent struggled violently against her bindings once more. “Oh no, no, no...” The tall woman blindsided the blonde, pistol-whipping the side of her face. “No more struggling. I'm off to get my knife... but I'll be back,” she added with a sickly laugh.

As Alison left the basement, Jamie let more tears fall while trying not to throw up at the thought of the dead skin touching her own. She could smell it and the sticky feeling on her tender breast was making her ill at the thought. She scanned the room, trying to find anything she could use to help her break free but there didn't seem to be anything. She tried to topple the chair, hoping she could smash it, but Timmons had bolted it to the floor. ‘ *Goddamn it!* ’ she growled to herself. She glanced at the bodies again and her stomach churned violently at the way they had

been tossed carelessly aside after their deaths. One woman still had her eyes open and Jamie vaguely wondered what the last thing she saw was, before succumbing to Alison's torture. The one that had moved earlier had her eyes closed and she was partially covered by another body. It was a hideous and heartbreaking sight.

Agent Green had never felt such fear and thought that she was indeed going to die today... unless CJ could figure out her random clue and get to her on time . 'Oh please, DM, please,' she silently begged.

\* \* \* \* \*

Kate watched as Sam's car left a spiraling dust trail as it approached the house. She went to open the front door, knowing that this would take some major calming down techniques. Although, she had no idea how she was going to do it.

The producer practically leapt from the vehicle and ran up the front steps. "Hi Kate," she said, rather abruptly.

The blonde knew it was just fear and nerves making her friend seem cold and angry. She sighed. "Hey. Let's go into the study."

But before they could talk, Shannon came skipping through to see who was at the door. "Hello, Sam," she chirped.

"Hi, Shannon."

Eddie bustled out of the living room to collect his stray granddaughter. "Oh hello, Sam. I'll just take Shannon back through with me... let you girls talk."

"Thanks, Dad. We won't be long."

"Nice to see you, Mr. Marshall," the redhead said sullenly.

"You too, dear. And please call me Eddie," he smiled.

As the man took Shannon away, Kate put her hand on Sam's back and guided her into the study, closing the door behind them. The actress poured her friend a stiff drink and sat down beside her on the couch. Once the producer had taken a couple of gulps, Kate spoke. "Okay. Here's what I know so far. CJ is out looking for Jamie..." At Sam's stricken expression, the actress took her hand and held it tight. "She'll find her, Sam. I know she will."

"Where... I mean, where did she...?" the redhead stuttered.

"She went missing outside the LAPD offices. You need to stay here until it's over."

"I need to get out there and find her..."

"Sam, that's not going to happen. Let CJ and the FBI agents do their job. They'll find her."

The producer stood up and yanked her hand away from Kate. "And what if they don't find her in time. They'll just bring back a body. Oh God, I love her so much... this can't be happening," Sam sobbed into her hands.

Kate stood and grabbed her friend, pulling her into a heartfelt hug. Sam continued to cry and the blonde's heart was aching for her friend. She was so worried about her wife and tried to put herself in Sam's shoes. It would be

horrifying to think of CJ out there captured by a maniac. She squeezed Sam tighter. “Shhh... it's gonna be okay. Please try and remember she has the best agents looking for her.”

“I... know. But I... oh God...”

Another bout of cries followed and Kate decided talking was no use. She just held the producer and whispered the occasional word of comfort into her ear.

A while later, Sam composed herself and they went into the kitchen to make some tea. Eddie offered to put the kids to bed but Kate wanted to bathe them first and headed upstairs, leaving her father to use his loving, paternal influence on a very emotional Sam.

\* \* \* \* \*

As dusk fast approached, the four FBI agents arrived at the rendezvous point in their unmarked Bureau sedan. The cops showed them which house was their target and the Chief inconspicuously arranged his SWAT team.

Earlier, the Bureau had called ahead to the Bakersfield PD and the undercover cops had posed as preachers spreading the word of God. After hearing from a neighbor that the next house was suddenly occupied and incessantly knocking on its door, they had come across a very tall woman inside the house, which should have been vacant. She had a scarf covering most of her face, which in itself seemed strange and when they had caught a glimpse inside the house, there was no mistaking the smell and look of a derelict home. A short time later, they found a stolen car concealed in the backyard and that gave them enough ammo to call the FBI to attend immediately. Their instruction had been specific; ‘ *Find the target and hold position - call the SSHU* ’. But the Specialist Serial Homicide Unit had already been on their way.

Now, they were ready to move. CJ and Ethan had their standard Bureau outfits on, which included their FBI ballistic vests, the letters emblazoned on the cover, front and back... always good if the SWAT guys had to step in and needed to identify the agents quickly. The team was strategically concealed at various positions outside the house. CJ slipped in through the broken old door on the side of the building as quietly as possible; her gun aimed straight ahead of her. Ethan followed; his gun poised ready, gripped in both hands, which he held just in front of his right shoulder. The door led into the garage, which in turn led to the rear hallway of the house. The darkness was settling over the street now and CJ mentally cursed their timing, but this couldn't wait until morning.

As the agents stealthily walked through a dark, narrow corridor into the next room, the damp, musty smell thickened and almost choked them. CJ's stomach momentarily leapt into her throat when she caught sight of the shape of a person out the side of her eye. Her heart beating double time, she swung round quickly but calmly, aiming her gun at the slightly creepy-looking mannequin that stood in the corner, bathed in the blue-gray shadows of night and staring blankly across the room. It seemed to mock her with its eerie head tilt and jaunty arm pose. She blinked and refocused on her journey, Ethan still silently covering her back. She could hear ‘ *SWAT team still holding* ’ being updated in her earpiece. Her eye centered on a dim light coming from what she thought was the kitchen. A fleeting frown crossed her face until she realized that the low humming noise she could hear was a generator. She knew this derelict property would have no power, so either Alison had gotten lucky or was very organized.

Checking every corner of their current room, mindful of hiding places behind furniture, the two agents moved slowly in formation towards the kitchen. As they approached the door, they saw a tall figure walk past the lightened gap and froze in their tracks. It was Timmons - CJ was sure of it - and it seemed the killer was unaware of their presence.

CJ could feel the tension coming off Agent Matthews but knew how good an agent he was and trusted him to stay completely calm. She could only just hear him breathing and it seemed he was matching her rhythm. She brought her left hand off her gun for a second to signal to him. He brought his hand around her head into her line of vision to reply. Satisfied that he knew what she wanted, she walked forward. Behind her, Ethan aimed his gun at the kitchen

door. CJ sidestepped up to the space, her back against the wall, and poked her head carefully around the doorframe. She spotted the killer's back as Alison descended into the basement. The agent turned to signal to Ethan again and they both proceeded to follow Timmons.

CJ peeked around the doorframe leading to the basement. The staircase was enclosed and she gave a mental 'Yes!' as she silently descended against the dirty wooden wall that hid her from Alison's view. Ethan followed and they could both hear Timmons' gravelly tones as she spoke. It gave CJ hope... hope that she was talking to a very-much-alive Jamie. But Alison's next words made her gut heave.

*“ You know, this is the same as the knife I used on you the last time. What a thrill to be able to kill you with it now. I really want you to cry, little girl. Let me see you cry before I slice into your still-beating heart, hmm?”*

CJ's nostrils flared in anger but she pushed it back to keep her focus.

*“ And now... now it's time. I've had my fun with you. It's Agent Carson's turn next .”*

That was enough to make CJ move in. Their time had run out. After an almost imperceptible signal to Ethan, she lurched into the room with Agent Matthews following. He immediately took a back-up position and analyzed the people present in an instant.

“One move and I'll take you down, Alison. Drop the knife. It's over,” CJ said as professionally as she could without snarling at the woman.

Timmons was shocked and puzzled as she tried to figure out how she could get her gun out quickly enough. ‘ *How the hell did she get here so fast?* ’ Deciding that she couldn't get to her gun, she lunged towards Jamie with the knife. But she didn't get there.

CJ did not hesitate in firing two rounds into the tall killer's body, sending her off course and crashing to the floor. The agent didn't dare look at her captured friend... not yet. She walked toward her target and watched her chest rise and fall as she gurgled and struggled to breathe. Blood pulsed from one of the bullet holes.

“That was... fast... Agent... Cars...” Alison croaked.

CJ stood over the prone body. The tall killer stared into the blue eyes that bore right through her. It was a challenging gaze and CJ knew Alison wasn't done trying yet. As Timmons' hand moved toward her gun - which CJ could see poking out of the waistband of her pants - the agent gave her one last warning. “Don't touch that gun, Alison!”

Timmons knew she was defeated but it didn't stop her. CJ pulled the trigger one last time.

Grimacing at the evil woman, the agent shouted, “This is Agent Carson! SWAT team stand down. We need paramedics in here!”

She knew everyone could hear her through her mic and sighed in relief that this was over. Instructing Ethan to retrieve the gun and knife for evidence, Agent Carson turned to her trapped friend and colleague. Jamie's scarred flesh was still uncovered and the blonde couldn't take her pain-filled eyes off her nemesis, who now lay in a pool of blood. She was shocked out of her trance by CJ touching her cheek gently. She looked up into the professional but very loving face of her best friend, and immediately looked back down before she started bawling.

“It's over. Look at me, Agent Green.”

"I can't," Jamie said quietly. "Please don't make me... not yet." Still staring at the floor, she whispered. "One of the bodies moved. You need to help her."

