

After The Damage Was Done

By Wendy Arthur

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This story contains scenes of mild violence, but nothing scary this time. However, this story does contain a discussion dealing with the lead characters' childhood abuse, both mental and physical. So, 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.

Chapter 1

CJ Carson watched her wife as Kate closed her eyes, savoring the last moments of the evening sun on her face as it fell behind the mountains. As they sat on the back porch, the special agent tried to comprehend what they were currently discussing. It seemed they were about to become the adoptive parents of two little girls whom CJ had met through one of the worst cases in her FBI career.

Kate opened her eyes, took in her spouse's expression and knew the tall woman was deep in thought. "Tell me what you're thinking now, honey," the actress requested.

CJ pushed her foot off the wooden planks beneath them to restart the gentle sway of the bench swing. "I'm just trying to imagine how I'll cope as a Mom... if our application's successful."

"Didn't Mark say it was just a formality now? Paperwork and all that?"

"I think so. But I would guess that this woman at Social Services will want to meet us... to speak with us, at least," CJ said, snuggling deeper into Kate's side.

"Hmm, possibly. I can't really think of a better parent for them than you, honey. I mean, you know exactly what happened to their family and we'll cope with any questions together..." Kate trailed off, feeling CJ tense beside her. "What?"

"I never even thought of that. Oh God! What should we tell Shannon if she asks about them?" the tall woman asked, feeling a slight panic about the idea of being a parent, never mind the whole background of Shannon and Lucy Davenport.

"CJ, it'll be fine. I think, if she asks, we should explain it in non-scary but truthful terms. But we also don't know how much she already knows. She might have asked Helen about her Dad and brothers already. We'll deal with any questions she has about Sheila, too. I know we can do it."

"I hope Helen hasn't told them anything. Judging by that woman's attitude toward them, I can't imagine what she'd answer to those kinds of questions," CJ sighed.

"Well, you and I have been through a lot in our time together. I'm sure we'll manage this," Kate said with authority, kissing the side of her wife's head.

"I know. It's just such a huge deal, Katie. I mean, we talked about having kids but I thought we meant in the future, like a few years at least. And didn't you want to give birth?"

Kate chuckled sleepily. "I think I'd like that, but having Shannon and Lucy doesn't mean we won't want more in the future."

CJ gasped. "Oh good Lord, let's wait until I figure out how to handle these two. Please?"

The actress tightened her arm over CJ's stomach. "Honey, I'm in the middle of a very successful TV series and I just won an award. I'm not planning on us getting pregnant any time soon. I think we'll cope fine with the two girls. Although, I will have to speak with Tony to see if he wants to extend his duties."

"Oh, good point. But if he doesn't, we could hire someone to help, right?"

"Yep, I think we'd have to anyway. He can't do everything and drive me to work. I have a feeling he'll want the job, though... and another pay rise."

CJ laughed quietly. "Uh huh. We'll figure something out."

They continued their discussion for a while longer, figuring out the 'hows' and 'whens', which rooms the girls could have and trying not to get too overwhelmed by the thought of becoming parents. After all, it wasn't all signed, sealed and delivered just yet.

An hour later, Kate dragged an overwhelmed CJ up the stairs. Once the agent was in bed, the actress slipped her body under the duvet and groaned at the feel of her wife's soft, warm skin against her own. She rested her hand on CJ's chest and lightly scratched and tickled the flesh between the agent's breasts. CJ sighed deeply, savoring the touch. Her mind was still full of what would happen in their future but she tried to clear it out and concentrate on her spouse.

"You need to relax, baby. Let's forget about it tonight and start worrying again tomorrow, huh?" Kate purred, rising to kiss CJ's cheek.

The agent turned her head to capture the sweet lips with her own. "Mmm, okay. You talked me into it."

"You're so easy..." Kate giggled.

"Only with you," CJ gasped as a smaller hand gently massaged her breast.

The taller woman got up on all fours and hovered over her wife. CJ looked over the woman who had stolen her heart so completely. The blonde hair, slightly mussed with bangs sprinkled across the smooth forehead; the beautiful, dark green eyes that pierced into her very soul; the strong collarbone, reminding CJ that she had to nibble on it very soon, and the perfect valley between two glorious breasts, the sight of which made the agent weak with desire. She

stopped her visual trail and decided on kissing instead. Starting with the full lips, CJ kissed her wife so gently, trying to let Kate feel all the desire, passion, gratitude and unconditional love she was feeling.

She began a slow trail across Kate's cheek to her ear and delicately sucked the lobe into her mouth, making the actress moan with pleasure. CJ licked the shell-like structure while inhaling the scent of Kate's hair - her beloved coconut shampoo - and it gave her such a shiver that she felt the wetness gather between her own legs. Kate had her hands on the back of CJ's shoulders and was running her fingernails in small circles, creating a plethora of goose bumps all over the tall body.

CJ made her way down to Kate's neck, licking, nipping and suckling on the creamy skin. She lowered her mouth to that wonderful collarbone, then dipped her tongue into the hollow of her wife's neck, and moaned as she felt Kate grip her by the hair, just to make sure she continued south. Kate's breasts were so very sensitive by this point that the agent had only breathed on her nipple and it stood to attention. Smirking, CJ sucked it into her mouth, batting her tongue over the tip as she tasted the surrounding flesh. Kate whimpered and began to squirm around underneath CJ, and the taller woman knew her spouse was becoming very aroused.

She teased the nipple for a few more minutes, rasping her tongue and teeth over the tip to drive her wife crazy, before heading over to make sure its twin got the same attention. She was completely unprepared for Kate to climax and her blue eyes popped open as the actress thrust her hips up to meet CJ's stomach. She kept her lips wrapped around the nipple and tried to look up at her wife. Catching a glance of Kate's mouth open and closed eyes, then feeling her hands gripping CJ's back and head tightly, the agent realized she had indeed made Kate come with her intensive foreplay. She let the nipple go with a slight pop and looked round at the blonde. CJ raised an eyebrow and the actress grinned.

"Well... that's... new..." Kate breathed, and then shivered as the little aftershocks rippled through her body.

"I'll say," the agent replied with a hint of wonder.

"That was... amazing. The way you... were... oh, I can't speak," Kate said, slapping CJ's shoulder playfully.

The tall woman chuckled quietly and covered Kate's body with her own. "Is there anything else I can get for you, my dear?"

Kate laughed out loud. "You're all I need, baby."

"Uh huh." CJ was incredibly aroused but she knew by the look in those dark, hooded eyes, that Kate wasn't done anyway, so she waited for her wife to dictate what was to happen next.

The actress kissed her spouse passionately until they were breathless, tongues dancing together and finally licking the sweet lips as they parted.

Kate held CJ's face a few millimeters from her. "How about you sit up and slide your delicious flesh onto mine?" she husked, raising an eyebrow when her wife blushed.

"Unngggg," was CJ's only verbal response.

The raven-haired agent was so very close to climaxing but she did what her spouse asked. She almost blushed again when she came, simply from her sensitive ridge touching the blonde thatch of hair as she settled onto Kate's mound. Her body slowly convulsed as the mild orgasm faded and she leaned gently on her wife's breasts to steady her upper body. Kate watched intently as her Goddess-like lover came back to her. CJ opened her eyes and smiled, making the blue orbs sparkle with love. She moved one hand to lean on the mattress beside Kate's head and the other slid between their bodies. She spread the swollen outer lips at her center and lowered her wet flesh onto Kate's. She gently opened Kate up and they both gasped when CJ began to thrust... very slowly.

Kate raised her hands to massage CJ's breasts as little moaning sounds involuntarily left her throat. CJ's tongue was only just poking out of her mouth as she concentrated on the wonderful sensations working through her entire being. Kate began to move against her every stroke and both were lost in a haze of pleasure.

As they took their time to gradually build the intensity, their movements became faster and slightly erratic. Their passion was like the birth of a lightning bolt, sparking through the air between them and as they drew close to their peak, CJ opened her eyes to connect with the darkened emeralds beneath her.

"Ciara! Oh... oh..."

"Yeah..."

Kate's orgasm shot through her petite frame and she pressed her center hard into CJ's. The agent couldn't resist and let herself go, falling into her climax with an almighty exhale and a strangled scream. Kate grabbed her wife's buttocks to keep CJ connected to her as they rode out the pulsing aftershocks. The feeling of CJ's wet flesh against hers was unbelievable and Kate wanted to experience it for as long as possible.

"Mmm-mmm-mmmm," Kate murmured, as if she had just tasted something heavenly.

CJ's eyes were smoldering pools of spent pleasure. She leaned down and covered Kate's lips with her own. They kissed for a few languid moments and once they'd parted, CJ rolled over onto the bed. Kate turned to her, as the agent pulled the duvet up around them and they settled into their usual warm ball of sleepiness.

"I love you, Katie."

"I love you more, my darling," the actress replied, waiting for the next line.

"Not possible," CJ slurred sleepily.

Kate smirked. "I beg to differ."

"Agree to disagree?"

"Absolutely."

A few moments later, they were both snoring lightly.

* * * * *

Getting to the studios at 8am the next morning, Kate and her fellow actors knuckled down to work. Once they'd gotten three full scenes in the bag, an 'incident' halted production for the third time in two weeks.

Kate stood at the edge of the set with her arms crossed. "I can't believe this place. They need to up the set budget for sure," she muttered to her co-star, Nicole, as they watched the crew trying to clear up yet another pile of rubble after a 'wall' collapsed.

Nicole stood with her arms crossed, mimicking Kate's stance but shaking slightly. "It was too close this time. I'm not sure I can continue unless they do a complete rebuild."

Kate looked at the dark-haired actress. She wasn't close to Nicole but they seemed to maintain a good working relationship, even though they were the two lead females. "Why don't you talk to Phil... see if he can sort something out with the studio bosses?"

"I think I will." Nicole shivered and gave Kate a nod before walking away.

"What's *she* groaning about?" said a voice behind the blonde.

She turned to see Jody Morgan standing with her hands on her hips. Jody was one of the other actresses on the show, a typical prima donna, slightly taller than the blonde was, but similar in her coloring. Her eyes were a hazel-green but held none of the sparkle and kindness that Kate's did.

Kate eyed the woman's 'my-shit-don't-stink' facial expression and her body language. She mentally rolled her eyes at the incredulity. "Well, she was almost flattened and I think she got quite a scare. She wasn't groaning."

"Hmmpph. Sounded like groaning to me. Where's Jack?" Jody grumbled.

"Uh, I don't know. Maybe the cafeteria?" Kate answered, completely confused by the woman.

Jody didn't even respond and stalked off toward the studio doors. Kate shook her head. 'Moody bitch,' she thought to herself with a stifled chuckle.

A stark half-hour later, Phil Romaine and his crew had changed the shooting schedule and they moved to stage twelve to film some other scenes while the damage was being repaired. Kate stood tapping her toe on her mark as the rest of the crew shifted the furniture around in her 'office'.

A slightly pale-faced Nicole had been pulled off her scene again due to not being quite with it, and Kate was going to shoot the next scene, out of sequence. Phil shouted 'action!' and she went into her dialogue with Jack. His character had been dumped by hers and Kate was quite happy about that, as it meant she didn't have to kiss him anymore. So there they were, having an on-screen argument, Kate's timing and dramatic performance perfectly portrayed as Jack responded in his usual exuberant fashion.

A few moments later, just as Kate said her penultimate line of the scene, she heard a blood-curdling scream off to her left. She turned to see Nicole fainting and Phil jumping up out of his director's chair with a look of complete horror on his face. Jack reached out towards Kate but he was across the set by this point and tried to get around the desk... but he was too late. The next thing Kate felt was a solid and unbelievably heavy thump to her head, sending a burning hot jolt of pain through her entire body as she crumpled to the ground. Darkness smothered her as the large lighting rig covered the petite body, ripping through her lab coat and pinning her to the studio floor.

* * * * *

At the LA field office, CJ tapped her finger on the phone handset as she waited to be taken off hold. Jamie plopped down in the seat opposite her and placed a hot coffee on the agent's desk. "Thanks, Penfold," CJ winked.

"You've been on hold forever, DM," the blonde said.

"They've passed me through to the right department... just waiting for..." She flicked the piece of paper in front of her. "...Marion Fletcher to pick up now."

Marion was Mark's friend at Social Services and she had called CJ earlier, but the agent had been out doing some legwork for a case and missed the call. She sipped on her coffee, curling her lip slightly at the bitter taste of the machine-made drink. "Ugh. I think I'll pop out for the good stuff after this call."

Jamie nodded and waited, wanting to find out the latest on her friend's adoption of Shannon and Lucy. She leaned her head on her hand and sighed. CJ perked up when she heard the droning, on-hold elevator music cease and the line, click.

" *Hello. This is Marion Fletcher* ," said the feminine voice on the other end of the phone.

"Hello, this is CJ Carson. I believe you called earlier. I'm sorry I missed it," CJ responded politely.

" *Oh, Ms Carson. I'm glad you got back to me. I wanted to discuss the adoption with you and your wife. Would it be possible to come and visit you in your home?*"

"Of course. When did you want to visit?" the agent asked, feeling slightly nervous for some reason.

" *How does Friday sound... say around 2pm?*"

"Sounds fine. Can I call you back to confirm once I check with Kate?"

" *Yes. If you can't get hold of me, just leave a message. I'll hopefully see you Friday then* ," Marion said.

"Is... is there anything we need to prepare for you... before you arrive?" CJ stuttered.

" *No, Ms Carson. I just want to come see you both and have a look at the house but from what Mark has told me, you are perfect candidates and have a great rapport with the children already. It seems Shannon raves about you to all she meets. And you're saving me a lot of paperwork on this one... but don't let that get around* ," Marion replied.

CJ sensed the smile behind the words and took a deep breath. "Okay, thanks. I just don't know how all this works."

" *That's why I'm coming to see you. Don't worry... I'll talk you through everything. I'll see you Friday* ."

"Right, Friday. Thank you. Goodbye."

" *Goodbye, Ms Carson* ."

CJ hung up the phone, feeling the blood rushing quickly through her veins. "Holy crap, why am I so nervous?" she said to Jamie.

"It's a big deal, DM. Just take it a step at a time. You and Kate will do fine," Jamie assured.

"God, you sound like Kate," CJ muttered, running her hand through her raven locks.

Jamie smiled and got a few more details from her colleague before going back to her own desk. CJ decided to wrap up a little more of her case file before going out for the good coffee.