CJ frowned, not having seen into the corner due to the light being switched off again. "Bodies?"

"There are three or four in that dark corner..." Jamie trailed off.

CJ knew there would be bodies somewhere - and she could smell them in the house - but to have them in view of each victim as they were tortured was so sadistic that even she thought she may have underestimated Timmons.

Ethan spoke from behind CJ. "I see them, Agent Carson. I'll take care of it."

"Get the paramedics, but if there's no pulse, they need to be left for the CSI," CJ said, realizing Ethan knew this but feeling the need to clarify for some reason.

The young man nodded and as the EMTs filed into the room, CJ turned her attention back to Jamie. She noted the erratic breathing and the way Jamie clenched her jaws together. She understood that she wanted to cry to release the tension and fear but would never do it in public. The raven-haired agent took her handcuff key from her pocket. She looked behind her as two more paramedics came into the basement. Before unlocking Jamie's wrists, she removed the hideous piece of flesh from the blonde's chest and closed her shirt to cover her bra. CJ growled internally as she put the flesh in an evidence bag. She never thought she could hate someone so much... but my God, she hated Timmons.

CJ unlocked the cuffs then searched the many pockets of the cargo pants. Flicking open her penknife, she released Jamie's feet and helped her to stand. She shook her head at the paramedic who was loitering nearby and ushered her colleague out of the basement as more agents appeared through the door. She took Jamie up the stairs to a quiet corner of the filthy house, noting that Mark stood guard quietly to allow them a moment's peace. CJ smiled wanly, impressed once again at how considerate her boss was.

Jamie sat silently but still did not cry. CJ put her hand on her colleague's chin and lifted her head tenderly in the near darkness. When Jamie's brown eyes met hers, the tears began to stream down her cheeks. Agent Carson held her for a few long minutes, very used to this kind of situation. She knew Jamie would feel better able to face the rest of the day and the work that had to be done before she could go home, if she let some of the anxiety out. It wasn't a sign of weakness... far from it. Agent Green had pretty much been through the mill and now she was safe. This was what she needed to continue to cope and relive it all again when she gave her statement and wrote her report.

'*It's over*,' CJ thought as she kissed the blonde hair before letting Jamie go. "It's over," she said aloud.

\* \* \* \* \*

Some hours later in the middle of the night, Jamie stood in front of the mirror in the restrooms at her office. Her face was the picture of torment and sadness. But she was alive. She never thought she would get out of that place with her life. She didn't feel ready to speak with anyone about it yet, but knew CJ needed to go through everything with her very soon. She took the medi-wipes across her face, hands and breasts, wanting to wash as much of her incarceration off her skin as possible.

She had briefly gone to the ER, where they had removed the bullet that had gone through clean and was located easily, right under her skin. It had been cut out, cleaned and dressed, and Jamie had wanted to get out of there immediately after.

On her way back along the corridor, she passed Mark, who gave her a nod of acknowledgment and approval. When she entered her office, only CJ and Ethan were present. The young man nodded a 'hello' and went on with his work. CJ smiled at her and analyzed the blonde's face.

"I'm okay, DM," Jamie confirmed in an exhausted tone.

"Uh huh, but I wish you'd let me take you back to the hospital. You need another check-up, Penfold."

"I'm really okay. She never sliced me this time and I'm not gonna have a breakdown." Agent Green convulsed slightly at the thought of her capture and CJ was on her feet in seconds.

"Hey! She won't get near you again. And you practically saved yourself with that clue. You knew I'd figure it out," the raven-haired agent said in a praising tone, resting her hand on Jamie's back.

"I hoped... hoped you'd make the connection. If I had shouted Baker Street, she would have stuck that fucking gun in my back again and shoved me into the car."

CJ could see Jamie was angry. She couldn't imagine what her friend had gone through. Maybe if Jamie still wasn't coping well with it in a few days, she could talk to Kate, who had been through a similar experience. CJ knew the blonde agent wouldn't talk to the Bureau shrink. "How about some coffee, Penfold?"

"That would be good."

"Do you feel like talking to Sam yet? She's at our place with Kate. I sent them a message so they should know you're safe."

"They'll be in bed now," Jamie said, looking at her watch and noting the time at 4am. "I'll talk to her in the morning. Maybe I'll stop feeling like I want to throw up by then."

As CJ went to get the coffee, Jamie sat across from Ethan. "I guess you saw everything in that basement, huh?" Agent Matthews knew what she meant and nodded. Jamie sighed. "Do you want to know the whole story then?"

"Only if you want to tell me, Jamie. I'd be glad to listen... and it won't go any further."

Jamie began to give him an overview of her dealings with Alison Timmons, the six-foot-two killer with the most unusual MO the Bureau had seen in quite some time.

But what the agents couldn't know at that moment was that Timmons was still alive. Miraculously, she was in the ICU - under the guard of two FBI agents and two cops - fighting against the damage from the bullet holes that CJ put in her. If she survived, she would be in a maximum-security facility for the rest of her life. Agent Carson would make sure of that.

\* \* \* \* \*

A little later that morning, Kate walked out to her Mercedes with Tony, Sam and Shannon in tow. She spotted the two FBI agents sitting in their vehicle. While one spoke on the radio mic, the other got out of the sedan and waved at her. Kate's stomach dropped but then she saw the man smile and she dared not hope for good news. Holding her breath, she waited until he crossed the space between them.

"Ms. Carson, we're leaving now. It's over," the burly man said.

Kate paused to think before responding. "No agents down?"

"No agents down, ma'am. Agent Carson reported in. Have a good day."

“Thank you. You too,” she said as he walked away. She realized she had accidentally slept late and rushed around this morning. She hadn't checked her cell. It was only now that she pulled it from her bag and looked at the screen. There was a text message. ‘ *We're both okay. I left a message for Sam. Hope she got it. Be home soon. Love you. CJ x !* ’ Kate smiled widely and turned to Sam, who was standing by the Mercedes helping Shannon into her seat. “Sam... they're okay! Everything's okay!”

The producer let out a heartfelt moan and a few tears fell from her very reddened eyes. Sam had cried for most of the night but now her tears were of relief. She nodded to Kate and walked over to hug her. As the news sunk in, Sam got into her own car and followed the Mercedes down the drive with a small smile on her weary face.

\* \* \* \* \*

Jamie entered studio 7-C at the Olympian lot. She saw Sam standing behind a multitude of cameras while a rather animated scene was being shot. Waiting quietly until she could go to her lover, Jamie tried to stay upright on slightly swaying legs. She was so tired, and apart from going into work the day after to clear up some paperwork, she was on enforced leave for a week. But she had to see Sam before going home to bed, just to let her girlfriend know she really was alive and well... for the most part. While she had wondered off in her thoughts, Sam had spotted her and was now standing in front of the agent with a worried look on her face.

Jamie broke from her daze. “Oh, hey you... sorry... I'm just tired,” the blonde said, grabbing Sam tightly with her good arm.

The producer tried not to cry but it was futile. She squeezed the living daylights out of Jamie's torso but noticed the agent flinching. “I know I need to get used to your job and all the danger... and I will, but I have never been happier to see anyone in my entire life! I love you so much.”

Jamie pushed back to look at her partner. “I love you too. And this was an extreme case. It's not often we have an escaped serial killer who just happens to want my blood,” she said, pushing a few strands of unruly red hair from Sam's contorted face. “Too soon to joke?”

“Yes.” Sam exhaled gustily, looking at the bruising on Jamie's face. “Are you okay? Are you hurt?” she asked, visually checking her lover's body.

“Yeah. The bitch shot me but it's really fine. Just stings a little.”

“Oh God, honey. Go home and get lots of rest. I'll be over as soon as I can. I can't believe I have to go back in there.”

“I'll see you after work then,” Jamie responded, producing a key from her pocket. “I had this made a few days ago. Meant to give it to you... if you want it?”

Sam's wide eyes gradually rose to look at Jamie's hopeful brown ones. “My own key?” At the agent's nod, she smiled. “I definitely want it and you can have one for my place too. I'll see you real soon, my love.”

“I look forward to it,” Jamie murmured, kissing her partner before walking back to her car with a little spring in her step.

As soon as she got home, she shed her clothes and had the quickest but most thorough half-body shower ever, before falling into bed. She was asleep about two seconds after her head hit the pillow.

\* \* \* \* \*

CJ dragged her tired ass into the house, knowing Kate would have left already, which meant Shannon and Tony would have left with her. She had wanted to get home as soon as possible, but it hadn't been soon enough to hold her precious spouse. She shouted a weak 'hello', hearing Eddie shout back from the kitchen. As she did her usual 'arriving home' routine, her father-in-law came shuffling into the hallway. He took one look at the tired face that held even more tired blue eyes, and took the agent into his arms.

"Oh sweetheart, you look positively exhausted. Come... I'll make you a nice breakfast before you go to bed," Eddie said, releasing the tall woman.

"How come you're still here, Dad?"

"Oh, you didn't think I'd leave until things had settled down, did you?"

"But that could've taken forever," CJ said.

"Not with my FBI daughter on the case," Eddie said, rubbing the back of CJ's shoulders.

The agent smiled. "Where's Lucy?"

"She's with Alice and the twins in the crèche, honey. Now come on..."

"I need to hug my daughter... then I'll take you up on that generous offer of food."

Eddie silently stood in front of the agent for a few seconds. "I'm very proud of you," he said in a manner CJ had never seen from the man before. He wasn't flailing around and was deadly serious.