* * * * *

Inside stage twelve at the Olympian Studios, everyone seemed to be in a state of utter panic. Nicole was still out cold and Phil was carefully lifting the lighting rig with the help of Jack and a few crewmembers. Someone had called 911 and the sirens could be heard outside the studio walls. Everyone else seemed to be flailing around, not quite sure what to do.

The director tried to slow his breathing as he looked at Kate's limp body. Her lab coat was sliced and there was blood seeping through her blouse beneath, which on closer inspection was also ripped. She had a few burn marks where the hot spotlights had pressed against her skin before they cooled, and a huge bruise was forming on her forehead and creeping up under her hairline. As the paramedics worked feverishly on Kate, getting her into a neck brace and carefully putting her onto the stretcher, one of the studio bosses arrived and told Phil that he was temporarily shutting down the Deadline studios. They were now under investigation due to the number of incidents

in a short space of time. The police had followed the boss in and were ushering all witnesses into a room just behind the stage.

Jack rubbed his hands together in a nervous fashion at the sight of Kate on the stretcher being taken out the door to the waiting ambulance. He spotted a very stressed out and worried-looking Samantha Morris, running in from another direction, obviously having heard the news. Information traveled around these studios faster than the Internet and he made his way over to Sam to tell her what had happened. Just after he got the basic story out, a cop approached them and directed Jack into the witness room and told Sam to leave, since she hadn't seen anything.

The redhead ran out the door and caught the paramedic as he was closing the rear doors to the ambulance. "I'm her best friend. I need to go with her." Sam knew it wasn't strictly true but really wanted to go with the actress.

"Well, I..." the young man began.

"Please," Sam pleaded. "I need to call her spouse on the way. I need to be there with her!"

The paramedic must have seen the worry in Sam's eyes and relented. "Okay. In you go," he said, opening the door for her.

She sat down inside, nodding once to the other EMT before looking at Kate's pale face. She swiped a few tears off her cheeks as the engine growled to life and the sirens wailed as they exited the studio lot.

* * * * *

CJ picked up the phone, rubbing her eyes as she tried to focus after reading an especially long file.

"Agent Carson..."

" *CJ, its Sam ...*"

The agent immediately straightened up as her stomach hit the floor. She sensed something was terribly wrong. "Sam, what... what's happened?"

Jamie also stiffened at her friend's words. She looked up to see CJ's eyes were open way too wide.

Sam knew she couldn't bullshit and came straight to the point. "*CJ, there's been an accident. I'm at the hospital with Kate...*"

"Is she all right?"

" *She's been injured. You need to come here... now, CJ,*" Sam stammered, not quite sure how she was managing to speak.

"Where are you?" CJ barked.

" *UCLA-*"

CJ cut her off, knowing she was at UCLA Medical Center. "Right. Stay with her. I'm on my way."

The agent hung up the phone and grabbed her jacket. Jamie was about to open her mouth to ask what was wrong when CJ turned to her. "Tell Mark I've left. Kate's been hurt. I have to go," she said and ran out the door, not waiting for a response.

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CJ drove like a maniac and arrived at the ER a surprisingly short time later. She quickly found Sam in the waiting area. The producer had been sitting hoping for news since she'd arrived but didn't have any answers for the tall woman. She quickly reeled off what had happened to Kate and rubbed her palms nervously down her slacks when CJ didn't seem to register any of her words. The agent was on automatic pilot and went on the rampage, looking for a doctor to tell her where the hell her wife was. Sam attempted to calm the tall woman but it was pointless even trying.

On the inside, CJ was terrified. Her heart was... well... she couldn't even feel it beating. It seemed it was going so fast that each beat had just merged together into one long flat line. Fear-based adrenaline pulsed around her body and it was the only thing keeping her on her feet. She eventually found someone who resembled a doctor and strode up to the man, using her presence and height to get his attention.

"Are you a doctor?" she boomed.

"Oh," the man said, spinning around to face her, "yes."

"I need to know where my wife is. Her name is Kate Carson... or Marshall," CJ said, a small amount of reality seeping in as she realized Kate could be checked in under either name.

The man recognized the extreme worry and stress in this tall woman's fierce eyes and quickly changed his demeanor. "My name is James Kyle. I'm Miss Marshall's doctor. Please, come with me. I need to speak with you," he said calmly, ushering CJ into a nearby room.

The tall agent allowed herself to be guided through the door, feeling like she might faint very soon. Once they were seated, the doctor looked at CJ with concern.

"Are you okay? You look very pale... Miss?"

CJ stared at him for a second, not even comprehending the words. "What? Oh, Carson... and I'm fine. I need to know everything, Doctor. And I need to see my wife."

"We'll go and see her in a moment. She is very much alive and she has some injuries from the..." He looked at his notes. "... lighting rig that fell on her. She has some minor burns and took a pretty severe blow to the head. Miss Carson, we've heavily sedated her due to some minor swelling on the brain. Thankfully, we didn't need to induce an artificial coma-

"Coma? Swelling? Oh my God, please tell me she's going to be okay?" CJ said, throwing her face into her hands and leaning forward to try and stop the onslaught of hyperventilation.

"Please try to breathe deeply. We *didn't* need to induce a coma. It's a positive thing. She's responding slowly to treatment. We'll reduce her sedation when we're satisfied she's out of danger."

CJ gulped repeatedly. She was going to throw up all over the doctor's shiny black shoes. She wanted to punch her fists through the walls. She wanted to scream so hard that every window in the place shattered. Instead, she sat and stared at this man, who probably had to give people this kind of news every day. She didn't realize she was holding her breath until the doctor leaned forward to touch her shoulder.

"Miss Carson, do you need to lie down for a moment?"

"No... no, I'm fine. I need to see her. Please."

"All right."

As they walked the corridors, CJ couldn't ignore the clinical hospital stench and tried very hard not to barf everywhere. Her stomach was doing its best to expel any and all of its contents, but she clenched her teeth together and willed her breakfast and the copious amounts of coffee she'd consumed, to stay down.

Walking through the door, a few instant tears escaped and ran down her face as she looked at the small body in the bed. Kate was wired up to all sorts of contraptions and her skin was so pasty white it almost looked blue - which did nothing for the agent's heart, which she was sure had stopped beating altogether.

She sat in the chair next to the bed as the doctor checked the patient's chart. CJ touched the smaller hand with a single finger, feeling like she just couldn't cope with more.

The doctor hung the chart back on the foot of the bed and came to the opposite side to CJ. "She seems to be stable, Miss Carson, and she's responding to the medication quite well. You can stay with her for a while," he said.

"What's your prognosis, Doctor?"

"We won't know much more until she's awake. Her external injuries are comparatively minor."

"What does that mean? Compared to what?" CJ said with some alarm.

"The swelling, Miss Carson. Once she's awake, we'll get a better idea of the damage, if indeed there is any at all. Please try to stay calm," he said gently.

CJ was usually the one asking people to stay calm and she nodded, knowing that anything bad happening to Kate was the worst thing in her life, and she had to try and focus.

The doctor smiled wanly. "I'll leave you alone for a while. If you need anything, just ask the nurse," he added as he exited, not sensing a response from the agent.

Just as he walked through the door, CJ threw a quick 'thank you' over her shoulder, very much a delayed reaction to the information she had received.

She fixed her eyes on her wife and was aware of her heart beginning to beat again. One thing that gave her strength was that Kate was breathing on her own and her injuries seemed to be almost insignificant, save for a burn mark on her upper chest and the bruise on her head. The only potentially serious problem was the swelling. CJ tried to stop the feeling of panic that seemed to be making her overreact to everything. Taking a deep breath, she gulped and took the hand she was touching into her own. She rubbed her thumb slowly over the knuckles and finally stopped fighting her emotions. Hanging her head weakly, she let the tears fall and bounce off the cold, sterile floor.

They could take anything... anything away from her, and it wouldn't matter... but not her Katie.

* * * * *

Out in the ER, Assistant Director Mark Mulroneo went to the reception desk and flashed his badge. After being told about Kate's condition, he walked away and spotted a cop near the doors to the secured area.

"AD Mulrone, FBI," he said to the broad shouldered officer.

"Delaney, Sir. How can I help you?"

"Are you here because of the incident at Olympian Studios?"

"No, Sir. Do you need to know about that?"

Mark sighed. "It couldn't hurt. I'd appreciate if you could find out what happened."

"No problem. Give me two minutes," he said, walking away to use his radio privately.

A few moments later, the cop told Mark all he could. The AD had called the studios already, after talking to Jamie, to try and figure out why his agent disappeared from work. He'd found out that an accident had halted production, but that was all. Mark was worried about Kate. The little blonde had captured his heart. Not in the way one might think, they just had a strangely easy friendship.

He dropped his shoulders and sighed. Thanking the cop, he headed back out of the ER, knowing he couldn't do anything more here. He would talk to CJ when she was ready to call him.

Chapter 2

As the day progressed, CJ did nothing but sit beside her wife's bed staring blankly ahead. Sometimes her eyes would drop shut and she'd suddenly jump, realizing that sleep was trying to claim her. She looked at Kate's unconscious face and wept again without being aware of it. She leaned her elbows on the edge of the bed and whispered to the blonde.

"Katie, if you can hear me, I just want to let you know I love you more than anything. You can't leave me. I... I don't know what I'd do without you. There is no life without you, Katie. Please... just come back to me. I know I'm being over-dramatic but I can't help it... just don't leave me..." CJ broke down again and dropped her face onto the white sheet. She cried until there were no more tears, and faded in and out of something resembling sleep as she held onto Kate's hand.

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CJ was completely confused when she woke up with a painful neck, but remembered she had fallen asleep in a hideously crooked position. She looked at her watch and did a double take when she saw it was 6am. *'How the hell did that happen?'* she dazedly thought.

She blinked away the sleepiness and stood to stretch her stiff body. Looking at Kate, there seemed to be no change. She hadn't moved all night. *'Well of course she wouldn't move... she's out cold, you idiot,'* CJ grumbled silently to herself.

A short time later, a slight knock at the open door to the room made her jump and turn around. Jamie stood looking at her friend worriedly. "Hey, DM, are you all right?" she asked, seeing the agent's empty, exhausted stare.

CJ blinked and took a few seconds to figure out a response to the relatively simple question. "Fine."

"How is she?"

"Sedated... completely out of it," CJ said quietly. "They'll wake her when they think she's out of danger."

The blonde agent nodded and sat down on a nearby chair. "CJ, I have news. Sam and I worked together to find out what the cops were saying inside the studio. They were there all last night."

"Oh?" CJ said, her eyes never leaving the bed in front of her.

"Yes. Uh, the recent set failures at the studio... it looks like they uh, were not accidents..."

CJ's head slowly lifted to stare at her colleague. Jamie gulped at the rising anger she could see - and feel - from CJ. "What did you say?" the raven-haired woman almost snarled.

"Someone deliberately caused the rig to fall. The cops found that it had been messed with. The chains to the ceiling were loosened and the stabilizing ropes had been cut. The rig had been precariously balanced and would have fallen with a light breeze... or someone shaking a nearby hoisting chain, which is what the cops think, must have happened. They dusted the chain in the hope of getting a print," Jamie said, trying to stay in agent mode to remain calm. She had to be honest, she was very angry at whomever had done this too, but nothing close to the rage she could see, barely contained in her friend.

Special Agent Carson got to her feet and ran her hand roughly through her hair. She began to pace the floor and when Jamie didn't say anything else, CJ stormed out of the room and down the corridor. As she made her way to the exit, people moved aside, seeing the ferocity and determination shooting out from icy eyes.

In a Jekyll and Hyde moment, the agent stopped briefly to politely tell the nurse she would be back soon, then returned to the nostril-flaring, teeth-gritting warrior persona. Jamie followed at a safe distance, concerned for CJ but not ready to get in her way just yet. But when the tall woman pressed the remote for the central locking on her truck, Jamie decided that it was time to intervene. CJ was in no fit state to drive anywhere.

"DM! Wait!"

CJ turned around and balled her fists tightly, clenching and unclenching them in an effort to stop the destructive feelings coursing through her. "Don't tell me to calm down! I don't think I could stand it," she growled, almost crawling out of her skin.

"I won't... but please let me drive you wherever you're going. Please?" Jamie begged.

"Is Mulroney at work?"

"I don't know. I haven't been in yet."

"Take me to the office."

Jamie didn't argue and intended to stick to CJ like glue for the rest of the day, or until she saw some sign that the agent had returned to sanity. She drove to the LA field office and did not attempt a conversation during the journey. CJ sat stock still, her elbow on the windowsill, twisting her lips with her fingers. Her brow was in a constant furrow and her cheeks continually jerked due to the grinding of her teeth.

Once inside the building, Jamie remained in the corridor as CJ knocked on Mark's door and walked straight in, not waiting for an answer.

Mark stood up abruptly behind his desk and frowned at his agent. He sized her up immediately. "Sit down, CJ."

The agent didn't comply and leaned both hands on his desk in an intimidating manner. "I want to be put on the investigation at Olympian Studios," she stated, a little too calmly.

Mark mirrored her stance. "You know I cannot authorize that, CJ, as much as I'd like to."

"Bullshit! You would authorize it if she'd died! Goddamn it!"

"Enough!" Mark shouted. "That's too far, Agent. Now, sit down!"

CJ was struggling to control the anger and slowly lowered herself into the seat. Mark straightened up and pursed his lips. He watched the woman as she stared at the desktop and gripped the arms of the chair with her hands, holding on so tightly that he could see her knuckles turning white.

He sighed and tried to understand how incredibly scared CJ would be. "Listen to me. I cannot authorize an investigation into this..." He raised his hand when CJ took a breath to speak. "But, I suggest you take two weeks of paid leave to be by your wife's side. If you... need any of us, we're only a phone call away," he said, raising an eyebrow and hoping that CJ would catch on to what he meant. "Jamie is due some vacation time, so I'll see what I can do about getting someone in to cover her workload... *if* she wants the time off."

CJ was lost in her glare at him, but finally realized what he meant. "I... thank you," she said quietly, still clenching her jaws together.

"If anything major comes up, I'll need to call Jamie back in here," he added sternly, not wanting to let CJ off the hook completely for her earlier outburst.

"Yes, Sir."

"Good."

CJ nodded and stood up. "Is there anything else, Sir?"

"Yes. Do *not* self-destruct over this, CJ. Kate is tough... you know that as well as I do, and I don't want to see you fall apart. You need to be there for her." CJ's eyes turned to fire again at his presumptuous tone, but Mark gave her a warning look and she backed down. "Now, I suggest you go and calm down a little before you leave. I'll call Jamie."