CJ fought the tears that stung her eyes. She'd never had a father who'd said anything remotely encouraging to her in her life. She bit her lips in a vain attempt to stop the tears and looked at Kate's father now, realizing how much she loved him. "Thank you... you've no idea..." She faltered and more tears escaped. Trying to stifle his own tears, Eddie encompassed the tall, tough FBI agent in another genuine hug.

Once they'd parted, CJ smiled at him as he slipped an arm around her waist. "Let's go have that breakfast and see if Lucy's up for talking yet," Eddie grinned.

"Right," the agent replied, feeling so glad to be home.

"Did you tell Katie that everything's all right?"

"Yes, Dad."

"Good. You know how much she worries about you..."

"Yes, Dad."

\* \* \* \* \*

When CJ crawled into bed, she sent another text message to Kate to see if she could talk. Ten minutes later, her cell phone rang and, shaking herself awake, she answered it. "Hello?"

"*Oh baby, you sound so sleepy. Want me to call later?*"

“No! Hey, you. God, I miss you. I wish you were here,” CJ whined into the phone.

“ *I wish I was there too. Where are you exactly ?*” Kate asked.

“In our bed, honey. I'm so exhausted and want to be fully refreshed when you get home,” the tall woman drawled, stifling a yawn. She heard Kate giggle. “What you laughing at?”

“ *Nothing really. You, yawning... and I'm just so incredibly happy you're home, even if I'm not... yet.*”

“I'm glad I'm home too... even with Lucy hanging round my neck while I tried to eat breakfast,” CJ chuckled.

“ *Awww, the kids were missing you so much, CJ. Shannon will be so happy to see you after school .*”

“I think I'll go with Tony to pick her up. Take Lucy and surprise her,” CJ said thoughtfully.

“ *Great idea ,*” Kate agreed. “ *How's Jamie?*”

“She's okay. It'll probably hit her in a few days. But she left the office when I did, to go see Sam before going home.”

“ *Oh, that's good. Sam's been crying all night, I think .*”

“I'll bet.”

“ *I knew you'd find her, CJ.*”

“I wasn't so confident I'd find her in time, honey, but it all worked out.” The agent paused for a second at the thought of it *not* working out. “Okay. I'm gonna go get some sleep. I'll let Alice go home once I wake. Her mother is okay now but there's no point in her being here this afternoon.”

“ *You're so considerate. How many more days do you have to work?*”

“I need to cover Jamie's week of leave then I'm taking one.”

“ *I can't wait. Once this San Francisco thing is done, I'm off too,*” Kate almost squeaked.

CJ grinned, simply happy to hear her wife's voice. “It can't come quickly enough, baby. I love you. Talk to you later.”

“*Love you too, CJ. Bye.*”

“Bye.” The agent ended the call and put the cell phone on the nightstand. She closed her eyes and thought about Kate's arms wrapped firmly around her, and drifted off to sleep almost feeling the blonde by her side.

\* \* \* \* \*

Somewhere in an ICU, Alison Timmons' heart stopped. After the doctors and nurses frantically worked on her for ten minutes, she was breathing again. Even knowing what this woman had done, these professionals stood by the

oath they took to preserve life, even if, in their personal view, the life did not deserve to be saved. It was not their call... but it was their job and so there she lay... alive.

What Alison didn't know was that a few beds away in the same ICU, was the girl who had lain in the pile of bodies in that stinking basement. She too, was grasping onto life. Another one saved by the SSHU and the experienced personnel at the UCLA Medical Center.

Cecilia Carson was one of the nurses on duty in the ER this night, and had worked on the victim. She had looked for CJ, but all of the agent's who'd accompanied both victim and killer were male.

Cecilia wondered if she would ever see or hear from her niece again. It broke her heart to think that CJ hadn't even known about her all these years. But she supposed that after telling Alyssa that CJ's father had tried to rape her after punching her around a little, that she should have expected nothing less. Alyssa hadn't believed at that time that her husband was capable of such things. Cecilia had left her sister's house that night so many years ago... told never, ever to return.

The nurse frowned as she sat during her break, sipping her lemon tea. She wanted to know all about CJ's life, and wondered what had happened after Alyssa's death. She had only learned about her sister passing away when she was at her mother's funeral a few years back. She hadn't seen CJ that day, having hidden in the back of the church, knowing she wasn't really welcomed by anyone. She had mourned her sister twice; once when she had broken all contact, then when she found out she had died. Cecilia's heart broke again at the thought. She really hoped CJ would call her.

## Chapter 6

Kate got home from work, feeling her body buzzing at the thought of holding her spouse. But she knew she would have the family stuff to deal with until the children's bedtime. Then, all bets were off. CJ was going to be dragged upstairs and stripped of her clothing quite rapidly. Her mind was wandering all over the place as she opened the front door.

What she hadn't anticipated was her Dad and CJ planning for the actress' arrival. Eddie, Shannon, Lucy and Kamali had just slipped out the back door when they saw Kate's car coming up the drive. And now, CJ stood in the middle of the hallway with a shy grin on her face, biting her lip in one of the cutest poses Kate had ever seen. The actress walked over to her wife and slipped her arms around the tall woman's waist.

"Where is everybody?" the blonde asked.

"They won't be back for an hour. Dad can be quite forceful when he wants to be... and quite embarrassing," CJ smirked.

"Oh? What did he do to embarrass you?"

"Well, uh, he said he would give us an hour to get re-acquainted, although he didn't say it quite so plainly."

"Uh huh. Kiss me... and then I need to feel you under me," Kate purred, rising up on her tip-toes.

"Under you, huh? Sounds perfect..." CJ whispered as her lips met her wife's.

The tall agent scooped her petite lover up into her arms and climbed the staircase. Once in the bedroom, Kate dropped her bag from her arm and continued to investigate every part of CJ's mouth with her tongue. Before the tall

woman knew what had happened, they were naked on the bed. She vaguely recalled their clothing flying onto the floor but it was all a blur.

Kate straddled CJ's thigh and pressed her center onto the warm, naturally tanned skin. Her mouth open, her emerald orbs pinned on her wife, she began to thrust slowly. She knew this would arouse CJ tremendously and it was building the fire inside her own body as well. Kate reached down and took both of her spouse's hands in her own. She intertwined their fingers and gazed at her lover as her breast heaved with every quickening breath. Her thrusts gained a little speed and pressure as her climax neared, and judging by the look on CJ's face, she was going to come with Kate; the sight of her hot, little wife making her very wet indeed.

She watched CJ, who would occasionally look down at Kate's stomach and mound as she pushed back and forth over the strong thigh. The agent would moan every time she thought about the swollen clit that was now ready to explode. The feisty actress pulled CJ into a sitting position as she continued her movements, and kissed her wife while simultaneously placing the larger hands on her breasts.

CJ moaned at the contact with the soft skin and pert nipples, and was ready to climax simply at the thought of the wet trail Kate was leaving on her thigh. She realized she didn't know where her spouse's hands had gone, but soon felt one slide down to her overly sensitive clit. CJ whimpered as Kate manipulated the soaking wet flesh with well-practiced skill. The agent opened her eyes when her wife broke the contact with her lips.

"I'm... coming..." the blonde gasped out as she thrust even faster.

CJ raised her thigh a little to press it hard into her wife. "Do it... come for me, baby..."

As Kate's orgasm took hold, the taller woman watched her as the actress' eyes closed in rapture. The hand that stimulated CJ abruptly entered her and the agent was taken by surprise at the instant orgasm she hadn't thought she was ready to have. It buzzed through her body and she thought it might just be possible to spontaneously combust.

As Kate came back to herself, the taller woman licked her lips and flared her nostrils to get as much air into her lungs as she could. She then bit the actress on the chin. "You okay?"

"Uh... huh," the blonde breathed. "I was gonna... try and keep going... with you. But you already, uh..."

CJ laughed weakly. "Yeah... I did. I really need to stop being so easy."

"No... don't. I love... that I can do that to you."

"*Only* you can do that to me," CJ said, licking a sweet, sweaty neck.

"Mmmm, that was so good... and so needed... and I so love you."

The agent smiled. "Oh I agree... and I love you too. When am I gonna stop missing you so much, even after only a few days?"

"I hope, never. I missed you too. I'm glad you can stay home now," Kate husked, kissing CJ on the forehead.

The tall woman's arms tightened around her wife's waist. They fell down onto the mattress and lay together in a tangled heap for long, peaceful moments. CJ broke the silence. "I can't wait for our time off. Just me, you and the kids. We could go to the cabin... show the girls our little home from home," she suggested.

"What about school?"

“I mean when school is over. I know I only have a week's leave this time but I could get a few days when Shannon stops for the summer. You'll still be off then. What do you think?”

“Sounds great,” Kate replied, tickling her spouse's skin with her fingertips. “We need to get up soon,” she groaned.

“Yep. Oh hey, talking about the cabin... I was thinking of asking Charlie if he knew anyone who could build a small addition... like a little room with two bunk beds in it.”

“Honey, that sounds like a wonderful idea. You're such a good Mommy,” Kate teased gently.

“Aw, shucks. So are you,” the agent replied, sticking her tongue out.

They continued to talk for a short while longer, throwing in a few chuckles here and there, just so glad to be together again. When they got up, Eddie and the kids still weren't back so they decided to go out and meet them on their walk. The two women strolled hand in hand out into the farmland, and found Dad and the kids picking flowers not far from where Nevada and Idaho grazed peacefully. It was a wonderful sight and CJ sighed, finally relaxing after yet another tough time at the Bureau.