"She's here, Sir. She wouldn't let me drive from the hospital."

"I can see why. I'll talk to you later, Agent."

CJ knew a dismissal when she heard one and walked out of the room. As she approached Jamie, who was standing at the end of the corridor, she heard the agent's cell phone ring and knew it was Mark. Jamie concluded her brief conversation before CJ even got to her and they both left the office together.

* * * * *

Sam was at work early, after all the drama yesterday delayed production in practically every studio as extra safety checks were undertaken. She crossed the lot, fretfully rubbing her forehead and worrying about Kate. She had called the hospital but there was no change in the actress' condition. Now, she headed to the cafeteria to get something to drink. She spotted a very weary-looking Jack Bannerman shuffling across the parking area and decided to see if he knew anything further.

On her approach, she could see the exhaustion in his eyes. And had he been crying? Surely not.

"Hello, Sam," Jack croaked.

"Hello, Jack. Are you okay?"

"No. I was here all night. The cops practically interrogated me."

"Why would they do that?"

"I think they did it to everyone who saw what happened. Some of us haven't been home yet. Being the gentleman I am, I let the others go first. God, Sam, I tried to get to her... I really did. But it all happened in a matter of seconds," he blurted. "Do you know how Kate is?"

The redhead was surprised to see sincerity in his eyes, but also knew he was quite a good actor. "No change. She's unconscious. That's all I know."

Jack rubbed both hands over his face in an effort to blank out the horrible events. It didn't work of course, and he shook his head slowly. "I gotta go check on Nicole."

"Nicole?"

"Yeah. She went to the cafeteria to wait for me. We're... you know, an item."

"Oh? I thought you were going out with Jody," the producer said, aware of just about every piece of gossip around the studios.

"Uh, that ended. She was too..."

"Too?"

"Too crazy. I'm outta here. Later, Sam."

"Bye, Jack," Sam replied. Frowning at this new information - and the 'Police Line Do Not Cross' tape on the studio door - she continued her own journey to the cafeteria and decided to investigate further. She knew the biggest gossip mongers in the business and would use them fully in the coming days.

* * * * *

Jamie persuaded CJ to go home and get a change of clothing for herself and pajamas for Kate. When they were there, they found Tony walking the dog and CJ told him what was happening. From the solemn look on his face, he already knew and told her he would stay at the house to take care of the animals while she was away. The tall woman would have hugged him if she hadn't been feeling so desolate.

A short time later, the agent winced as they arrived back at UCLA Medical Center, beginning to hate the place already. As they walked towards Kate's room, Jamie tapped CJ's shoulder and told her she would wait outside. CJ nodded and proceeded along the corridor alone. Doctor Kyle exited the room with a nurse and almost collided with the raven-haired woman.

"Miss Carson," he said quietly, "I didn't have your cell phone number. Could I speak with you in private?"

"Why? What's happened? Is Kate okay?" The agent's stomach hit the floor again as a million different worries ran through her head.

"Yes, yes. Please, Miss Carson," he repeated, gently nudging her towards the family room. Once they were inside, he turned to CJ. "We were very pleased with Kate's response to the medication and the swelling has gone down. We slightly reduced her IV meds and she somehow awoke. She's a fighter, that's for sure."

"I... I need to see her... I need to see her now!"

"Please, sit down," the doctor offered.

"But I..."

"Please," he said more forcefully. CJ sat down, and he did the same. "Miss Carson-"

"Call me CJ."

"All right, CJ. As I said, Kate is awake but there seems to be some memory loss..."

At those words, tears streamed down CJ's cheeks but she didn't move a muscle and her expression didn't change. "How much memory loss?"

"It seems to be retrograde amnesia-"

"What does that mean?"

"It means she has lost memories from before the accident. When she couldn't recall what had happened to her or where she was, I asked her a few questions and she seems to think it's roughly five or six years ago. She told me she just finished making a movie and that she's twenty-five years old... and single." He paused when CJ began to shake. "CJ, she remembers everything before that time period and I don't see any reason why she won't regain her memories... but there's no way to be certain. We'll have to scan her again in a couple of days. I'd like to take you to see her but I must ask that you don't tell her of your relationship or your life together. It can be a very confusing time for head trauma patients and I cannot have her experiencing high levels of stress. It could seriously affect her health."

CJ had heard his words but couldn't process them. Kate had forgotten her, forgotten their love, forgotten the incredible and special connection they shared and everything in their life together. The agent's heart was in shreds and her body was ready for giving up. She wanted to see Kate, to look into those green eyes and see if there was a hint of anything still there, but she didn't think she'd be able to cope with the blank look Kate would give her if she didn't remember.

"I need to think for a minute..." CJ mumbled.

"I understand, CJ. Take your time. I'll be at the nurse's station." Doctor Kyle got up and left.

CJ's mind was filled with confusion and conflicted emotions. Could she cope if Kate looked at her like a stranger? Would the actress even want her to stay in the room? If Kate didn't know her, would she want CJ to leave and never see her again? "Oh God," the tall woman gasped. She was feeling dizzy and was glad to be sitting down. She wasn't sure she'd be able to walk but she wanted to know for sure and had to see Kate. Standing on wobbly legs, she carefully headed to the nurse's station.

She approached the doctor who was watching her with concern. When she reached him, she wet her lips nervously. "I... I'd like to see her," she whispered.

"Okay. But please remember... she doesn't seem to know anything from recent years and may not understand why I'm bringing you to see her. I need you to hold it together and take things very slowly. Do you understand?" Doctor Kyle asked, as if speaking to a scared child.

CJ nodded and managed to follow the man to Kate's room. She walked in, feeling totally terrified of the emotional pain that would face her now.

As they appeared, Kate looked at them and blinked. She glanced at the doctor, then carefully studied the tall beauty with the reddened, tired eyes. The agent remained silent as time seemed to grind to a halt and she tried to prepare herself for the agony of not being recognized by her beloved spouse. Kate rubbed her head to try and alleviate some of the throbbing pain.

The actress' next word came out in a croaked whisper. "Ciara?" she asked, frowning deeply in confusion.

The doctor raised two eyebrows, not knowing if that was indeed the right name. CJ used every bit of strength to stop the tears but she just couldn't do it. As she stood in the middle of the room looking like a lost soul, she let them fall silently. She couldn't walk, couldn't speak, and the doctor went to Kate's side.

"Do you remember this woman?" he asked gently.

"I..." Kate narrowed her green eyes and concentrated as hard as she could. "Yes, I know her..." It almost sounded like a question, but it was a ray of light nobody had expected.

CJ was at collapsing point. After building herself up for Kate not recognizing her at all, the actress had remembered her somehow. It wasn't the all-passionate, laughing, bubbly, feisty Kate... but there was hope that she was still in there.

The blonde reached out her hand, seeing the tall woman's legs begin to buckle. CJ walked shakily towards her wife and dropped into the nearby chair. She tentatively took the proffered hand.

Kate curled her fingers around CJ's and squeezed. She looked to the doctor. "I don't remember anything else yet, but I *do* know this woman. Could you leave us alone for a while?"

"Of course, Kate. I'll be back later. Just call if you need anything." He nodded and smiled at CJ before leaving the room.

The agent had never been so scared and didn't know what to say, but it didn't matter.

Kate's inquisitive side was still firmly in place and she studied the stunning woman in front of her. "I'm sorry. I know this must be difficult because I feel love here... between us, I mean. And I'm assuming you remember that love. I feel it but I don't know who you are to me, or how I fit into your life. Your name *is* Ciara, right?"

CJ sniffed away her continual tears, which seemed to have a life of their own. "Yes, but..." She faltered and an uncontrollable blush crept up her neck.

"What?" Kate asked, lowering her eyebrows.

"You don't usually call me that in publ..." CJ stopped herself.

"Could you please stop trying to hold back and just answer me?"

"I'm sorry. I just can't believe you're apologizing to *me* ... and you want to know everything so fast. The doctor told me you need time to process. I don't want to overwhelm you," CJ said quietly, studying the floor intently.

"I want and need to know. If you know me, you'll understand that. When I saw you, I felt something powerful in here," the smaller woman said, pointing to her heart, "and I want to know what you are to me. Are we... are we together?"

CJ sighed heavily. "Is that what you feel?"

"Overwhelmingly so..." Kate admitted.

The agent gazed at the smaller woman who seemed to be bonded to her in a way she would never understand. "Yes, we're together," she said, returning to her study of the shiny gray floor tiles.

Feeling relieved, Kate nodded and wriggled her fingers around the ring on CJ's hand. "We're married?"

"Oh, Katie. I... I..."

"We're married," the actress stated, getting slightly frustrated at her lack of memory. She was feeling such familiarity and it was like the facts were just out of her reach. "The doctor told me I've forgotten quite a few years. This feeling between us is pretty powerful and that makes me even more frustrated. I want to remember our life. How long have we been together... and don't hold back please, Ciara... oh, what do I call you anyway?"

"CJ. It stands for Ciara Jane. My name's CJ Carson," the agent said, feeling her stomach convulse at introducing herself to her wife. "We've been together more than three years."

"So, is my name Kate Carson?"

"Officially, yes, but you still use Marshall for work," CJ nodded, and Kate actually smiled at the worried and sheepish look on the tall woman's face.

The actress squeezed her wife's hand to get her attention. When the agent looked up and locked her gaze with Kate's, the blonde was mesmerized for a few long seconds by the deep blue eyes. She cleared her throat gently, not wanting to exacerbate her headache. "I... I need to rest for a while," she said weakly. CJ nodded again and began to stand. "Where are you going?"

"I was going to let you rest."

"I don't want you to leave unless you have to... or want to," Kate said, feeling a little scared at the thought of this woman leaving but not knowing why.

"I'd love to stay right here. Are you sure you're okay with that?"

"Yes. Please stay."

"All right. Is there anything you need?" CJ asked, wanting to make her spouse as comfortable as possible.

"Not right now... but I would like to brush my teeth sometime soon," Kate replied, grimacing at the taste in her mouth.

"I brought your toothbrush," CJ said, before realizing that she shouldn't be leading any conversation about their life together.

"Oh?" Kate said, raising an eyebrow. "What else did you bring?"

"Uh..."

"CJ... no holding back."

"Oh, well... the doctor said..."

"I don't care what the doctor said. I want to know. Do you *want* to answer me?"

"Of course I do. I just don't want to tell you about your life... I want you to remem..." CJ shook her head in self-deprecation and paced the floor, pinching the bridge of her nose.

"Hey!" Kate barked, somehow quietly. When CJ looked over, she smiled to try and reassure the tall woman somehow. "Don't be so tough on yourself. Come, sit down."

CJ pressed her thumb and forefinger into her temples to try and release some of the tension. She sat in the chair next to Kate's bed and slowly brought her eyes up to look at the blonde once more.

"Now... talk to me quietly and tell me where we live," the actress said, taking the larger hand in her own. "Maybe it'll ring some bells."

CJ gave up following the doctor's advice for the moment, and gave Kate brief details of their house, their animals and a few facts about the accident.

The actress had been told she'd had an accident, but not what type of accident. She watched CJ struggle to rein in her emotion as she spoke, and she tried to understand what it was about this woman that made her feel so safe and loved. '*Well, she's my wife and she seems to truly love me... and God, she's beautiful* ,' Kate thought.

As the agent's smooth voice gained a little confidence, Kate drifted off to sleep. CJ panicked slightly and pressed the call button for the nurse, not knowing if her wife was allowed to sleep yet... after coming round from a head injury. The nurse arrived a moment later and said it was okay. Kate was wired up to all kinds of monitors and the nurse told CJ that her wife had even struggled against being sedated when she awoke briefly in a confused state while lying on the gurney. The tall woman almost smiled when she heard that, knowing her tough little wife wouldn't take anything lying down... literally.

After a while, CJ began to doze off in the chair still holding onto Kate's hand, her mind slightly numb from experiencing just about every emotion in one day. She was mentally and physically exhausted and as she fell helplessly into sleep, she sent a few thoughts of prayer to anyone who may be listening, that things would somehow be all right.

* * * * *

CJ woke up to an alarm going off and after getting her bearings, she panicked thinking something was wrong. Her wide, unfocused eyes landed on a woman, gently shaking a bag of fluid.

"Don't worry. I'm just changing her medication and switching off a couple of monitors," the short, round-faced nurse said kindly.

The agent nodded and rubbed her sleepy eyes. Finally feeling a lot more awake, she turned to her wife. Kate was lying on her side facing CJ and had a smirk on her face.

The tall woman frowned. "Are you okay, Katie?"

"Yes. You seemed to have a moment of panic there. Are *you* okay?"

"I'm fine. How do you feel?"

Kate took a deep breath. "Restless, frustrated, tired, my head is sore..." She lowered her voice to a whisper for CJ's ears only. "But I really just want a decent cup of coffee," she winked.

CJ was a little puzzled at how relaxed Kate seemed to feel around her. The actress didn't truly know who CJ was and yet, here she was grinning and joking around. Once again, Kate's resilience and strength astounded the agent and she shook her head slowly.

Kate adjusted her pillow. "What was that for?"

"You just astound me but I don't know why I keep being surprised by it," CJ shrugged. "You seem to be fine with the fact that you woke up married... amongst other things... even though you can't remember. I just think you're amazing."

Kate gave the tall woman a sparkling smile. "Well, it's good to know you think your wife is amazing. I have to say, I think mine is too." CJ blushed and swallowed hard, not sure how to respond. "CJ, can you try and relax around me? Stop worrying about saying the wrong thing. I'm sure you know, if I have a problem with anything I'll tell you about it."

"I'll try. It's just difficult..."

"I know. I can't even imagine... I just wish I could make sense of some of the things that are floating around in my mind. I can see things but I don't know what they mean or if they're actually part of my life."

"Would you like to tell me about them and I can try and place them for you?"

"Oh... that's a good idea."

CJ seemed to relax, feeling a slither of normality creeping in. "Well, I do have 'em once in a while..." she smiled.

Kate laughed, and the agent almost bawled at the sight of the beautiful face in front of her. Then the actress grimaced and held her head. "Hmm, no more making me laugh until this headache goes away."

"Sorry, honey..." CJ slapped her hand over her mouth. "I mean, sorry."

"See? That's what I mean. Stop apologizing. I like hearing you call me honey... *and* Katie. Ooh, did you call my Dad? Do you know..."

CJ nodded, effectively silencing the smaller woman. "I had a slightly incoherent conversation with Dad yesterday. I was kind of a mess and... well, you know how he is at the best of times. But we muddled through and he told me I must keep him and Jeffrey updated on a daily basis," she ended quickly, deciding that she was beginning to babble.