\* \* \* \* \*

A few long, thankfully boring, work days later, CJ arrived home around 6pm. Eddie had left and was back in New York, and Alice had a day off since Kate was at home all day, before leaving for San Francisco tomorrow. Tony's car wasn't outside the house and CJ was looking forward to an evening at home, just her and her three girls. She chuckled to herself at the thought as she got out of her truck. ‘ *I have a family* ,’ she mused, almost making herself cry with happiness. ‘ *Who would've thought* ,’ She shook her head and approached the front door. Once inside she was greeted exuberantly by Kamali, then two bouncing children.

Kate stood in the living room as the huddle came into view. “Hello, darling,” she drawled.

“Hey, you. What's so exciting?” CJ asked, trailing a clinging Lucy along with her, attached to her leg.

“I think it's just very exciting to have you home. I know I'm excited,” the actress said, raising an eyebrow.

But CJ's eyebrows lowered at those words. “Don't tease me... not right now.”

Kate could see the mischief and fire behind those gorgeous baby blues. “Later then... how was your day, dear?” she asked, kissing her spouse briefly on the lips.

“Fine... thankfully nice and... you know, the opposite of loud.”

Kate nodded and turned around to see where Shannon had gone. “Shannon, honey, where are you?”

“ *I'm in the play room. I'll be right out* ,” said a giggling voice from around the corner. The girl walked back into the living area with something for CJ. “We made this for you, CJ. Me and Lucy,” she said shyly, handing the macaroni picture to the agent. But it wasn't just a macaroni picture. It had rice grains, bits of feather and some pumpkin seeds, and bore a striking resemblance to Nevada.

CJ grinned at Kate then looked at the two pleased little faces peering up at her - Lucy having now let go of her leg. “This is so beautiful, you guys. I love it a lot. Did you use the glue, Squirt?” the agent winked at her older daughter.

Shannon chuckled. “Yes... and it made the squirting noise again.” Her chuckles grew into full on laughs, and CJ and Kate laughed at how easily amused the girl was.

“Let me go put this on the art board and then I'll get changed before dinner. What we having tonight?”

Kate eyed her wife. “Well, we thought you could help us with a roast chicken salad. We could eat out on the deck.”

CJ smirked, knowing that Kate had done a lot of the cooking lately. “I would love to help. In fact, why don't you put your feet up, my love, and we'll fix dinner?”

“Oh you are so wonderful, my dear... and good at taking hints,” Kate drawled.

The agent kissed her wife then whispered a quick, “I'm good at lots of things,” into her ear.

Kate breathed deeply to settle her quickening heart. “Okay. Let's head to the kitchen. CJ, go get changed,” she ordered, giving her partner a mischievous wink.

\* \* \* \* \*

Jamie sat at the dining table in Sam's cozy house. The redhead was putting the finishing touches to a salmon dinner that she was really looking forward to. But earlier today, the full realization of what had happened to her - and what had almost happened - had hit home. She knew it would. She just didn't want it to suddenly make her cry right in the middle of making love to her girlfriend. She shook her head now, just as Sam brought the plates to the table.

“Hey, you all right?” the producer said warmly.

“Yes, honey. And don't worry... I'll get my emotions under control by bedtime. Promise,” Jamie replied with a frown.

“Just let it out naturally, Jamie. I mean, you went through a horrific experience. You don't need to be tough in front of me. You know I'll love you anyway,” Sam winked as she set the dishes down.

The agent sighed heavily. “I know,” she said, twisting her face at the few tears that escaped.

Sam leaned over her and held around her shoulders, pressing the blonde's head against her chest. “I love you, Jamie Green. I'm so glad to have you back,” she whispered.

The agent inhaled the scent of her lover, and it healed and relaxed her simultaneously. “I think you're the first person to say that to me.”

“Well... there have been many fools in your past. But now... is now. I'm looking forward to every day I have with you.”

Jamie looked up at Sam's face. “You still think I'm gonna screw this up, don't you? Us, I mean...”

“Hell no... that's not what I meant at all. I just cherish every minute with you... especially after last week... and the fact that you have a dangerous job.”

The blonde lowered her eyes sheepishly at her faux pas. “I'm sorry I doubted you,” she said sullenly.

“I'll forgive you this time,” the producer said, holding Jamie tightly, “but I'm in this for the long haul and you better quit it soon,” she added, partially in jest.

The blonde pulled her lover closer and hid her face at Sam's cleavage. “I love you, Sam.”

"I know... but you're not having *that* until after you eat dinner. You can have me for dessert," the producer smirked.

When she heard a small chuckle from the agent's lips, she knew she had done the trick. Pulling away, she kissed Jamie on the lips and went to her own chair. It wasn't long before Jamie was checking out the dessert menu.

\* \* \* \* \*

Across town, CJ sat at her desk. Today, both she and Ethan had a stakeout to assist with, since the Unit was not busy. Agent Matthews looked at the tall, raven-haired woman, wondering how grumpy she would get throughout the course of their shift.

' *A stakeout AND Kate had left for San Francisco already* ,' he mused. Not a good combination for CJ's and her occasional mood swings.

"Coffee, Ethan?"

' *Okay* ,' he thought, ' *Is she asking me if I want a coffee, or am I supposed to get it?* ' He sat for a few seconds deciding what to do. "Sure CJ," he said, waiting to see if she got up. When she did, he relaxed his shoulders and a small chuckle escaped his lips.

"What's with you, man?"

"Oh, nothing," Ethan replied.

"Uh huh. Looking forward to a scintillating afternoon with me, I bet," she said, firmly tongue-in-cheek.

"Oh, absolutely," the young man replied with a slight hint of sarcasm.

CJ laughed heartily, knowing that she could be a nightmare to figure out sometimes. "Sorry I've been so grumpy. But you know me well enough by now and I also know you can handle it," she winked, putting his coffee down and heading back to her seat.

"Grump away, CJ. I know you're missing your wife already. You poor thing," Matthews said daringly... but only because they were alone in the office.

When an empty paper cup flew past his head, he decided to give it a rest, and grinned at CJ's narrowed eyes and stuck out tongue.

\* \* \* \* \*

A few hours later, they were both holed up in a crappy, rented room across the street from their target's apartment with a telescope, two radio mics and a few sandwiches and sodas. "God, I'm bored. Is this guy ever gonna come out of there?" CJ grouched as they watched the apartment block.

"Well, he's definitely in there. Big time crook... I'm sure he'll need to go out soon to make some dirty money," Ethan responded, slurping from his can of sweet soda.

"Pfftt..."

"I don't like it either, CJ, but for once, the Unit has nothing on the books."

"I know. It *is* weird, right?"

“Weird, but good...”

“Yeah, I guess,” CJ admitted. She sighed and decided to try a call to her wife to brighten up her day.

Ethan sort of listened in to the one-sided conversation, occasionally smirking at CJ's comments. He outright chuckled when she offered to go to San Francisco to kick some asses. After a growl from the agent, he stifled further outbursts and grabbed a packet of chips to keep himself busy.

Suddenly CJ blurted something that sounded like a line from a movie. “That's it! I don't care if I blow this stakeout! I'm hijacking a chopper! I'm coming to rescue you, baby!”

Agent Matthews sprayed some partially crunched chips across the room and turned to CJ, eyes wide. “Did you just say you were gonna hijack a chopper?” he asked with raised eyebrows.

CJ slammed down the phone and turned to Ethan. “I gotta go!”

The young man checked out the window then looked at her with a strange expression on his features. “Uh, we can't, CJ... that's the guy we're supposed to be tailin'...” he said, pointing across the street.

“Fuck!”

“Isn't Kate shooting a TV show?”

“Yeah.”

“She'll be fine then,” he said, waiting for another outburst.

CJ glared at him for a moment and gradually realized how silly she must have sounded. “Uh huh,” was all she managed in response. And with that, she had to content herself with the fact that Kate was surrounded by her assistants and crew, and would call her back when she could. ‘*Man, I get crazy sometimes*,’ the agent thought with a shake of her head.

Burying her knight in shining armor persona, she headed out with Ethan to tail the suspect.... with her cell phone set on ‘loud’.

\* \* \* \* \*

CJ was just about to leave the office when her cell phone rang, making her jump at the volume. Quickly retrieving it from her pocket, she saw it was Kate calling and a wave of giddiness flowed through her. Jumping real quickly into her truck, she answered the call. “Hey... are you okay now?”

“*Yes, honey. Sorry about that earlier call. I've had quite a day*,” the actress sighed.

“What happened when you screamed earlier?”

“*Well, I'll give you the short version for now. I had my wallet stolen while I was on location-*”

“Oh God! Did you get it back?” CJ interrupted.

“*Yes, honey. Let me finish... anyway, like I said, wallet stolen. Then it turned out the woman who made me scream earlier was the one who chased the pickpocket down and recovered my wallet.*”

After a few seconds of silence, CJ prompted her wife. “And?”

*“ The woman looked exactly like me... I mean, exactly me... just with messier hair .”*

“Wow, really?”

*“ Yep... and here's the real kicker. She runs a detective agency with her best friend and business partner... who looks exactly like you !”*

“Get outta here,” the agent laughed.

*“ I'm serious, CJ. It was the weirdest, freakiest thing I ever saw... which is why I screamed. Actually, maybe I just dreamed it all ...”*

“Nah, they'll just be our ‘twins’. You know how people say there's a double out there for everyone? Well, you just happened to meet ours in one day, in the same place... hmmm, yeah freaky.”

*“ Possibly. Anyway, my double... Stella... was a fan so I had my picture taken with her. I bet people think it's a Photoshop mash-up ,”* Kate laughed down the phone. *“ She turned out to be really sweet. She has my number in case they ever come to LA. We could all have dinner. Haha, that would be hilarious .”*

“Okay, now you're getting carried away. What was my double's name?” the agent asked curiously.

*“ Reggie... short for Regina, I think. She's a former model .”*

“Uh huh... and was she hot?” CJ teased.

*“ Well, she looked exactly like you, honey, but she'll never have what you have .”*

“And what's that?”

*“ My heart ,”* Kate husked.

“Oh man... can you come home now please?” the taller woman said, feeling her stomach flip.

*“ I'm leaving here tomorrow morning. I should get back after lunch sometime. Will you be home? ”*

“I'll try to be,” CJ said, knowing she would indeed be home, having taken a half day specifically to greet her spouse. Then after that it was a week of leave. CJ smiled at the thought.

*“ Okay, I'm gonna go eat something. I can't wait to see you tomorrow, baby ,”* the actress drawled into the phone.

CJ's nostrils flared. “Don't call me ‘baby’ when you're so far away...”

*“ Sorry, forgot ,”* Kate giggled.

“No you didn't. You just enjoy torturing me.”

*“ All right, enough, before I start thinking about you... like that. Bye honey, I love you .”*

“Ditto, my darling. Bye.”

CJ hung up the call and started the drive home, looking forward to spending time with the girls before bed. ' *Time off soon* ,' she told herself over and over.

## **Chapter 7**

CJ plowed through her work the next morning and after a brief meeting with Mark, she went back to the office to wait for Jamie to arrive. She had only spoken to her friend via telephone the past few days.

She made coffees for Ethan and Mikey, who were working on completing reports for various departments while the Unit continued to go through its quiet spell. Plopping her butt down in her seat, she sipped on the bitter coffee while her computer finished the file cross-check she had initiated about a half hour ago.

Jamie strolled into the office, refreshed from her leave and smiling, no doubt from a plentiful supply of Sam-time over the past week. "Hello, all."

After the two men had said their greetings, CJ smiled at her colleague. "Hi, Penfold. Good break?"

"Yes. I didn't realize how much I needed it," the blonde said, propping herself on the edge of CJ's desk.

"Did you have your 'down day'?"

"Yeah... you were right... three days later," Jamie smiled wanly.

"Okay now though, right?"

"Yep... Sam was a real help. And it was good for us to deal with this one together. That's kinda foreign to me, being such a loner before and everything."

"I hear ya. It took me a while to let Kate help me. I'm glad you're back, Penfold."

Jamie laughed out loud. "Yeah, right. You just want to leave now."

"Oh no, not yet... I'll be in tomorrow. And I have to make you a welcome-back-disgusting-coffee before I leave for the day," the raven-haired agent winked.

Once the four agents had caught up with all the gossip, CJ left. She was buzzing with energy at the thought of Kate coming home today and she knew the kids would be too.

Back at the ranch, she set about tidying the house and once that was done, she let Alice have the rest of the day off. When Tony came back after picking up Shannon from school, the young driver left again to go and wait for Kate at the airport.

CJ told the girls her plans and when Shannon started a conversation about calling her Mommy, she had to hold back her excitement and emotion.

As Lucy sat on CJ's knee, the agent looked lovingly at her older daughter. "I would love for you to call me that. And you can do it any time you feel ready," she beamed.

"Okay," Shannon responded, nibbling on her fingernail. "I want to call Kate Mommy, too. But that would be silly."

"Well, it would get confusing, that's for sure," CJ said, pretending to bite Lucy's fingers that were playing with the tall woman's mouth. "Maybe there's another name for Kate..."

“Yes. Sometimes it's okay to say Mama too.”

“That's an idea,” the agent praised.

Lucy listened and watched all this with interest, and after CJ confirmed once again that both her and Kate would love to be called by their new titles, the three of them continued their preparations for the actress' arrival.

They got slightly distracted with 'making' dinner, and lost track of time.

\* \* \* \* \*

Kate stepped out of the Mercedes and walked around to the trunk where Tony was already removing her suitcase. “Thanks, Tony.”

“No problem. I'll come and pick up the car for its repairs tomorrow,” the young man said pleasantly.

“Oh, I forgot about that. Remember to ask them about the hybrid-connector-thingy,” Kate grinned, watching Tony try to stifle a laugh.

“I will, Kate. Hey, did you ever tell CJ that this thing is a custom hybrid. She's into that eco-stuff, isn't she?”

Kate frowned. “You know, it has never come up in any of our conversations... and it's not something I would have thought to tell her. I'm sure you could discuss all the technicalities with her, Tony. You know me... I'm not much into cars.”

“Right. Still, you can pick out a damn nice truck when you want to,” he winked at his boss.

Kate laughed and waved as she headed up the steps. It was late afternoon now and she had been surprised to see no shiny blue Dodge Ram out front. *‘Hmmm, I wonder where CJ is? She said she was off this afternoon,’* she pondered as she unlocked the front door. She stood in the hallway for a second, listening for voices as she dropped her bag on the floor. Hearing a faint child's voice, she closed the door behind her and headed for the living area.

“Anybody home?” she shouted, hearing a laugh being unsuccessfully stifled from the direction of the kitchen.

The actress continued toward the sound and as she walked through the double doors, she bit her lips together hard to avoid laughing her ass off at the site before her.

On the far away side of the island unit, sat three wise monkeys in the form of her wife and daughters. Lucy was holding onto the arms of her barstool and staring at Kate with big brown eyes; Shannon was desperately trying not to laugh again, and CJ... Kate's nostrils flared in an extended effort to hold back her giggles... CJ was sitting in the middle of the two children, the ends of her dark bangs whitened by flecks of runaway flour; her long hair only saved by the fact that it was tied back in a ponytail. Her black tee was also covered in patches of white with the occasional handprint here and there, and the actress noticed that all three pretty much had more food on them than what she suspected was in the oven. The tough, cool special agent had such a guilty look in her eyes but her incredibly cute pout made up for the mess they had created. All three were baking - well, it looked like baking - and the counter was covered in utensils, flour, various cutouts of pastry and some stray berries.

The blonde decided to smile and remain silent, her lips still firmly pressed together as she approached. She looked at Shannon, who was just about to say something when a small, husky, melodious voice broke the silence.

“Mama,” Lucy said, stunning Kate so much she stopped dead in her tracks.

CJ turned to the infant, her mouth forming an 'O' in surprise.

Shannon was very excited. "She said Mama!" the girl squeaked.

Kate caught CJ's gaze and the agent answered the blonde's unspoken question. "First word," she nodded at her wife, who was now on the move again.

"Mmmmmama," Lucy repeated, sticking her flour-covered hands out to Kate.

The actress gathered the tiny girl up into her arms and hugged her. She then looked at her younger daughter's face and brought her own hand up to point to herself. "Mama?" she asked.

Lucy smiled and nodded, making those beautiful, natural curls bob around at her cheeks. "Mama..."

Kate released a few tears, making sure she was still smiling so that the children knew they were happy tears. She carried Lucy around the counter to hug the other two precious people with her free arm.

"Mamamama... hommm..." Lucy continued, deciding she liked her own voice.

"You are so clever, Lucy," the actress gushed, hugging her younger daughter.

Shannon chuckled. "Lucy was listening when I was talking to CJ about calling her Mommy today," she informed the blonde.

Kate was now standing behind the girl's barstool and squeezed Shannon's shoulder. "You were, huh? And what did you guys decide?" CJ smiled at her wife when Kate winked at her.

Shannon put down the piece of pastry she had in her hand and wiggled around to face CJ. "CJ said we can call her Mommy if we want... and maybe call you Mama?"

"And do you want to?" Kate probed.

"Yes!" the girl said excitedly.

"So, let's see... I'll be Mama and CJ is Mommy?"

"Yes, 'cause Lucy called you Mama now... so that's a deal then," Shannon said, crossing her arms over her chest at their impressive accomplishment.

CJ finally found her voice. "Well, I'm very happy with that. Do you think it will get a little confusing for Lucy though? Mommy and Mama sound quite alike."

"No because..." Shannon thought hard for a second and scratched her nose, covering it with more flour. "Mommy ends with an 'eeee' sound and Mama ends in 'aaaa'... so it's okay," the girl smiled.

Kate smirked. "That is true, CJ. I'm sure it'll be fine."

CJ grinned lovingly at her wife. "Great."

"So... Mommy, we should clean up this mess before dinner is ready," Shannon said, deciding it really *was* time for them to get organized.

Kate laughed when CJ almost cried at the appellation. The agent got to her feet and helped Shannon off the barstool. “Right, because we have Vegetable Surprise to eat before the little berry pies will be baked, right?”

“Right!” Shannon quipped.

“Mama, home,” Lucy piped in, just to keep herself included in the discussion.

“Yes, sweetie,” the actress said quietly, smiling and hugging the small girl again. Lucy patted her Mama’s face, both little hands on the blonde’s cheeks as usual. Kate couldn’t believe how much she loved these children. “You have a beautiful voice, Lucy. I love it. What a clever girl you are.”