The blonde was gazing admiringly at CJ - seeing how affectionately the tall woman talked of her father - and she got lost in another dreamy gaze. Kate blinked to snap out of it. "I'm glad you two get on."

"Since the moment I met him. He's a great guy."

"He sure is. I'm glad he and Jeffrey are still together. They seemed to be a good match. Anyway... oh yes, something that keeps appearing in my mind is a wolf, a black wolf. Does it have any significance?"

Dumbfounded, CJ stared at her wife. "Uh, yes. How does seeing the wolf make you feel?" she asked, trying to erase the thought that her great-grandfather was guiding them once again.

"Hmm. It feels fine. It's the central image I keep seeing and it's almost like it's trying to help me to see the other lost memories but they're still out of reach. Do I sound like a complete crazy woman yet?" Kate asked worriedly.

"No," the raven-haired agent whispered, shaking her head emphatically. "It sounds very accurate."

"It means something important to us, doesn't it?" Kate asked, but it was more of a statement than a question.

CJ nodded and after the actress persuaded her to elaborate, CJ told Kate about her heritage and how the wolf could be symbolic. She stopped short of telling her wife anything about the wolf 'appearing' in Montana. She didn't want to tell Kate anything about Montana... not yet. Keeping it to general stuff about CJ's past, they chatted over a rather weak - and disgusting - cup of tea that the nurse had brought in.

* * * * *

Kate listened and watched her spouse closely as the dark-headed woman spoke in a quiet voice. Green eyes momentarily fixed on CJ's lips, examining how they formed the words and how the tall woman bit her bottom lip as she thought about what to say next. The actress began phasing in and out, her concentration not quite back to what it was, and she suddenly focused when CJ said something about an orange sunset.

"Oh!" she gasped.

CJ was on her feet in a split second. "What? Are you all right, Katie?"

"Oh sorry, CJ. Please... sit. I just remembered something... something silly, I think," the blonde said, tapping her finger on her nose.

"Nothing is silly. Want to tell me?" CJ said, sitting back down and taking Kate's hand that was permanently stretched out towards her.

"When you said orange..." Kate chuckled. "I remembered a pool of spilled orange juice... in a kitchen? But I don't know whose kitchen..."

CJ nodded and grinned. "Uh huh..." she said, urging her partner to continue.

"The floor was wooden. A wooden floor in a kitchen?" she quizzed.

"Uhm, yes. But it's treated wood, you know? Stain-proofed, waterproofed..."

"Our kitchen?"

The tall woman nodded again. "You're doing *so* well, do you know that?"

"I am? I feel kinda silly, remembering something so insignificant."

"None of this is insignificant, Katie."

"So, who spilled the orange juice?" the actress asked as she raised an 'I-can-guess' eyebrow.

"Well... technically... it was Eddie," CJ replied sheepishly.

"My brother? Hah, that sounds about right, but why do I get the feeling you were involved?"

CJ pursed her lips, making Kate giggle quietly as she repositioned her head on the soft pillow. The agent curled her mouth into a half-smile. "Uh, well, I kinda snuck up on him, thinking he was an intruder and he threw the carton up in the air in fright..." CJ trailed off when Kate tried to stifle a belly laugh. "Don't hurt yourself, Katie," she added seriously.

The smaller woman held her head and stuck her tongue out to alleviate CJ's intensely worried expression. The agent sighed and relaxed her shoulders again.

"I get the feeling we're very happy together," Kate said - a statement, not a question.

"We are. Do you-"

"I feel it, CJ. Don't question it. And I'm glad you didn't say 'we *were*' happy. I feel happy and being with you just feels right. I..." She stopped speaking when she saw CJ shed a single tear. "Honey, please don't cry."

"I'm sorry. I won't. I'm... I'm so relieved you feel it, Katie. When the doctor told me you had lost your memory..." CJ paused and rubbed her thumb over the back of Kate's hand. "I... the thought you might not know me almost killed me... but here you are, making me the happiest woman in the world, all over again. Sometimes I can't comprehend how lucky I am..." she sniffed, wiping away the tiny trail of the single tear.

"I'd say we're both very lucky." Kate paused in thought. "CJ... would you... would you do me a favor?"

"Anything."

"Would you kiss me, please?"

"I... but I..."

"You said anything," the blonde reminded.

"I..." CJ gazed at her wife then dropped her eyes to the floor. "I don't think I should. I don't want to force-"

"You're not forcing anything, CJ, I asked you to," Kate interrupted. "I just want to feel it. Just a quick kiss..."

CJ leaned forward and Kate raised her pounding head slightly off the pillow. Their lips met so very gently and CJ wanted to run a mile. She was afraid that Kate wouldn't feel what she felt and that it wasn't the right thing to do at this moment in time. Kate kissed her back and suckled tenderly on her bottom lip. CJ's breath caught in her throat.

Kate knew it was right. Nothing had ever felt so right to her, and she savored every second they were connected. She knew the instant she saw this woman that they were bonded in some unfathomable way and was mighty glad to find out they were married. She felt so safe and protected in CJ's presence. Now, she felt the softest lips ever, mingling with her own and even though she still had the pain in her head and the frustration of forgetting, she felt a definite quickening of her heartbeat and a hunger for more. Her green eyes popped open when CJ broke the kiss and abruptly got to her feet. "What's wrong?"

CJ couldn't catch her breath. Everything was spinning. The passion, love, fear and many other confused emotions were swimming around inside her, and she paced the floor again, trying to slow her pulse. "Sorry, I... I..."

"Here..." Kate reached out her hand. "Please come sit here. I promise I won't ask you to kiss me again."

"Oh God, I love kissing you!" CJ blurted, taking the smaller hand in her own. "I just... it got too much, you know?"

The actress nodded. "I know," she said quietly.

They sat in silence for a few moments as CJ tried not to panic and run out the door. Kate was lost in thought, hazily staring at her wife until the deep blue eyes rose to focus on hers. Kate smiled, seeing it returned hesitantly, and realized that CJ didn't know how she felt about the kiss.

"It was amazing... and it felt so perfect," she whispered shyly. Her eyes never left CJ's and the agent knew it was the truth.

"I..." the tall woman began. *'God, I've never had so much trouble talking in my life'*, she mentally chastised.

"Say it," Kate urged.

The agent bit her lips. The words were barely a whisper but Kate heard them. "I love you."

The dazzling smile that crossed the blonde's face made CJ raise a curious eyebrow. "I love you too. Not sure how I know that, but I do. We'll be fine, CJ, I promise."

"I think I realized that when I walked in and you remembered me. We've always had this weird-"

"Connection?" Kate nodded. "I know. I wanted to ask you to bring me something..."

"What do you need, Katie?"

"Well, they told me that when the accident happened I was doing a scene. I wanted to ask you to find my wedding ring because I guess I wouldn't have been wearing it," she asked, looking at CJ through sandy lashes.

The agent's heart melted and inhaled slowly. "It's here in your personal belongings."

"Where?"

"In that closet over there," CJ pointed.

"Could you get it for me?" the blonde asked. CJ retrieved the ring and handed it to Kate, who examined it closely. The actress smiled and looked at her wife. "It's beautiful... and it matches yours."

"But of course," CJ responded lovingly.

"Will you put it on me, please?"

"I'd love to but I'm not sure you're supposed to wear jewelry in here," the agent sighed.

Kate gestured for CJ to come closer. When the agent's ear was next to her mouth, she whispered. "I don't care."

CJ laughed and shook her head. "I see," she said, raising a dark eyebrow. "Well, if you get into trouble, I want no part of it."

"Agreed. Now, put it on me, woman!"

CJ did as she was asked and Kate beamed from ear to ear. She grasped the agent's hand and pulled her down for a quick kiss on the cheek. As the tall woman straightened up again, Kate winked at her. CJ could see the love in her wife's eyes and would never question their indescribable connection again.

The agent couldn't help but chuckle at the absurdity of it all. Modern medicine didn't really stand a chance against the two of them... head injury be damned. After a few more minutes of comfortable conversation, Kate ordered CJ home for a relaxing soak in the tub, since the agent had been at the hospital constantly for God knows how long. CJ was finally persuaded and told Kate she would return forthwith - smelling slightly better - and got to her feet in a determined fashion, making the blonde giggle again. The tall woman kissed Kate on the forehead, avoiding the dark bruise, and waved shyly as she walked out of the room.

As the agent left the hospital, she had a quick word with the nurses, who told her that Miss Green had left a message. She took the piece of paper - having completely forgotten that Jamie had been there with her - and read it once she got into her truck.

"Dangermouse, I didn't want to disturb. When I came to check on you, you were both sleeping. Don't worry, I'll take a cab ;) Call me when you get a chance. Love, Penfold x"

CJ smiled and folded the note, putting it in her pocket. She began the drive home with a glint of happiness and hope sparkling from her bright blue eyes.

Chapter 3

Jamie waited patiently at the studio gates. The guard had put a call out for Sam and the agent could now see her lover walking quickly across the lot. Jamie's heart skipped a beat. Their relationship had been coming along quite nicely since their friends had intervened and the blonde was trying to learn how to open up. Sam was being very patient with her.

"Hey, you," the redhead greeted as she pecked Jamie on the cheek.

"Hi. May I come in?" the agent quipped.

"Of course. Jim, this is Jamie. Could you give her a badge?"

The young, handsome security guard nodded and proceeded to issue an authorized visitor badge to Jamie. As both women walked into the lot, Jamie's eyebrows began to draw together.

Sam noticed the change. "What's up?"

"I just realized that the guard was really handsome and I never even noticed. I'm just not interested. Must be love," the taller woman said, nudging Sam's shoulder.

"Love?"

"Yes." Jamie stopped walking and turned to the producer. "In case you hadn't noticed, I love you," she said sweetly.

"I... oh, that's the first time you've said that," Sam replied, a little flustered at the admission.

"It's okay, Sam. You don't have to say anything. This isn't the most romantic place for me to say it but I just wanted you to know."

"But... oh God, I've wanted to say it to you but I didn't want to scare you off. Funny, huh?" the redhead said nervously.

"Uh huh," Jamie murmured, taking Sam's shoulders in her hands. "Just say what you feel... what you want to say. Didn't we agree that at the start?"

"Yes, but our 'start' wasn't exactly smooth sailing."

Jamie nodded. "You have a point. Okay, from now on, say what you feel. I won't run away. I love you, Sam and for the first time in my life I want to have a relationship. That's pretty huge to me."

"I love you too, Jamie," Sam said quietly. The redhead hadn't made a move to touch the agent and Jamie realized it was because they were in the middle of the studio lots.

"Good. Now, let's discuss this further in private. May I kiss you quick while it's quiet around here?" Jamie requested, seeing only a couple of people crossing the area.

Sam was immediately on tiptoes, kissing Jamie lovingly before withdrawing shyly. "I don't want to be a spectacle around here just yet. Is that okay with you?"

The blonde smiled. "Yes. Now, let's go investigate."

"Oh, I have some information. Let's go to the cafeteria... it'll be pretty quiet at this time of day."

"Lead the way."

* * * * *

As CJ soaked in the tub, she played with the faucet with her toes and tried to wriggle around to get comfortable and relax. It just wasn't working.

"Never realized a bath could be so crap without Kate," she grumbled under her breath. She washed quickly and walked into the bedroom. Her clean clothes were laid out on the bed and once she had her faded jeans and tan shirt on, she repacked a bag for Kate with fresh pajamas, underwear, toiletries and an outfit to wear if she got released. She slipped her feet into a pair of her favorite boots and headed along the upper hallway. As she glanced at one of the bedroom doors, she remembered about the girls. "Oh shit! What day is this?" she muttered.

On her way down the staircase, she finally figured out it was Thursday and she slapped her forehead just as Tony walked in the door with the dog. CJ had forgotten he was staying at the house and smiled at the young man.

"Hey, CJ. Are you okay?"

"Hi, Tony. Yes, why?"

"Uh, you just slapped yourself and you look kinda lost. Anything I can do?"

"I just forgot what day is was. You'd think I had the amnesia."

Tony looked down at the floor. "How is Kate?"

"Tony?" When he looked up, she smiled again. "She's okay. She remembered me. It's hard to explain it all right now but when I bring her home, just be ready to be introduced to her again, all right?" CJ said as gently as she could.

"Sure, CJ. It's great she remembered you," Tony said, feeling a little more at ease.

"It sure is. She seems to get random pieces of information at random times. Who knows what she will recognize here at the house." CJ paused for a moment. "Tony, there is something we need to discuss with you but I think I'll wait and see if Kate gets better first. And right now, I need to make a phone call."

"Okay. I'll go tend to the horses. Kamali, come," he said to the dog who trotted happily alongside him.

CJ snagged her cell phone and dialed Marion Fletcher's direct number. She strolled into the kitchen and stood at the island unit. Tapping her nails on the surface, she waited for Marion to pick up. "Don't go to answer machine, don't go to answer machine," she chanted quietly.

" *Marion Fletcher, how can I help?* "

"Hello, Marion. It's CJ Carson..."

" *Oh, CJ... is it okay to call you CJ?* "

"Yes, of course."

" *I was waiting for your call* ," Marion said with a tone in her voice CJ couldn't quite decipher.

"Oh?"

" *Yes. Mark called me. He didn't tell me much but he did say there had been an accident. Is everything all right?* "

"Uh, yes," CJ said, feeling a little overwhelmed. "Kate was injured but I'm only calling to ask you for a slight delay in the proceedings," she added, worried that they'd miss their chance at the adoption.

" *CJ, please do not worry. I took over this case personally when Mark told me about it. Your paperwork is all here. I checked on the girls yesterday by phone and I'll pop out to see them tomorrow. They'll be ready when you are... but please, make sure you two are both fully prepared.* "

"Oh, I will. Thank you so much, Marion. I was so scared we'd miss our chance."

" *No, CJ. It's pretty obvious whom these girls should be with. Just call me when you are sure you can handle the transition and I'll come visit you before you pick them up. They're with a nice foster family and they're together. Try not to add to your worries* ," Marion said firmly but kindly.

"Oh my Goodness, thank you. You really are very helpful. I... I don't mean to sound rude but I... didn't expect this much consideration," CJ stumbled.

" *Well, yes. We do get a bad rap from time to time. I suppose it helps that I've known Mark for years and Shannon doesn't quit talking about you* ," Marion said.