“Mmmm,” the infant smiled.

CJ and Shannon giggled, making Kate turn to them and chuckle at the mess the kitchen had become. Lucy laughed too... using her newfound voice... and the whole family ended up in a group hug. Kate didn’t care that her best black pantsuit was now covered in various floury white handprints. It was an amazing moment and she took the kiss from her spouse when CJ offered it.

When they parted, the actress tilted her head. “So, where’s the truck? I thought you guys had gone out somewhere,” she asked.

CJ smiled at both their daughters. “Oh no. We wanted to be here to welcome you home but we were washing it before we came inside. It’s out back. See how clever and productive we’ve been today?”

“You certainly have,” Kate said, eyeing the mess in the kitchen. CJ just laughed, making her wife give up on her fake annoyance. “Okay, let’s clear this up a little and have some of that Vegetable Surprise I can smell cooking! Wait... what’s the surprise?”

CJ grinned. “The surprise is... I didn’t burn it.”

“I see. Thank goodness,” Kate tried to say without laughing. “Right, let’s clear up!”

“Yes,” Shannon squeaked, a tad dramatically. “Then we can have dinner... all together. We missed you... Mama,” the girl added, having to think about the name before saying it. But it would become second nature soon enough.

Kate almost cried again. “I missed you all too... so much!”

CJ kissed her wife again and Lucy threw in another giggled ‘Mama’ in agreement.

\* \* \* \* \*

After the children had gone to bed, Kate had soaked in the tub for a luxurious hour while CJ emptied her wife’s bags and organized the laundry. When she came back upstairs, she spotted a sealed cardboard box in the corner of the bedroom, next to the couch. It was marked ‘Davenport’ in black sharpie, then on a label next to that, ‘For attention of Carson’.

CJ frowned and walked to the door of the ensuite. “Katie... what’s in the box?”

“Box?” The actress thought for a moment. “Oh! God, we’ve been so busy. Marion called and said there was something she wanted to bring over. Because of everything that was happening, I asked her if I could send Tony to get it. He picked it up just before I left for San Francisco. It was in the trunk of my car.” Kate smiled. “I didn’t want to open it until we could do it together,” she said, turning in the bath to look at her wife.

The agent approached and perched on the side of the tub. "What's in it? Did she tell you?"

"Yes, honey. It's some of Shannon and Lucy's personal possessions from the Davenport house. Marion forgot about them and they had been stored in a closet at her office."

"Well, it's good she remembered. What kind of things are in there?"

"I'm not sure exactly, but Marion did say that there were baby photos," Kate said, smiling lovingly at her spouse.

"Really?" CJ replied, wide-eyed. "Can we open it tonight?"

"I guess we could have a quick look tonight, yeah."

"Cool. I'll jump in the shower right now and we'll take a look once we're done," the tall woman quipped.

"I'm comin' out anyway. I'm beginning to prune... actually no, I am a prune."

CJ chuckled and stripped off her clothes. After a wolf-whistle from her wife, she strutted into the shower cubicle. Not long after, they sat on the plush bedroom carpet facing one another, with the box between them.

CJ felt her stomach flip slightly. "This kinda feels like Christmas," CJ said, ripping the strip of tape from the box.

"Yeah," Kate responded, feeling a little apprehensive.

The agent paused before opening the flaps. "What's wrong, honey?"

"Nothing. I just feel a little weird about opening stuff that belonged to the Davenports."

"Well, Lucy and Shannon are our family now, and we need to accept their past."

"I know that, CJ. I just feel a little weird about it. Let's open it now..."

The taller woman hugged her spouse and took a deep breath. "Okay."

The first items in the box were some drawings. According to the writing on the back, they were some of Shannon's first attempts at art. CJ smiled at her wife as they both looked at the brightly crayoned stick figures. "Pretty good, huh?" the agent said.

"Yeah..."

The taller woman pulled a small bundle of loose photos from the box and turned the top one over, hoping for some information on the back. "Shannon... two weeks old," CJ read then bit her lips together to stop her tears. "Look how cute!"

Kate shuffled around to sit next to her wife so that they could look at the pictures together. "Very cute..." The actress looked with affection at the photo of her daughter, propped up with cushions on a couch in the Davenport house.

As they looked through the mementos - stopping at every one to comment or give an 'ooh' or 'aah' - the two women got the strong impression that only Charles Davenport was interested in documenting his daughters' early years. CJ

and Kate thought it a little sad that the man had found out they weren't even his a few years later. When they came across a picture of Shannon holding a newborn Lucy, CJ gasped.

“Oh my God, it's too sweet... Shannon is kissing her baby sister!”

Kate almost laughed at the tough agent's goofy face. “It's great to have photos of them when they were growing. We can add to that now... continue it on...”

“Yeah.” CJ turned to hug her wife. They sat together and decided which ones to show the kids. The agent knew they would have to answer more questions, but the few photos with Charles, Simon and Craig - there seemed to be none with Sheila - in them would still be shown to Shannon... and maybe Lucy too. The Carsons had agreed never to deny Shannon's memories of her first family. And Lucy would be told about them when she was older.

A short while later, while consuming a warm, soothing cup of tea, Kate told CJ of her adventures in San Francisco, including the entire run down of her meeting with Stella Starr and Regina Harrison. CJ thought it sounded like some kind of dream sequence and could see why her spouse had screamed at first. It was quite strange to think of someone out there who looked exactly like her. She joked to Kate that if she ever needed a stand-in for work, she could call Regina. The actress laughed at that, but then thought of using Stella as a stand-in for when she had to deal with Jack Bannerman. Raising a sinister, plotting eyebrow, she looked at her wife, who briskly nudged her in the ribs for teasing her. After a few chuckles, they headed upstairs.

\* \* \* \* \*

When Kate crawled into bed, CJ was deep in thought. The agent automatically took her wife into her arms and the smaller woman kissed her on the cheek. “What you thinking about, honey?”

“Just about how far my life has come in the past few years,” the agent replied, inhaling the smell of her spouse's hair.

“And?”

“I went from having nobody... just living my job to fill the void every day, to suddenly meeting you in Montana in the strangest of circumstances. Now, I have a wife who is the only person in this entire world that I'm ever going to want... and I love you more than I ever thought I was capable. And what's more, we have this incredible bond that seems unbreakable,” CJ paused in awe of her life now, and Kate waited with tears in her eyes, mindful that her wife wasn't finished. “And now... now we have two beautiful children. It's mind-boggling... in a good way,” the agent finished, looking down into watery green eyes.

“You can be really deep when you want to be... and you're good at making me cry with your poetic words. You really should try and write again, honey.”

“I used to try and write to dream up my perfect love story. I don't need to dream anymore, Katie. I have it right here in my arms.”

“Oh my God, stop! I'm gonna bawl my heart out.” Kate kissed her wife deeply, releasing all the love and passion she felt for this stunning Federal agent. Pushing back, she smiled at the agent's love-filled eyes. “I love you so much. And I love our life too. Isn't it awesome that the kids want to call us Mommy now?”

“Yes, Mama...” CJ teased.

“Hey! Please don't bring that into our bed... it'll totally ruin it for me,” Kate said, poking CJ in the chest.

The agent burst out laughing and rolled her body onto her lover's. "Sorry. No more... I'm sure there are other things I have to say to you now... like, tell you what I'm going to do to really welcome you home."

"Ooh, there's that husky voice I can't resist... tell me what you're gonna do, baby..."

"Mmmm, call me baby again..." CJ said, closing her eyes and getting completely distracted.

"Baby..." Kate panted at the agent's ear. She licked the curved structure and heard her wife let out a gasp of pleasure.

As CJ shivered, Kate felt her lover's nipples harden and it sent a flood of moisture between her legs. She put both her hands on the taller woman's buttocks and squeezed them whilst pulling them closer to her body.

Locking eyes with the agent, Kate decided to verbalize what *she* was going to do. "I think, after I kiss you senseless, I'm going to climb on top of you and turn around... you'll see how wet I am and you'll get real hungry..."

"Oooh," CJ groaned.

"I'm not gonna let you touch my clit... you'll have to wait until I devour you first... make you come in my mouth before you get to taste me..."

"Jesus, Katie..." CJ whimpered as she squirmed around on top of her spouse.

"Oh yeah... then I'll let you feast. I want you so bad and you know it won't take long..."

CJ rolled them over so that Kate was on top of her. "No more talk... I want you... now." The agent kissed her lover, pouring her heart and soul into the contact. She grasped Kate's body against her, as closely as possible, feeling the maximum amount of warm skin connected with hers.

Once they were breathless, Kate wiggled free of CJ's arms and got up on all fours. She began to turn herself around, kissing a gentle trail over CJ's breasts and down to her side, making the agent twitch at the ticklish feeling. The actress smiled as she continued, sliding her tongue over her wife's hipbone, hearing the constant heavy breathing of her aroused partner. CJ's hands landed on Kate's butt cheeks as soon as she straddled the agent's face.

"Oh Jesus..." CJ whispered when the moist flesh came into view.

Kate sunk her head down to kiss the taller woman's inner thighs, eliciting another whimper from the agent. The blonde could smell the heady scent of the very aroused female body and hummed in appreciation. Not wasting any more time, she stuck out her tongue and tasted the salt-sweet offering as her wife's legs fell open wider.

"Mmmm..." the actress moaned. As her tongue began a steady rhythm, she could feel the engorged ridge swelling even more as CJ neared her climax. She stopped her oral ministrations for a second, then delicately swirled the tip of the muscle around the wet clit. Hearing the tell-tale sounds of her wife about to come, she pushed her face further onto CJ and began batting her tongue back and forth quickly. Her nose teased the agent's opening, triggering a flood of moisture, which Kate continued to lap up.

As CJ came, her body curled, lifting her head as she decided that she just had to suck on Kate as her orgasm flowed through her. Attaching her lips to her wife's clit, she suckled while her own groin convulsed in heavenly waves of pleasure. Kate pushed down onto her wife's mouth, the sudden feeling of CJ licking her, bringing her to climax right after the agent. The smaller woman's legs became weak and she collapsed on top of CJ. But the agent just smiled happily as she slowly massaged Kate's center with her mouth, the blonde making hot little 'mmm' sounds as she came back to herself.

Kate kissed CJ's inner thigh and ran her tongue over her wife's clit just to check she got all of the tasty juices she'd been offered. Feeling the agent slap her buttock, she giggled and rose up to turn around once more. When her eyes met those satisfied blue ones, she grinned.

Watching Kate's sparkling green orbs pin her with an intoxicating gaze, CJ pulled the smaller body down on top of her, kissing the sumptuous lips and tasting her own flavor mingled with her wife's. "Delicious."

"Yes... you are," the actress purred.

"Oh, I meant you, baby... simply delicious," CJ said, pushing a few strand of unruly blonde hair from Kate's cheek.

The actress wiggled an eyebrow. "I think I have a little more energy to expend. How about you?"

The agent laughed quietly at the smug expression on the cute face. "I'm ready when you are, Mrs. Carson..."

Kate laughed before things got serious again... seriously good.

\* \* \* \* \*

At 7am the next morning, CJ reached up and unlocked the new secure gun cabinet she had installed high up in the wall behind the front door. She still had her spare gun in the safe in their bedroom closet, but she had decided she didn't want to carry her service weapon through the house anymore and with this new cabinet, she could lock it safely away as soon as she entered their home. Only she and Kate had the combination for both the safe and the new locker, which gave CJ complete peace of mind. She had taught Kate how to shoot a couple of years ago. The actress didn't like guns much, but she had accepted the need for basic training after one of the many adventures they had been through. Although CJ had to admit, Kate could take a suspect down with her bare hands.

Once the agent had placed her gun in its holster under her suit jacket, she heard a small chuckle and turned to see Lucy shuffling through the door from the living area.

"Mmmomm," the girl tried, knowing all these words but just learning how to actually speak them.

CJ smiled widely and raised an eyebrow. She crouched down to Lucy's level as she approached. "Hey, Little One."

"Mmmmee," the infant said with a determined look in her twinkling eyes.

"You're doing so well. Put those together... Mommy," the tall woman suggested as she took the tiny hand in hers.

"Momm..."

"You're so clever, Lucy. And you have a beautiful voice," CJ said encouragingly.

"Mommy," Lucy managed, clapping her hands at her success. CJ also clapped, making the girl chuckle.

"That's right. I'm Mommy."

"Mommy... bu-bye."

The agent was stunned. "Yes, sweetie... but I'll be back after work."

Kate came into the hallway. "Hey you... Shannon's finishing breakfast and I came to see where this little one had disappeared to, but Kamali pointed the way," she said, flicking her head toward the dog.

"I think Lucy is quickly playing catch-up. She was just telling me 'bu-bye' before I go to work!" CJ said gleefully.

"She was? Wow, Lucy," Kate said, picking the small body up.

"Mommy, bu-bye," the infant said again, waving at CJ.

Kate looked both astounded and very proud, and the taller woman laughed as she kissed them both. "Bye, Squirt!" she shouted loudly.

Shannon came running in from the kitchen to hug and kiss the agent. "Bye, Mommy." And with that, she ran back into the kitchen, no doubt to finish her Cheerios.

"Bye honey. Be careful today," Kate smiled.

"Always. Hey... I might be home in a couple of hours."

"Good," Kate grinned widely.

"How about we work out together later?"

"Depends what you mean by 'work out'. Now scoot... before you're late," Kate ordered.

CJ gave her wife one of those looks and scanned the smaller woman before deciding she really should scoot. "Okay, okay... bye, baby."

"Bye," Lucy said, mimicking the word as the agent walked through the front door.

"Bye," CJ said, holding her hand over her heart and swooning at her family.

"Bye," Lucy answered, not knowing when to stop.

CJ laughed and waved, hearing a few more 'byes' as she got into her truck. As she was driving away from the house, a smile spread over her face and remained firmly plastered there all the way to work.

\* \* \* \* \*

Agent Carson got home five hours later. As she locked up her service weapon, she could hear a strange 'No.....no.....no' sound accompanied by a repetitive thudding. When she got to the entrance of the kitchen, she saw Kate loading up the dishwasher. "Katie?"

The actress spun around. "Hey, you." She approached her wife for a kiss and was taken into a bear hug.

"So, uhm, what's that noise?" the taller woman asked cautiously.

Kate smirked. "Well, I asked Lucy if she wanted lunch and she said no. I asked her if she wanted some juice and she said no. I asked her what she wanted to do... she said no. So..." Kate took the agent's hand and led her to the door of the crèche. "She's bouncing," Kate deadpanned, pointing to Lucy, who was jumping up and down on the spot throwing in the occasional protest.

CJ pinned her lips shut to restrain her laughter. "I see." Just then, Lucy saw her and came running. The tall woman lifted her daughter. "Hey, Little One."

"Hi," Lucy replied. "Mommy, home." The little girl was getting used to voicing the words she had heard everyone else using. It still amazed both CJ and Kate but they had learned to stifle their shocked looks when Lucy looked a little worried every time they changed expression at another new word spoken.

"I sure am. What have you been doing today, huh?"

Lucy frowned and looked sheepishly at Kate. She reached out to the actress in a reconciliation of sorts. "Mama."

Taking the girl into her arms, the blonde tweaked the tiny nose. "So... do you want something to eat now?" Lucy nodded and gave her signature hands on Kate's cheeks as an apology of sorts. "Come on then. Let's make Mommy a little snack too." Kate put the infant down and they walked back into the kitchen. "Go get changed, honey. Anything in particular you want?"

CJ grinned. At Kate's rolling eyes and waved hand, the agent laughed and said a coffee would do until dinner. She was just about to leave the large diner when she shouted over her shoulder. "Hey, where's Shannon?"

Kate shouted back. "She's out with Tony. I'll tell you once you come back down..."

CJ sprinted upstairs, efficiently changing into some of her favorite comfortable clothing. A quick pee and hand wash, and she was back down in the kitchen before the coffee was even ready. "So, where's Shannon?"

Kate shook her head and smiled at her wife. "She fell over in the school playground today and ripped her shirt. Her elbow is cut but not too badly. Tony was taking her to the mall after he picked her up, to get some brightly colored band aids and a couple of new school shirts since she's starting to grow out of the ones she has anyway. They should be back soon."

"Ah. She really likes Tony."

"She does. I'm glad they get on. Oh, and I told Alice to keep doing three days a week. I knew she was worried when I had all this leave, in case we wouldn't want her to work and their money issues would come back. I thought it would be good if we could still have some 'us' time anyway."

"Absolutely. It would."

"So," Kate said as she put the mugs on the table, "What happened at work today?" she asked, sitting next to her wife and handing a sandwich to Lucy who was perched on the next chair.

"I cleared up some paperwork, helped Mikey with some of his inquiries and tried to decide what I wanted to do about a woman I met at the UCLA Medical Center."

At those words, Kate looked up from her mug. "Woman?"

CJ's expression grew sullen. "She said she was my aunt."

"What?! When did this happen?"

"When I went to question the guard when Timmons first escaped," the agent responded, waiting for her wife to get mad at her.

“Why didn't you tell me? And who... I mean, is she Mom's sister?”

“Oh, Katie, I don't know. She said she is, but why didn't Mom ever tell me about her... I mean, she wouldn't have kept that from me, would she?”

“Honey, I don't know. Maybe she had her reasons. Or maybe this woman is just some psycho who-“

“No. She's not. She's a nurse... like Mom wanted to be... and she is the double of my mother.”

“Does she want to know you?”

“Yes. She gave me her number... said she had photos and mementos from the past,” the agent said, looking at her wife through dark lashes.

“Nom... nom... nom...” Lucy added as she chewed her sandwich.

Kate smiled and ruffled the girl's curly hair. “Good, huh?”

Lucy nodded and pushed the half-eaten snack up to her Mama's mouth. Kate took a small bite from the corner and nodded in approval. Satisfied that her sandwich was indeed delicious, Lucy went back to munching happily.

The actress turned back to her wife. “What's her name? This woman, I mean.”

“Cecilia Carson.”

“She never married?”

“I guess not. I never asked her about anything.”

“Why don't we call her and meet her for coffee?”

“Would you do that with me?”

“Oh, CJ, of course I would. She might be a member of your blood family. The only one you have... we should at least hear her out.”

The agent smiled wanly. “Okay. I'll find the number and give her a call. But just so you know, you three are more important to me than any blood family.”

Kate put her hand on her heart and blew a kiss to her wife.