CJ could hear a smile and had to crease her lips in a small one of her own. "Thank you. I'll call you soon. Promise."

" *Okay, CJ. Bye for now* ."

"Bye." CJ hung up the call and reminded herself to thank Mark - and apologize profusely for shouting at him - when she saw him next.

She picked up Kate's bag and headed off to tell Tony what her plans were. Once in the truck, she took a deep breath and put her key in the ignition. A cell phone rang and since she wasn't familiar with the ring tone, she figured it was Kate's. "Hello?"

" *Hello, Katherine?*" said a stark voice on the line.

"Uh, no, but this is her phone. Can I ask who's calling?"

" *It's Elizabeth Emerson. I want to speak with Katherine .*"

"She's not available right now, Mrs. Emerson. Can I take a message?" CJ asked, not realizing whom she was speaking with.

" *Who is this?*" the cold woman demanded.

"My name's CJ. I could let Kate know you called and get her to-"

" *Oh, you're the 'wife'* ," the shrill voice said, the disapproval very evident in the tone.

CJ could practically feel the woman's acidic look of disgust oozing through the handset. "Yes..." Suddenly, CJ remembered that Kate's mother was called Elizabeth. The actress never spoke about her mother much and CJ never pushed her for information.

Mrs. Emerson confirmed it. " *I want to see my daughter. I'm here in Los Angeles, for Goodness sake. I must see her. What's your address?*"

CJ decided that she would be shouting at this woman very soon and ending the call would be best. "I'll give Kate your message and she can get back to you. Thanks for calling. Goodbye."

She hung up before she said something she'd regret later. Her head fell into her hands and she let out a muffled groan. "What a day so far. Keep it together, CJ," she told herself. She started the engine and left for UCLA Medical Center.

* * * * *

Kate sat in her hospital bed feeling sad, lonely and a little lost. She couldn't figure it out but her face was a picture of pure misery. She pondered why her heart felt like it was lurching forward in fits and starts, like she was afraid of something. It was uncertainty, she decided... but when the most beautiful woman she'd ever seen walked in the door, her face lit up like a beacon in the night. "Hi," she suddenly smiled.

"Hi. Do you still remember me?" CJ asked, raising a worried eyebrow.

"Like I could ever forget you," the blonde quipped.

"You looked kinda sad when I came in. Do you want to talk about it?"

"I... hmm, I was sad and couldn't figure out why. But I realized when you walked in... it was because you went home," Kate said, her eyes filling up in another sudden change of emotion.

"Hey, hey," CJ murmured quietly, leaning down to hug her wife. "It's okay. I won't leave you again, all right?"

"Oh, CJ, that's not what I meant," the actress said at her spouse's ear. "I just feel safer with you here but I need to get over that if we're going to have a semi-normal life. I feel like I've lost so much time and it's a little disconcerting."

CJ pushed back and found the chair with her butt cheeks. She rubbed her hand over Kate's face to remove the salty tears and looked deeply into the emerald pools before her. "You're going to be fine. Give it some time, honey. Of course you're feeling lost right now. You don't remember the last few years... and boy, have they been busy. But I'll be right by your side to help you every step of the way."

"But, you have to go to work sometime, CJ." The actress' eyes popped wide open. "Oh!"

CJ stayed right next to Kate, her face only a foot away from the blonde's. "What? Something else come to you?"

"Uh, yes, Special Agent Carson? Or am I just making that up?"

CJ blushed for some strange reason. "No... you didn't make it up."

"Wow, you're in the FBI. It seems you're the only person I remember from the last few years. Then it's just these random things that don't make sense until you explain them to me or confirm why I know about them. The last thing I remember about LA... we are still in LA, right?" At CJ's nod, she continued. "The last thing I remember is doing an acting job and being incredibly lonely, even though I was surrounded by people. Do we have friends?"

"You and I were so similar before we met, Katie. I was the same way. We have a small group of good friends now. I'll introduce you as we go along."

"Sounds fine. Could you... could you just hold me for a while?"

The agent smiled, sensing her spouse was still feeling a little out of it. "Yes. Scoot over... carefully."

CJ climbed onto the bed next to her wife. She almost... almost bawled again when Kate settled into her exact favorite spot under the tall woman's chin and wrapped a strong little arm over her stomach. CJ kissed the blonde locks near her mouth and held the precious woman in a full embrace.

"This is much better," Kate said quietly.

"It certainly is. Do you need to ask me anything else?"

"Not yet. This is what I needed."

"Me too."

A few silent moments later, Doctor Kyle walked in and the look on CJ's face made him hold up his hand. "Don't worry... and don't move. It's nice to see a smile on her face," he said, nodding to Kate.

CJ squinted to see her wife's lips curled into a contented grin.

"Hello, Doctor Kyle. I feel much better already," Kate murmured, not moving from her spot.

"Excellent. I'm just in to check your chart. Any news for me?"

"Yes. I just remembered I'm married to an FBI agent," Kate uttered with some satisfaction.

"Indeed," the man nodded. "You seem to be making some progress. I'm very pleased."

CJ smiled and squeezed the blonde gently. "I am too, Doctor."

He nodded at the tall woman. "Yes, it is nice to see you looking happier too. Its not often I see something like this."

"What do you mean?" Kate asked.

"Well, I... I don't know what to call it. It's not something I understand... you two... 'fit' somehow. And I can't think of a better way to aid your recovery than for you to go home with CJ, if that's what you want, Kate?"

"When can I go?" Kate said, excitement coloring her words.

Doctor Kyle laughed at her impatience. "Not just yet. I need to scan you again. That'll be tomorrow. We could release you at the weekend but I'm not making any promises. I need to see the results first."

CJ nodded and Kate relaxed back into her wife's arms. "Okay," the blonde said.

"Good. I'll check in again later."

"Thanks, Doctor," both women said in unison.

Kate took a deep breath and snuggled deeper into the warm body that cradled her. "I feel a little sleepy."

"Just rest when you want to, honey. I'm not going anywhere."

"Will you talk to me for a while? I like your voice."

CJ smiled. "What would you like to hear?"

"Tell me about my current acting job?"

"All right. I know practically everything about it. So, the show is called Deadline..."

* * * * *

Jamie watched as Sam worked. Quietly standing at the side of the set, the blonde was amazed at the amount of people it took to make a TV show. Runners buzzed around behind the scenes, cameras were coming at the actors from all angles and the crew were everywhere - silent when they were shooting, and barking commands and instructions when the director yelled 'cut!'

Both women had been interrupted earlier in the cafeteria when Sam had to unexpectedly go back into the studio. Now, Jamie waited patiently for her lover to finish up her day, then they could discuss the information they'd collected thus far, over dinner. They seemed to make a good team. Sam got all the gossip around the lot and Jamie used a contact in the LAPD to keep up with the investigation. She understood why Mark couldn't put them on this case. They were a specialist unit, dealing with serial killers and other high profile cases. He wouldn't be able to justify their involvement with his bosses. It wasn't even an FBI matter in the first place. She was glad the AD had got around it by giving them time off though. The agent decided he really was a good boss and his heart seemed to be in the right place.

"Ugh. Another day done," Sam grumbled as she approached. "I'm ready for a nice meal with a beautiful woman." She tapped on her chin and stood before the agent. "Now, where could I find a beautiful woman?" she smirked, moving slightly closer to Jamie.

"Oh, I don't know, but you're surrounded by actresses. I'm sure you'll find someone," the blonde drawled, sliding her tongue round her teeth.

Sam smiled. "Ha ha! I have the woman... just need some food now." She surprised the tall agent by kissing her briefly on the lips.

Raising a light brown eyebrow, Jamie sneaked another quick kiss, poking her tongue out to teasingly lick Sam's full lips. "So... food?" she said, straightening up.

"Uh... uh yeah," the producer stammered, still feeling the tingle.

They headed outside and over to Sam's little office. Once she had tied up some loose ends and grabbed her coat and bag, they left and drove the short distance to a favorite take-out joint to get some food.

* * * * *

Jamie leaned back on the couch and patted her belly. "That was good. How was yours?"

Sam barked out a laugh. "You ate most of it!"

"I did not. You gave me one forkful," the blonde replied indignantly.

"Jamie, I'm not stupid. When I left to go to the kitchen, you stole some of my chicken."

The agent twisted her mouth into something resembling a pout. "I didn't..." she tried.

"My God, you're like a big kid. Just tell the truth," Sam smirked as she settled beside her girlfriend.

"It was irresistibly tasty. I had to steal it."

"Well, I'll forgive you this time. You can make it up to me later. Now... tell me what you found out today?"

"Hmm, Danny down at the precinct didn't have much info for me. He said that after the initial witness interviews, they didn't have a lead."

"That's a shame. Couldn't he give you *any* clues?"

"He said the only person who seemed nervous was Jack Bannerman, which doesn't surprise me," Jamie said, slipping her arm around the redhead's shoulders.

"Jack? Hmmm..."

"Hmmm?"

"Yeah. I thought he looked real nervous too but when I spoke with him after it happened, he looked genuinely worried about it and concerned for Kate."

The agent thought for a moment. "Do you think he would go so far as to hurt Kate to try and get to CJ?"

Sam shook her head. "No. And I think he knows by now, CJ would literally kill him if she ever found out he'd done it. And anyway, I have some gossip."

"Do tell, my dear?"

"I was talking to Jim... here in my studio, who is friends with Phil Romaine. That's Kate's director. Anyway, Jim said he spoke to Phil on the phone after they finished with the police and Phil said they'd changed the schedule because one of the actresses... Nicole..." Sam paused to look at Jamie. "Are you keeping up?"

"Of course," the blonde said, nudging her lover with her shoulder.

"Right. Oh, yes... Nicole was all shaken up due to another set collapse the same day, so Phil changed the scenes around. So what I'm saying is, Kate wasn't supposed to be standing there. Whoever has done this may not have been targeting Kate at all!"

"Well, honey, you might have something there. Is there any way to find out who would have been at that mark if they hadn't changed it around? Was Nicole supposed to be on set?"

Sam sighed. "I don't know. The studio is sealed off and I'm pretty sure they would've locked up the offices too, which is where the scripts and director's notes would be," she said, rubbing her chin.

Jamie squeezed the smaller woman gently. "Let me think it over and I'll get back in touch with Danny. I'm gonna see CJ tomorrow... find out how Kate is and catch up a little."

"Ooh, I'm off tomorrow. Could I come with you?" Sam asked, hoping to try and at least see Kate.

"Sure. That'd be great. I'm assuming they're still at the hospital so maybe we should get CJ to come see us in the waiting room... don't want to overwhelm Kate."

"Good idea. That's settled then," the producer nodded.

Jamie leaned in, holding her mouth at Sam's hair. When the redhead turned around their lips were mere millimeters apart.

"Do you want something, Agent Green?"

"Yes... you."

Sam slowly leaned back to lie on the couch and pulled the blonde with her. Jamie eagerly covered her lover's body and let her lips melt into Sam's. Good Lord, she loved those lips.

* * * * *

After Kate had fallen asleep again, CJ had gone to get something to eat and a decent coffee. After walking the whole way back from the café to stretch out her stiff body, she now sat in the chair next to her wife's bed. She looked at her watch, noting the time at 9.50pm. She yawned just as two green eyes fluttered open. Kate was facing the agent and smiled at her tired spouse. As usual, CJ waited to make sure that Kate recognized her, thinking that somehow, her wife's memories would disappear again. She knew it was just her being a tad paranoid and feeling a little insecure so she rolled her shoulders in an effort to relax.

"Hey, you," Kate mumbled. "You look tired. Did you sleep?"

CJ's mouth broke into a smile. "No, honey, it's only around 10pm..."

"Same day?"

"Same day."

"Wow, I feel like I've been out of it for a week. Have you just been sitting there?"

"No. I went to get some food and I needed to stretch out my muscles, so I walked for a bit," CJ said, helping to raise her wife up on the pillows.

"That's good." The blonde scratched gently through her unkempt hair. "Hmm, my head feels much better. Did they up my painkillers?"

"I don't think so."

"It must just be easing off then... thankfully. May I have a wake up kiss? Oh no, wait... my mouth is..."

"That won't stop me," CJ said, leaning over her wife. She kissed her lovingly, and tenderly sucked Kate's lip into her mouth before letting go. "Delicious..." she smiled, remaining mere inches from the actress' face. Kate's hand had landed on the back of her head and she couldn't move back anyway.

"You must really love me," Kate murmured.

"I do," the agent said quietly.

"I remembered something else," the blonde whispered. CJ focused intently on the green eyes in front of her, waiting for another revelation. Kate slowly ran her fingers over the dark hair in her grasp. "I remembered... a fight or an argument... it was me and you, right?"

"I don't know. Can you give me any more detail?"

Kate let CJ go and tapped her fingertip to the side of her head. "In a gym? You were on the floor?" Kate felt her heart wrench but didn't know why.

CJ nodded and sat on the edge of the bed. "That was us. It was a tough day but as always, we made it through," she added as she squeezed Kate's hand.

The actress somehow knew what CJ was thinking. "And we'll make it through this too. I'm sure of it."

"I know. I hope they let you out tomorrow, honey."

"I do too. I can't wait to see our house," Kate grinned. "You'll have to give me the guided tour. I hope you're ready for that."

CJ sighed. "It'll be weird, I gotta say. But yes, I'm ready for it. Katie, when the doctor told me you had forgotten everything... that was the only moment I thought I wouldn't make it. But when I walked in here and you said my name... God, I knew then that we could get through this... because we'd be together somehow." CJ stopped talking and her face tensed.

Kate brought the larger hand to her mouth to kiss the knuckles. "Did you think if I had truly forgotten you, that I would've turned you away?"

"It was a definite possibility. You would've had no idea who I was... I..."

"Hey," Kate said, making CJ raise her head. "How could I ever forget you? And even if I had, I think this feeling would have made me very sure I wanted you to stick around."

"I'd like to think that, but..."

"CJ, I remember you. That's all that matters right now. And even if I can't remember the events in our life so far, I remember you. And I remember that I love you. I feel it... so strongly. We can build on that, no matter what happens from now on. Let's just live for each moment and stick together... if that's okay with you?" Kate said with a hopeful smile.

CJ chuckled at her wife's expression. "That is absolutely okay with me." She leaned forward and kissed her wife again. "Now, do you need anything to drink? Or to eat?"

"Not right now. But when I get out of here, will you make me some really nice coffee?"

CJ laughed. "I will... and I'll join you, too."

"Did you bring your pajamas?" Kate asked.

"Nope. But these sweats are very comfy," the tall woman said, pulling at her pant leg.

"Then how about you get in here and spend the night with me?"

"I could do that." CJ lifted the sheet and slipped in next to her spouse. "Want to talk some more?"

"Hmmm," Kate groaned as she snuggled up to the sweet-smelling woman, "yeah. Tell me where you went for food... and what you had. I'll try not to be jealous or drool too much."

CJ's mind formed a mental picture and she almost made a lewd comment but quickly decided that it was entirely inappropriate. She told Kate what she wanted to know in a very straight-laced fashion and continued to talk quietly with her spouse until they both fell asleep.

Chapter 4

The next day brought a strangely exuberant Kate being taken in a wheelchair down to the X-ray department for her scan. CJ had to wait. And while she waited, she paced the floor. And while she paced the floor, she fought with the sense of loss that encompassed her after her wife left the room.

She wanted to ask the doctor about Kate's mood. CJ knew there was nothing wrong with her wife feeling happy, but Kate was incredibly upbeat and excited about life. If the actress hadn't been post-head-injury, CJ wouldn't have questioned it. She just couldn't believe Kate knew who she was and wanted to be with her - it seemed, as much as before.

She sighed and strolled out into the corridor. She had a look to the left, seeing nurses bustling back and forth, and various patients either being wheeled to different departments or shuffling around with their IV bags on mobile stands. As CJ turned to her right, she spotted Special Agent Green, flashing her badge to the head nurse who directed her down the hallway.

"Abusing your FBI powers, Agent?" CJ said, eyebrow raised.

"Damn right. And you be quiet... you'd do it too," Jamie smirked. Then she sobered. "How's Kate doing?"

"She's doing remarkably well, actually. She knows me but can't remember our life so far. She gets little snippets of memories and asks me what they mean."

"CJ... I... I'm so happy for you... that she remembers you, I mean. That's really good news."

"It is. I want to thank you for the other day. And I'm sorry I forgot about you," CJ said, scrunching her nose.

"I think you had bigger things to worry about, DM. I came in to check on you and you were sleeping. I figured you'd be calmer once you woke. Anyway, Sam and I are making a little progress on what happened, but I'll tell you about that when things have settled down."

"Talk of the Devil..." CJ nodded down the corridor. "Did you give her an ID badge too?"

"Uh, no, I just told them we needed to get in to talk to Agent Carson. They never questioned it," Jamie said, smiling at her approaching lover.

Sam stopped next to them. She hugged CJ briefly and asked the inevitable question. "How is she?"

CJ smiled wanly. "She's okay. She-"

"Uh, CJ? Here she comes. Do you want us to leave?" Jamie asked worriedly.

"No. It'll be fine. Just let me do the talking."

Kate frowned a little at the beautiful blonde woman who was talking to her wife, then she spotted the redhead. "Hi, Samantha. Uh, what are you doing here?"

All three jaws dropped until CJ realized that Kate had known Sam for a long time. The tall agent crouched down next to Kate's wheelchair. "Honey, it's good you remember Sam but I've never heard you call her Samantha before."

"Oh, I never... oh, are we closer now? Oh, that's great," Kate said with a smile and a quick hug to Sam. "And could you introduce...?" she added, gesturing to Jamie.

The tall blonde felt a pang of hurt go through her and she knew it was just because she felt a loss somehow. Kate had become an important person in her life but she toughened up and forced a polite smile.

CJ caught the fleeting expression on the agent's face and stood up. Slipping her arm around Kate's shoulder, she cleared her throat. "Katie, this is Special Agent Jamie Green. She's my colleague and a friend of ours."

Jamie moved in to shake Kate's hand but the little actress was having none of that. "If we're friends, I want a hug," she demanded, pulling Jamie down into the embrace.

Once released, Jamie smiled. "Thank you."

"For what?" Kate asked.

"For the hug."

"I'm sorry I don't remember you, Jamie."

"Think nothing of it. I'm just glad you're okay."

"I am that. Shall we go into my room?"

The orderly pushed Kate's chair into the private room and CJ helped her wife back into bed. Sam and Jamie stood aside while Kate got comfortable, then told the couple they would go and give them peace.

The actress protested a little but her wife persuaded her she'd had enough excitement for one day. CJ also didn't want the doctor to kick her ass for over-stimulating his patient. She made arrangements for Jamie to come to the house once Kate was home so that they could discuss everything. Once they'd left, she settled into the chair next to the bed to wait for Doctor Kyle to bring the results of the scans.

"They seem to know each other," Kate probed.

"They do, honey."

"Do they know each other *well*?"

CJ smirked at her wife's endless curiosity. "Yes. They know one another very well."

Kate watched CJ's face, gauging the twinkle in the blue eyes and the lips curled into a grin. "Ooh, they're *together* ..." Kate smugly crossed her arms over her chest. "Well, I would never have pegged Samantha Morris as anything but straight. Hmm."

"Hmm?"

"Yeah, hmm. So what have I missed? Are they the good friends you talked about?"

"I'd say they're our two best friends, yes. But there are a few others."

"I know you don't think you're supposed to tell me things but could you just tell me who the others are? Pleeeeeease?"

CJ studied the begging green eyes and the cutest pout she'd ever seen. She couldn't stop the chuckle that escaped her mouth. "Our other good friends are your driver, Tony, and my boss, Mark."

"Oh, really?"

"Yep. There are more but those are the closest. And I'm not saying anything else, honey. Let's take our time with this, okay?" CJ requested hopefully.

The blonde's face was reminiscent of a spoiled child but thankfully, she gave in. "Okay." After a few moments of silent communication, Kate smiled at the tall raven-haired woman. "I feel good. I hope the doctor says I can leave soon."

CJ was about to respond when she turned to see Doctor Kyle walk in. She took Kate's hand in her own and waited for him to speak.

"So, ladies, do you want the good news?" Pause "Or the good news?"

CJ exhaled forcefully. "You have a sick sense of humor, Doc," she said, shaking her head.

"Sorry, CJ. But all I have is good news. Kate, I can't see any permanent physical damage. The fluid around the brain is back to normal levels and should remain that way. We'll keep medicating you until tomorrow morning. After that, I want to keep you in for twenty-four hours for further observation. If everything goes as planned, you can go home on Sunday."

Kate perked up a little. "Well, I guess that's something. I'd really like to go home."

"You will. I just want to be absolutely sure before I release you."

CJ was still a little worried. "What about her memory?" she asked, feeling Kate squeeze her hand reassuringly.

Doctor Kyle pursed his lips. "I honestly don't see any reason why it won't return, but... this kind of thing is not an exact science. Every patient responds differently. Judging by what has happened so far, I'm fairly optimistic."

CJ knew that was as good an answer as she was going to get. "Thanks."

"Yes, thanks, Doctor. I really do feel good and I'm determined to remember everything," Kate announced confidently.

"It always helps to have a determined patient. I'll leave you two to talk."

"Thank you," they both replied as he left.

CJ put her hand to her mouth and squished her lips together in thought. Kate watched with narrowed eyes, knowing the agent was still concerned. The blonde wondered what it was about this woman that stole her heart the moment she saw her. '*Everything, I guess,*' she chuckled inwardly, '*Weird connection indeed.*'

"Penny?" Kate quipped.

"Hmm? Oh sorry. I was just thinking about what the doctor said."

"Well, it all sounded fine to me. But CJ, even if I don't remember... I mean, if I don't ever... will you be okay with that?"

"Of course I will. Why do you ask?"

"Honey, I know this must be incredibly difficult for you. You remember our life together and everything that entails. I mean, I even sense you holding back when you hug me because you think I might get uncomfortable." Kate paused and tried not to get lost in those blue eyes again. "I'm not uncomfortable around you... not one bit. I love having you wrapped around me and I know you woke up last night when I... when I was looking at you and touching your face. Why didn't you open your eyes or say anything?"

"Katie, I didn't... oh damn, okay I did wake up... but it felt so normal and I didn't want to open my eyes because everything would become too real again. Oh God, I'm so sorry, that didn't sound right..." CJ threw her head into her hands.

"CJ, please stop this. I knew what you meant. Stop beating yourself up. I'm guessing you do that a lot?"

The agent looked up, rubbing away the few tears of frustration that had escaped her tired eyes. "Uh... sometimes, yeah."

"Uh huh. So can you quit it now? We're gonna make it. Do you hear what I'm telling you?"

"Yes. I'm sorry. I'm just so scared of doing something that pushes you away. I know it's silly."

"It's not silly. I'm scared too. I'm scared of the feelings I have for you. I'm scared that I might not ever remember our life. And I'm scared that any strain it puts on us could wreck what we have... and I know you won't tell me when you're upset, in case you upset me. Oh crap, this is too complicated," the smaller woman said, leaning back on her pillows.

"Okay, okay. Let's simplify it," CJ said, taking a deep breath. "I love you and you... love me-"

"See? That pause. Don't do that! I do love you."

"All right. Please calm down or the doc will beat me up. I love you and you love me. We'll be fine," she said with exaggerated determination. She stuck out her chin and nodded firmly. Kate began to laugh, causing CJ to stare at her. "It wasn't supposed to be funny," she added sarcastically.

Kate continued to giggle and waved her arm to invite her wife onto the bed. CJ shook her head and climbed in. The actress immediately snuggled into strong arms and CJ could feel the petite body as it shook gently against her.

Kate finally managed to calm herself and sighed happily. "Well, if we make each other laugh in a dire situation, I guess nothing can stop us."

The agent squeezed her spouse and chuckled. "I guess," she said, kissing the blonde hair.

Chapter 5

Two days later, Jack Bannerman paced the floor in his lavish Beverly Hills home. Nicole sat on the hideous - but very expensive - white leather couch, playing with the tissue she held in her thin hands. Her long, dark hair was perfectly in place and her designer clothes were immaculate with not a crease in sight. But her face was covered in black make-up that had run as she cried her big, dark brown eyes out. She had just confessed to Jack that she had received threats from Miss Certifiable, Jody Morgan.

"Did you tell the cops about this?" Jack bellowed, still pacing back and forth.

"Of course not. I told you I only just thought of it. I had thrown out the note she left me. I didn't think it was worth the paper it was written on. Everyone knows she stalks you, so what was there to worry about?"

"Jesus Christ, Nicole! That rig nearly killed Kate! You were supposed to be on set, remember? Then you got all... all weepy and shook up..." he trailed off, running his large hand through his dark, silky hair. "Fucking hell! Where was Jody when this happened anyway?"

"I don't know!" Nicole shouted back. Then her face froze and she covered her mouth with her hand. "Oh no. I had just been in the restrooms with her not fifteen minutes before and she said she had 'something' to do. Oh, Jack..."

"Right. Keep this to yourself for now and let me think about it. I can't afford to get all mixed up in this crap."

"Jack, wait! Jody couldn't have done it, could she? And surely she doesn't have anything against Kate? Have you... have you been with Kate?" the actress said, putting a hand to her chest to emphasize her shock.

That question seemed to enrage Jack and he stormed off to his study. Nicole's head fell into her hands again as she dramatically began to cry.

* * * * *

As Kate was wheeled out to CJ's waiting truck, she felt elated at the prospect of going home. She didn't know where home was but she knew wherever it was, it would feel right because her wife was with her. A strange feeling came over her when she saw the shiny blue Dodge Ram. She squinted, as if trying to capture what was familiar to her. She gave up and shook her head, turning to the orderly and nurse, who had accompanied them outside.

"Thank you so much for all your help," she said to the nurse as she stood up. "But I have to say, I'll be glad to walk everywhere from now on."

The nurse smiled. "I'm sure you will, Kate. Please take care and call Doctor Kyle if you need anything. That applies to both of you," she added, looking to CJ and passing a bag of pain medication to the agent.

After the good-byes were complete, CJ helped her spouse into the truck. Kate sat on the leather seat and watched CJ walk around the front of the vehicle. Things were so familiar but in a very general way. It was driving her insane. As the agent got into the driver's seat, Kate let out an almighty sigh.

"What was that for? You okay?"

"I'm fine. I'm just so frustrated because I feel like I know something, then I can't pin down why. It's so annoying," the smaller woman said, making a growling sound for effect.

"Honey, I think it's *your* turn to stop beating yourself up. Just relax. I'm sure you'll figure it out when it's time," CJ said, patting her wife's thigh.

"Hmpph, I suppose I'd better practice what I preach, huh?"

"Oh yes," CJ said, throwing her an 'I love you' smirk.

They drove home, mostly in silence, CJ occasionally checking on the actress in case she was worried or... something. Kate was too busy watching the scenery go by.

As they drove along the approach road to the ranch, the actress gasped. "It's beautiful out here."

CJ nodded as she flipped the signal on. "I'm glad you think so because we're home."

"Oh God, is this ours?" the blonde asked, now peering out the windscreen at the lake and house beyond. "It's so perfect!"

"Well, thank Goodness for that. We did pick the place out together, after all."

"We picked well."

CJ smiled and pulled the large vehicle up at the front porch. She had to admit to herself that she was a tad nervous. But then she looked at Kate, who was practically wiggling in her seat, and she had to chuckle at the most amazing woman she'd ever known.

"Ready?" the agent asked, eyebrows raised.

"Yes." Kate opened the truck door and when she stepped outside, she spotted the horses. "They're beautiful... and familiar. Damn it, everything seems familiar." Another growl sounded from deep in her throat.

CJ grabbed the bag from the back seat and walked over to her wife, slipping her arm around Kate's waist. As she guided the smaller woman inside the house, Kate returned the gesture and curled her arm around CJ, tucking her thumb into the waistband of the agent's jeans. Once they were inside, she let go again and wandered off through to the living area.

CJ dumped the bag on the floor and followed. "You okay, honey?"

"Yep. Just looking," Kate said, but the tone of her voice had changed and CJ went to her side.

The agent slowly turned her wife to face her and saw the tears. "Hey, come here," she said, taking the woman into her arms. "Tell me what you're feeling?"

After a couple of sniffs, Kate answered. "I just want to remember."

CJ took a deep, shaky breath. "I know, honey. I know."

The last two days in the hospital had brought no other memories to the surface and CJ shared her wife's pain as she rubbed her hand over the blonde hair. Maybe that was all they would get.

* * * * *

'Why do I feel guilty? It's nothing to do with me. I just want to know how Kate is. Yes, that's why I'm here,' Jack tried to convince himself as he walked across the lot looking for Samantha Morris.