\* \* \* \* \*

They had finished their snack and Tony had dropped Shannon off at the house. After the girl had done her homework and they'd eaten dinner, the family was now returning from a long walk with the dog. Shannon was being carried on Kate's back and Lucy was on CJ's shoulders. They were singing along to one of Shannon's favorite songs, randomly bursting into fits of giggles, and Kamali would occasionally remember that he was carrying a stick in his mouth and try to get one of his humans to throw it by leaving it precariously at their feet as they walked.

Shannon and Lucy were in heaven. Never before had they felt such love and happiness - and positive interaction - from parents, and Shannon sang at the top of her lungs with glee.

“Ever feel like a pack horse?” CJ said to her wife.

Kate laughed. “Heck yes. I think I’m gonna need some hay after all this work.”

“You don’t eat hay, Mama,” Shannon chuckled.

“I don’t think it would be very tasty for people to eat, huh?” the blonde grinned.

“No, but horses like it,” the girl replied over Kate’s shoulder.

“They sure do.”

Once they were indoors, the actress took their daughters upstairs to get ready for bath time. CJ went to find her cell phone. It was time to call Cecilia.

Her stomach flipped nervously as the call was answered.

“ *Hello?* ”

“Uh, hello? Cecilia?”

“ *Yes?* ”

“It’s CJ... CJ Carson,” the tall woman stuttered.

“ *Oh my goodness! CJ, I’m so happy you called. Although, I hope you didn’t call to tell me you didn’t want to see me... that would be just... oh, listen to me babbling. Sorry.* ”

“Well uh... I just wanted to ask you to meet me and my wife for coffee.”

“ *Your wife?* ”

“Yes. Will that be a problem?” the agent asked.

“ *Good heavens, no. It’s wonderful. I’m so glad you’re happy!* ”

“Oh... right... well, would you like to meet?”

“ *Yes.* ”

“Do you know ‘The Strong Bean’ coffee shop near the Bureau building downtown?”

“ *I think so. I guess you go in there a lot, huh?* ”

CJ’s stomach flipped again. This woman sounded so much like her mother. “Yeah. We use it at work. So, how about this Friday? Are you busy?”

“ *Not after 2pm. I’m on early shift that day.* ”

“Okay, let’s make it coffee at three?”

*“Great. I’ll see you both then. Thank you for calling me, CJ.”*

“You don’t need to thank me. Just bring those photos you talked about. I’d be interested to see them.”

*“Oh, of course, I’ll bring them. Bye for now, CJ.”*

“Bye, Cecilia.”

The agent fell back onto the couch when she hung up the call. ‘*Wow, that was exhausting!*’ She heaved a sigh before mustering up the energy to go help with bath time. As she ascended the stairs, she could hear the sounds of giggling and splashing which got progressively louder until she reached the main family bathroom. Leaning on the door frame, CJ smiled at the sight of their two daughters in the tub with cone heads made with bubbles. Kate turned around from her kneeling position on the floor when her wife stifled a laugh.

“Hey, you... did the call go okay?”

“Actually, yes... all done. We’re meeting her for coffee at The Strong Bean,” the agent replied as she sat on the closed toilet seat.

“Oh good. I like that place.”

“Me too. Soooo, those are some funny looking haircuts you girls have got...” CJ smirked.

Shannon produced a cheesy, toothy smile. “I made Lucy’s but it keeps falling down,” the girl said, trying to make the bubbles come to a point again.

“Here... let me help,” Kate said.

“Mommy, here,” Lucy demanded, wiggling all the fingers on her right hand to summon the agent.

CJ knelt down next to Kate and popped a kiss onto her younger daughter’s forehead, transferring some of the bubbles onto the agent’s nose, which of course set off another round of hilarious laughter. Once the children were in bed and snoring peacefully, the couple went straight to their room for a soak in their own tub.

While they relaxed together, the taller woman rubbed Kate’s stomach since she knew her wife had cramps. They briefly conversed about a few things but all-in-all it was a silent time... just being... together.

In bed, CJ snuggled up to her nude wife and inhaled deeply, reveling in her wife’s fresh, natural scent.

Kate’s face took on a cute pout. “I got my period today.”

“So?” CJ slurred while she kissed the blonde’s neck. “Are you not in the mood?”

“Well, I never said that,” the blonde responded, rubbing her hand over her spouse’s hip.

“Sooo... there’s nothing stopping me sticking my tongue into your mouth?”

“No...”

“And there’s nothing stopping me... sucking on your nipples?”

Kate gasped. “No...”

The agent raised her dark eyebrow. “And there's *nothing* stopping me... licking your clit and making you come, right?”

A squeak and a moan escaped the smaller woman's mouth. “God, no...”

CJ kissed her lover's neck. “Oh... good...” she breathed.

## **Epilogue**

CJ seemed a little nervous as they entered the coffee shop. Kate led the way and gently grasped the agent's hand. The taller woman couldn't see Cecilia anywhere. “She must not be here yet. Let's get a table.”

Once they were seated, CJ's fingers rapped a steady beat on the surface of the table. The actress slowly covered the larger hand with her own. “Relax, honey.”

“Sorry. I'm not sure why I'm acting this way.”

“It's a slightly awkward situation, in that you don't know why Mom didn't tell you about your aunt. Let's just deal with it moment by moment,” Kate suggested with a loving smile.

CJ replied with a lop-sided smile of her own, knowing her wife's motto these days was just to live life and go with the flow. Just then, the bell behind the door dinged and the raven-haired woman looked up to see the spitting image of her mother walk through the door.

Cecilia Carson bustled over to the table immediately. “Oh, I am so sorry I'm late. I got stuck in traffic and I really didn't want to keep you waiting...” The woman stopped talking when CJ raised a hand.

“It's okay. We only just got here ourselves. Cecilia... this is my wife, Kate. Kate, this is Cecilia Carson.”

“So good to meet you, Kate,” the older woman said nervously.

“And you, Cecilia. Please, sit down,” the actress offered.

Once they had ordered the coffee, the conversation seemed to go straight to the heart of the matter.

“Why didn't Mom ever tell me about you?” CJ asked.

“Well, I don't know... actually I do know but it's really not a conversation for a public place like this.”

“I'd say this is fine. Please tell me,” the agent pushed.

“Uh, well... do you still keep in touch with your... father?”

CJ frowned, as did Kate. The agent wondered what her father had to do with anything. “I never really did keep in touch. But he died a few years ago anyway. What does he have to do with it?”

“I'm sorry to hear he died,” Cecilia said politely, but both women could tell she wasn't sorry.

“Don't be sorry. I'm not,” the agent said abruptly.

Kate held her wife's hand under the table. "What happened, Cecilia?" she requested gently.

"Let's just say there was an incident with your father... and when I told my sister, she didn't believe me. We had a huge fight and she told me never to come near her again. I tried to stay in touch after that but she wouldn't answer my calls."

"When was this?" CJ asked.

"You were almost four, I think. A long time ago. I was devastated when I found out you'd moved house and I couldn't find Alyssa again." Tears formed in the nurse's eyes and she blinked them away.

"Did my father hurt you?" CJ figured she already knew the answer.

A nod from Cecilia confirmed it. "When I refused him... he did hit me, yes. Your Mom didn't believe he was capable. I shouldn't have said anything."

"She found out later how 'capable' he was of violence, Cecilia. I'm sorry he hurt you. And I'm sorry she realized it too late."

"You have nothing to be sorry for, CJ. Please... let's not get hung up on the past... and please don't be mad at your Mom for not telling you. It was a different time back then. Women didn't really speak up as much as they do now."

CJ sighed. "Did you bring the things you talked about when we met?"

"Yes! Here... in my bag."

The nurse pulled out a bundle of old photographs and a few personal items the two sisters had shared when they were young. It included a necklace, the pendant of which was half a heart with an inscription on it. The agent gulped silently. She had the other half at home. Kate and CJ looked at a few photos and when the actress noticed tears forming in her wife's eyes, she decided to ask some questions to fill the silent gap.

"When was this one taken?" Kate asked, looking at a photo of Alyssa, Cecilia and a very tiny CJ.

"That was CJ's third birthday. Do you remember that hideous sweater I bought for you, CJ?"

The agent sniffed and shook her head. "No, but I just can't believe how alike you and Mom are. You could be twins."

"Sometimes we were mistaken for twins in high school," Cecilia said affectionately.

"I need to stop looking at these for now," the agent said, trying to hold back all the emotion she was feeling. "But I think we'd like it if you came over for dinner one night soon."

Cecilia burst into tears. "Oh, I'd absolutely love that. Oh, CJ, thank you so much..."

"Quit cryin'... you'll get me started again," the taller woman said, adding a smile to let her aunt see she was teasing slightly.

Kate smiled and slipped her arm over her spouse's shoulder. "We'd love for you to come over next week, Cecilia."

"It's a date. You can give me a call and let me know when suits you both. I'm on early shift Monday through Wednesday, but that's all I have on next week."

“Are you part time at the hospital then?” CJ asked, glad of the subject change.

“Yes. I love being a nurse but part time is definitely enough.”

“You guys do good work.”

“So do you, Agent,” the older woman said proudly.

After another half hour of light conversation, they all left the coffee shop. On the way home, CJ was deep in thought as Kate drove the truck. ‘ *Another family member* ’, she pondered. It was amazing. She would find out everything that happened involving her father when she got to know Cecilia Carson better. She needed to understand why her mother would keep this from her... but she had a pretty good idea how awful her father could be and didn't blame her aunt for trying to warn Alyssa.

CJ sighed again and smiled. She shrugged and decided she could handle anything with her strong, loving wife by her side.

**The End...**