He checked inside the cafeteria, waving an 'I'm-so-gorgeous' hello to a few fellow actors and admirers. Not seeing the producer anywhere, he decided to check the 'Rise of the Phoenix' studios, wondering if they were even filming today. He was just about to enter studio 7-C when Sam came out for a break with a few colleagues. She told the others to go on to the cafeteria and looked at the muscle-bound actor.

"Hello, Sam," he said politely, trying to hide his nervousness. Jack Bannerman didn't get nervous.

"Jack. Hello. What are you doing here? Did they start shooting Deadline again?"

"Uh, no. Another couple of days before they let us back in the studios. I just came to see you," he replied.

Sam noticed him picking at his fingers and shifting ever so slightly from foot to foot. "What do you need to see me about, Jack?" she asked, crossing her arms as she tried to read the man.

"Well, I just wanted to see how Kate is doing..."

"Not much has changed as far as I'm aware." Sam narrowed her eyes, starting to think Jack was hiding something, and she figured she would push him a little by giving him another thing to think about. "She has amnesia, Jack, so I'm not sure she'll be able to come back to work right away. I'd say that's pretty serious."

"Oh..." Jack gulped... hard. "Amnesia? Like, she doesn't remember anything?"

"That's right. That blow to the head could have killed her but instead, she can't remember her life, which is almost as bad," Sam stated plainly.

"Oh God, that's... that's awful."

"Yes. Yes, it is. If you make that public knowledge, I'll skin you alive, Jack."

The actor blinked and was lost in a stare of disbelief for a second. "I wouldn't ever do that to Kate. I..."

"You what, Jack?" the redhead probed.

"Nothing. Thanks for the update," he said, straightening up and tugging on his shirt to keep his hands busy.

"Hmm. Well, I have to go. If you think of anything that could help the police, I suggest you tell them. Goodbye, Jack."

Sam walked away and the actor actually blushed, but it was not through embarrassment. He was very worried that the producer thought he was guilty. And he realized at that moment that he might be, in part, responsible for Kate's injuries. "Oh shit," he muttered as he headed for his car.

* * * * *

After the guided tour of the lower floor, Kate and CJ ascended the staircase. Kate nodded as CJ showed her the guestrooms, ensuite bathrooms and the little room in the addition above the gym, which had yet to be allocated a purpose. Kate had wanted to make it an art studio but never had the time to paint, and they hadn't gotten around to using it for anything other than a storage room.

CJ braced herself for the next room. It was their master bedroom and before they got to the door, the agent turned to face her wife. "Katie, I... I've put some of my things into one of the guestrooms. I thought when you got home that you'd need some... space... and I..."

Kate stepped forward, silencing the tall woman. "Do you want to sleep separately?"

"I... I think we should for now."

"Why?"

"Uh, well..." CJ couldn't really think of a good reason but she knew she was very aware of their past and their passion. She also knew how much she wanted her wife and had to bury those wants and needs. Kate didn't feel that right now. Or at least, CJ thought she didn't.

"CJ, I can't really explain to you what I feel because in truth, it's all a little mixed up. What I do know is that I want you to hold me." Kate dropped her eyes to the floor. "But I understand if you don't want-"

"It's nothing to do with want. I... we... oh damn, this is difficult."

"I know. I'm sorry. I'll take the guestroom," Kate mumbled.

"No way... and don't apologize. This is not your fault. I just wouldn't feel right about sharing our bed when you don't remember who we are as a couple," the agent replied sullenly.

Kate sighed and held back the tears that were stinging the back of her eyes. "Is that our room?" she asked, pointing to the door behind CJ.

"Yes. You can go look around by yourself if you want."

"Okay."

CJ felt her heart rip in two and her stomach churn in a very unpleasant way. "I'll go get you some fresh towels," she said, desperately needing something to do.

Kate went into the room silently after CJ left. Her eyes filled with sadness when she saw the warm, earthy décor and the very obvious signs that this was the room of a couple who adored one another. The painting of the Rocky Mountains above the bed drew Kate's eye and she walked over to read the signature. "Wow, Eddie. Nice job," she muttered. She looked at the image again and her brow creased as another wave of vague recognition swept over her - not from the image itself, but of the mountain range.

On the nightstand, she found a stunning picture of CJ with a microphone in her hand. She touched the glass with a fingertip and stroked the agent's face slowly. Another tear fell as Kate realized she might never remember when or where the photo was taken. Sniffing and rubbing her cheeks, she walked around the bed to the other nightstand. This one had a few picture frames on it and she picked up the one with her and CJ in it. They both looked blissfully happy, with huge smiles on their faces and their heads squashed together at the cheek. Arms were tightly wound round necks and CJ had her tongue sticking out in a very mischievous manner. Kate giggled just as the taller woman came back into the room.

"What are you laughing at?" CJ asked, placing the towels at the foot of the bed.

"Us," Kate replied simply. She put the frame down and turned to her spouse. "CJ, please stay here with me. It feels so wrong that we won't be together."

CJ pursed her lips tightly and knew she was going to have to tell her wife what she was feeling. "Katie, please sit down," she said, placing her hands gently on the blonde's shoulders. Once Kate was seated, the agent lowered herself to her knees and knelt on the floor in front of the petite woman. "I wouldn't feel right about it because you don't remember us... I mean, our lovemaking and our life where that kind of thing is concerned. I do remember it and I would feel like I was somehow taking unfair advantage. Oh, I don't know how to explain it, really. I just don't want you to wake up during the night and I've somehow, uh... let's just say that sometimes I... touch you during the night... while I'm asleep." CJ blushed furiously and wanted to disappear into the deep pile of the carpet beneath her.

Kate took her wife's chin in her hand and lifted the beautiful face. "Please stay with me. If that happens... well, I won't freak out because you've told me that it's a possibility. I'll be honest, I don't think it would have bothered me anyway," she smiled. "I love you. Stay with me?"

CJ was helpless and couldn't argue with her heart. She wanted to hold Kate every minute and didn't want to sleep apart from her beloved wife. "Okay. On one condition..."

"What?"

"That you promise to tell me if you want me to leave. Deal?"

"Deal." The actress put her hand out to shake on it and CJ smirked, rolling her eyes at how easy it was for Kate to persuade her of anything.

The blonde grasped CJ's arms and pulled her toward her. "Kiss me," Kate whispered.

The tall agent swallowed hard again and complied with the demand. Their lips met in a warm and loving kiss. When they parted, something passed between blue eyes and green. Neither knew what it was but it seemed to settle them both.

"Wanna eat something that doesn't taste like sawdust?" CJ asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Oh God, yes!" Kate grinned, jumping to her feet.

Taking her wife's hand, the blonde led the way to the kitchen where they ate a light but tasty meal. Their conversation seemed easy and while they sat on the couch afterwards, enjoying the delicious coffee that CJ had promised to make, Tony came through the door with an exhausted German Shepherd.

He spotted the couple on the couch and gasped. "Oh crap. Sorry, I didn't think you'd be home 'til tomorrow. I... I'll leave."

"It's okay... Tony?" Kate said, fending off an over-exuberant black dog who clearly recognized his mistress. She patted him on the head. "Good boy."

CJ looked at Kate. "You remember-"

"No," Kate said, shaking her head. "I guessed."

Tony came closer to the couch with his hands clasped in front of him. "It's good to see you're feeling better, Kate."

"Thank you, Tony. I'm sorry I don't remember you but my wife speaks fondly of you."

"Aww, don't tell him that," CJ grumbled. "Now, he'll think I like him or something."

Tony chuckled. "Yeah, don't break the tough FBI façade."

"Oh, I see... she pretends to be tough. Okay, my lips are sealed," Kate replied, pretending to zip said lips. CJ pouted. "Does that usually work?" the actress asked, grabbing the stuck-out lip with her fingers.

"Nop weally..." CJ tried to answer.

All three chuckled and the young driver was amazed at Kate's relaxed manner after everything she'd been through. "Well," he said decisively, "I'm going to head home unless you two need anything else?"

"No thanks, Tony. You've been amazing the past few days," CJ said. "Can we give you a call when we need you?"

"Absolutely."

Once he had left, Kate seemed to get a little drowsy. CJ suggested an early night and after a rather mild protest, she put her wife to bed. Promising to join her very soon, the agent tucked Kate in with a kiss to her forehead, and went to take care of the horses.

* * * * *

She finished off grooming Nevada and led both horses out to their field. "Goodnight, girls," the tall woman said as she let them go. She stood for a few moments, watching the animals as they rolled around, undoing all her hard work. Idaho got up after her dust bath and shook vigorously, blowing a snort towards the agent. CJ smacked her lips together and returned to the barn with their halters. Quickly clearing out the stables, she wandered back indoors closely followed by Kamali.

She threw the plates and mugs into the dishwasher and decided to shower in the guestroom so as not to disturb Kate.

As she stood under the soothing jets, an image of her and Kate showering together flashed into her mind. She shook her head to try and erase the thoughts she knew had no business being there right now. *'Ugh, I'll never get to sleep,'* she thought as her body responded beyond her control. Suddenly, she realized she had to get into bed with Kate. The

agent leaned her head against the cold tile that was above the reach of the hot water. *'I need to get rid of this feeling'*, she reluctantly admitted.

CJ leaned one arm against the wall. Resting her forehead on it, she let her free hand slide down her body. As it covered her breast, she felt the heat settle in her stomach immediately. She twisted and flicked at the nipple, imagining her wife was the one stimulating her. It had the desired effect and she gasped out an almost silent 'Katie' as the flesh hardened. The tears ran from her eyes at the image of her wife in her mind. The hot water massaged her back and spilled over her shoulders, trickling down the valley between swollen breasts. She gave the other nipple the same attention and knew she was getting very wet... and it wasn't the shower. She could feel her clit throb and trailed her hand down over firm abs to the thatch of dark, soaked hair at the apex of her long legs.

Sinking two fingertips into the engorged folds, CJ's legs weakened and parted slightly. Her touch sparked along the hardened ridge and she began to stroke forcefully, knowing what she needed. Emotions fought against one another inside her - physical need versus what she really wanted, quick sexual release versus making love to Kate - but her body took over and as she neared her climax, her fingers moved faster and more desperately. She could barely breathe as her orgasm washed over her, moving through her body like the hot water that tumbled over her skin. She cried out Kate's name then bit her lips, praying that the actress hadn't heard her.

Taking a few deep breaths, she ran her hands through her raven hair and just wanted to cry. She didn't want to be having a quick masturbating session in the shower alone. She wanted to make love to her wife, to make the blonde feel safe and cherished; to make her feel the power of their souls uniting as they made love to one another. She clenched her jaws together and switched off the water. Drying her body and hair quickly, she snagged her tee shirt and pajama pants, and pulled them on. She walked hesitantly along the corridor toward the master bedroom.

CJ's heart melted when she saw Kate, curled up in a ball in the middle of the big bed, her blonde locks spread out over the pillow making her look like the angel she was. Using the small amount of light from the hallway, the agent navigated around the blanket box at the foot of the bed and climbed in her side, behind Kate. She lay stiffly on her back, wondering why she was so worried about this. The thoughts were quickly obliterated when her spouse instinctively turned around - grumbling incoherently under her breath - and grabbed hold of the larger woman. CJ smiled in the darkness.

Feeling a strong hand curve around the area just below her hipbone, she decided that it was a little too low and shifted her body to face Kate. The hand slipped up her back and rested between her shoulder blades.

"Smell nice..." Kate muttered sleepily.

"Thanks," CJ whispered as she wrapped her arms around her wife.

Kate snuggled into the agent's neck and inhaled deeply. "Coconut?"

CJ's lips curved into a smirk. "Yes. I thought you were sleeping?"

"I was, but I felt you come into bed. I missed you, Ciara."

The tall woman held her breath for a second. Hearing Kate use her name was a little strange when she knew the actress wasn't aware of the intimacy it held. She made sure her tone was gentle and light. "You did, huh?"

"Mmm-hmm."

"I missed you too. Get some rest, Katie. I've got you."

"Mmm...'kay."

CJ held the small body close and felt Kate resume the deep breathing of slumber. She rested her mouth on the blonde hair and the tiredness seemed to catch her unawares. She was asleep a few moments later.

* * * * *

Kate awoke late the next morning. As she opened her green eyes, she had to blink a few times before she recalled where she was. *'My bedroom... our bedroom'*, she thought. "CJ?" she said aloud. No response. Flipping the duvet back, she swung her legs out of bed and padded into the ensuite. Once she was in the bathroom, she turned around to look back into the bedroom. A feeling of *déjà vu* spread through her, like she had done it a million times before. "Hmm, I guess I have," she decided.

After dealing with a few biological necessities, she pulled on a large robe and assumed it was CJ's as it trailed along the floor behind her. She descended the stairs, hearing her wife cursing to herself somewhere in the living area.

"*That Goddamned woman. How dare she speak to me like that? Who the hell does she think she is?*" the agent continued to growl.

When the actress entered the room - a little apprehensively - she saw CJ pacing back and forth, seemingly venting at the dog. Kamali wagged his tail when he saw his other human appear and the agent swung around on her heels to see the cutest little blonde she would ever know.

"Are you okay, CJ?"

The taller woman sighed, knowing that Kate had overheard. "Yes... sorry, honey. Come here," she said, opening her arms in invitation.

Kate walked into the embrace and slipped her arms around CJ's waist. "Why were you angry?"

"I didn't want to tell you when you have so much going on right now... but your mother is trying to get in touch. She wants to see you," CJ said as calmly as she could.

Kate stepped back and took CJ's hands. "I'm assuming my relationship with her is no better than it was before?"

"I'd say, uh... no. She's only spoken to you once in the last four years and that was when *yo u* called *her*."

"Why on earth would I do that?" Kate asked, truly puzzled.

"Uh, well, something happened to you... please don't ask me what... and you wanted to let her know you were okay. Anyway, right now, she seems to want to see you and she says she's here in LA. She can be quite... painful to talk to," the agent said, wincing at the insults she had heard on the phone call and the thought of stressing her wife out.

"Yes, she can be. I'm sorry she upset you. I'll call her back later. I don't want to deal with her right now." Kate sighed. "She could've given me a little more notice if she was coming to California."

CJ frowned worriedly. "Yeah, she called the other day. I answered your cell. But you were in hospital and I didn't want to make things worse but I didn't know how you'd react and-"

"Stop," Kate ordered. She moved back into CJ's personal space. "Quit worrying and give me a good morning kiss."

The tall woman sighed. "Oh, all right." The kiss was sweet and tender and so full of love, CJ had to smile when they parted. "Did you sleep well?"

"Yes. You?"

"Yeah, fine."

"Why didn't you wake me when you got up?"

"Figured you could use a nice, long sleep in a comfortable bed. I was actually just about to bring you breakfast when the phone rang."

Kate grinned. "Ooh, maybe I should go back up there."

"If you want. How about breakfast in bed, then I'll draw you your favorite bubble bath?"

Kate's eyes rolled back in her head. "That sounds heavenly," she drawled. "Will you join me?"

"Uh... no, honey. I want you to relax. I have some stuff to do anyway," CJ said, licking her lips nervously.

"Okay. But I think it's you who needs to relax," Kate said before she headed back up the stairs.

CJ inhaled deeply and held it, wondering how she was going to cope with the everyday things she would normally do automatically. She now found herself being anxious about drawing a bath. Would Kate undress in front of her? Would her wife be shy about that sort of thing? And if she wasn't... could CJ handle seeing her in her birthday suit? "Oh, for God's sake, CJ. Grow up!" she told herself angrily. She finished preparing Kate's breakfast and took it to her wife.

* * * * *

An hour later, Kate was in the tub. CJ had somehow managed to avoid her spouse getting undressed and had hurried downstairs to call Jamie. Her colleague was at LAPD headquarters and told CJ she'd call her back when she was done.

She took a slurp of hot coffee and almost spilled it all over her lap when the cell phone vibrated against the coffee table.

"Hey Penfold, what's new?" she asked, seeing Jamie's name come up on the display.

"Hey, DM... lots. First of all, how's Kate?"

"She's okay. Not much progress, memory-wise, but she seems fine."

"And how are you?"

"I honestly don't know. I seem to be freaking out at the simplest of things," CJ sighed.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, take this morning. I drew Kate a bath. She's in it now. But my God, Jamie, I was freaking out inside at the thought of seeing her naked. I mean, how ridiculous is that? I don't know why I'm all weird about it."

" *CJ, of course you're feeling unsure about things. She doesn't remember everything you've shared and it's only natural that you'd react to her body. But how do you know she's not feeling that too, or would welcome that reaction?* "

"I don't. That's the point. But even if she is, is she feeling it just because she thinks she should? Oh, I don't want to talk about this. My brain hurts. Tell me what's going on with the studios," CJ huffed, running her fingers through her dark hair.

" *The cops didn't get any prints from that chain I was telling you about. But they have someone they need to track down... nothing concrete though...* "

"Who?"

" *Some actress called Jody Morgan. She was on the cast list... should've been there that day but wasn't questioned in the initial witness interviews. Police are looking for her ,* " Jamie said.

"Is she missing?"

" *I don't think so. Just haven't tracked her down yet .* "

"Is there any motive for her wanting to hurt Kate?"

" *Again, not sure. I'm still looking into it. I'll have more answers for you soon. Danny's been a great help .* "

"I'm glad you have a friend in the LAPD. And thank you for keeping me posted, Penfold."

" *Always, DM. And give Kate a hug for me. I'll pop over soon, if that's okay?* "

"Of course. Just gimme a call when you're coming."

" *Okay. Bye for now .* "

"Bye, Jamie."

* * * * *

After CJ went downstairs, Kate stepped into the bath, groaning at the strawberry scented water as it soothed each muscle. Lying back and submerging her body, she thought about why CJ was so nervous around her. She knew how difficult it must be for the agent but still, the woman had practically run out the door when Kate removed her robe. She continued to think about it as she rubbed her hand over her shoulder, spreading the hot water over her skin. Her hand moved down to her arm, then moved across her torso. Swirling her finger around in her navel, she chuckled slightly at the ticklish feeling. Scratching lightly through the dark blonde hair at her mound, she sighed pleasantly and kind of wished CJ would touch her there. "Whoa, what was that?" she mumbled to herself. *'Do I want her to touch me there? Hmm, yes, I do. Damn!'* A smirk crossed her features and she trailed her fingers lower.

Suddenly, her hand stilled when she felt the remnants of a deep scar on her inner thigh. She hadn't explored her body at all since the accident and the nurses had washed her in her hospital bed and accompanied her to the toilet since she had been so unsteady on her feet.

Now, she traced the raised skin with her fingertip and like a bolt of lightning, she recalled how she got it. Her world began to spin as image upon image flew through her mind. She got incredibly dizzy and the hot water of the bath added to her nausea. The sweat poured from her body as she was faced with all kinds of memories and emotions.

She was lying on a floor, CJ looking down at her with the kindest blue eyes she had ever seen. Oh, but the cave, Jason, the snow, so cold, so hungry, so painful... the black wolf!

The floodgates had opened and everything was becoming crystal clear. It was like an old-fashioned movie reel whizzing past her mind's eye at the speed of light and Kate tried to stand up in the bath, needing to free herself from the hot water. As she stood upright, her head spun even faster and she cried out.

"Oh God, oh God, oh God... CJ!"

The agent heard her wife screaming her name and jumped off the couch in a panic. Throwing down her cell phone, she took the stairs three at a time and was in the ensuite before she had even blinked. "Katie! What's wrong?" She got to the side of the tub just as Kate collapsed into her arms.

Dripping wet and covered in little clusters of bubbles, Kate clung to her wife until she felt some semblance of normality creep back in. She tried to focus her eyes and stop her head from spinning.

CJ's clothes were saturated but she didn't care. She was too scared, and carefully held the small body that clung to her. "Katie, are you all right?"

Finally, the silent actress regained her equilibrium and stood up on her own again, revealing her body to CJ. The agent tried to not look away, still not sure why she was feeling like she was invading her wife's privacy.

Kate blinked deliberately a few more times and looked at her partner who was now holding a towel up. "CJ, I don't need a towel. I need you to stop trying to avert your eyes!" she said forcefully.

CJ sensed a change and stared into the green orbs. "What happened? Why did you scream?"

"I remembered."

"Remembered what?"

"Everything, CJ. I remember everything," Kate beamed.

The taller woman suddenly felt like the weak one, as she processed what her spouse was saying. "Everything?"

Kate climbed out of the tub. "Everything," she said quietly, sliding her arms around CJ.

"Oh... how did... I mean, how?"

"I don't know, honey, but I think feeling the scar on my leg and the horrid memory of being attacked by Jason shocked all the memories out of me. But I think it was significant because it's how I met you. And that is the most important thing in my life," the blonde said, squeezing the larger body.

"I... oh Jesus, you remember everything?" CJ asked again, needing to hear it one more time.

"Yes, everything." Kate tapped on her temple in a deliberate fashion while holding CJ with the other arm. "I remember Montana, the cabin, your job, Charlie and Jonathan, my job, Jack Bannerman... ewww... moving here, our horse's names, Kamali, your truck... when I gave you the truck... on the hood, oh my!" Kate blushed and coughed. "The robbery, that time you got shot... oh, God," she said, putting her hand on CJ's chest. "Dad and Jeffrey's wedding... awww... Valentine's day, last Christmas, the Davenport case... oh! The girls!" she added with wide eyes. "What happened with the adoption? With... with Shannon and Lucy?"

CJ's eyes were streaming with tears by this point. "They're fine. We have plenty of time. Don't worry about that right now."

"Oh honey, this must have been so difficult for you. Oh CJ, I'm *so* sorry," Kate murmured, kissing all over the agent's face. "And us... how did you manage to... I mean, we have so much passion... I felt it but didn't know how to mention it to you. I'm not sure why."

CJ bit her lips... hard. "I wish you had. It's been making me nuts but there was no way I would've said anything to you. You were injured and I felt really bad for not being able to bury my feelings and... urges."

"Don't be silly. Of course you're gonna have urges. Holy crap, CJ! We're hot, me and you!" Kate said, her eyebrows raised so high, CJ thought they might crawl off her head.

The agent suddenly couldn't hold back the laughter. She held onto the most precious person in her life and laughed so much that Kate had no choice but to join in. They collapsed on the floor of the bathroom, Kate still totally nude and CJ's clothes still totally soaked through, but they didn't care. CJ leaned against the wall and Kate curled up between her legs and used her wife's chest as a pillow. They chuckled quietly after the initial outburst and CJ kissed the blonde hair in front of her, hearing a contented 'mmmm' from her wife.

"God, I love you CJ," Kate said between random giggles.

"I love you more," the agent responded.

Kate smiled widely even though CJ couldn't see it. "Not possible."

Another tear escaped the taller woman's eye but it was a tear of joy. "Shall we agree to disagree?"

Kate turned round and got to her knees in front of her wife. "I believe we shall," she husked, leaning in for a kiss.

CJ couldn't stop the feelings now coursing through her body and soul. She wrapped Kate in her arms and kissed her like she'd never kissed her before. Her tongue explored every part of the blonde's mouth. Kate hadn't really given her a choice, having poked her own tongue forcefully into the agent's mouth, demanding access and possessing her with ease. CJ tried to convey all the love, passion and want through her lips.

Kate did the same but was ravenously hungry. She had been feeling so much for CJ but couldn't understand her passionate and arousing responses to the woman, especially since she'd come home. They were so intense and yet, she'd had no memory of how they got that way. But now... now she remembered... and she wanted to make love to CJ all night long.

The agent pulled back to take a breath. Her heart was pounding so hard and so loudly, she wondered if it had perhaps relocated in her ear. "Slow down... Katie," she gasped. She kept her firm grip on the naked, slippery body and looked into the deep green eyes that were mere inches from her own. "I love you so much," she whispered.

"I know," Kate replied, feeling a few tears of joy run down her own cheeks. "I love you more than I ever thought possible. I knew it when I saw you in the hospital but I just couldn't-"

CJ's fingers silenced the actress. "Shhh, it's over now. I have you in my arms. That's all that matters."

"I know. But boy, it's good to be back," the blonde grinned.

"It's good to have you back. I missed you a little bit," CJ said, feeling guilty for saying it.

"Hey... I bet you missed me a lot. Don't worry, CJ, I understand. I think I missed myself a little, too," Kate said, crinkling her face at how silly that sounded.

They sat on the floor for what seemed like forever, just holding onto one another, thinking how lucky they were and conveying their relief through tender touches and loving words. Eventually, the agent's butt started to go numb and she wiggled slightly.

CJ tweaked the blonde's pert nose with her finger. "Maybe you should call Doctor Kyle and tell him the good news?"

"Hmmm, that can wait until tomorrow. Right now, I'd like you to take me to bed... Ciara."

CJ's mouth suddenly went dry and her heart rate picked up again. "You sure?"

"Oh God, yes." Kate stood up and held out her hand with a very broad smile on her face. "Please?"

"But..."

"CJ, I remember. It's like I'd never forgotten. Please make love with me."

CJ nodded and got to her feet. "Do you want to uh, rinse first?" she grinned, pointing to the remaining bubbles on Kate's skin and hair.

The actress laughed. "I guess I could... but only if you join me."

Kate tugged at CJ's tee shirt and the agent didn't need to be invited again. She wanted to touch her wife. She needed it like she needed to breathe.

Kate undressed her lover slowly, enjoying every second of it. She gasped at the body before her. "Wow."

"What?" CJ queried.

"It's like I haven't seen you for years. You are... beeeautiful!"

The agent looked incredibly bashful. "You're beautiful... my beautiful wife."

Kate grinned and took the agent in a searing kiss once more. Between mumbled declarations and light touches, they made it into the shower where CJ turned on the water. Kate was nibbling at her collarbone and she wondered briefly if she could remain standing.

"So... so... glad... to... remember," Kate said between kisses.

CJ couldn't speak. Her body and mind had blended into a pool of unending pleasure as her wife licked between her breasts.

The taller woman ran both hands over her spouse's back and relished the feel of the smooth skin. Kate's mouth covered her nipple and the moan that left CJ's lips came directly from her soul. She loved this woman so completely and the fact that Kate hadn't forgotten their love throughout this nightmare made this moment all the more profound for CJ. She pulled Kate up and kissed her so delicately, barely touching her lips. She ran the tip of her tongue around Kate's, and sucked the actress' bottom lip softly into her mouth. She let go and opened her eyes to find her lover watching her.

As Kate gazed into CJ's deep blue eyes, she trailed her fingers down the tall body, tickling her way over the thatch of soft, curly hair. CJ moaned again as the hand cupped her center, the middle finger exploring the hidden treasure beneath.

Kate knew exactly how her wife liked to be touched. '*Another thing remembered*,' she fleetingly thought. "I missed you," the blonde whispered, feeling the viscose-like moisture coat her fingertip.

CJ kissed her again, still not feeling able to speak. Kate's finger was now teasing her entrance and she whimpered into her wife's mouth.

"Look at me, Ciara. I need you to look at me..." Kate requested, sinking her finger further into her lover. CJ obeyed. The blonde entered her wife and simultaneously made sure her breasts were grazing against the agent's, only made possible by the fact the CJ was gradually sliding down the wall in her weakened state. "Come for me..."

The tall woman gulped and licked her lips, trying to get some saliva back into her dry mouth. She felt so helpless... unable to do anything but experience Kate's love. Her heart was thumping, her blood singing through her veins, and it seemed it was all rushing to one particular spot between her legs. Kate continued to thrust, and leaned in to kiss the raven-haired woman. Taking CJ's lip into her warm mouth, she added her thumb to the stimulation, pressing it against the now very swollen bundle of nerves. CJ felt the touch on her clit and the fingers thrusting in and out of her body. Her orgasm began to burn, spreading through her like a wave of pure fire.

Kate continued to tease the agent's mouth with her tongue, driving CJ through her climax, feeling the velvety inner walls gripping tightly at her fingers. The taller woman fell onto her wife as she thrust her body against the questing hand one last time. Kate smiled when CJ bit her shoulder, trying to hold back a scream that ended up working its way out as a muffled 'Katie'.

As the water fell over them both, the actress held onto the exhausted larger body. CJ's breathing slowed and as she looked at her wife, more tears fell. Kate was momentarily worried, but the agent covered her mouth with a wanton kiss.

"Happy tears," CJ explained once they'd parted.

Kate nodded. "I'm happy too. I love the feel of you in my arms."

"I love you feeling me," CJ grinned weakly. "But now I need to feel you... and I think I want to do that in our bed."

"Take me then..."

CJ didn't waste any more time and switched the water off. Grabbing a large fluffy towel, she dried Kate and herself quickly. She then swooped down to lift her wife into her arms.

"Oh my," the blonde chuckled, throwing her arms around CJ's neck.

The agent was too busy kissing her wife's shoulder and licking behind a nearby ear to answer. She placed Kate on the big bed and lit a couple of candles. Closing the drapes, she crawled up from the bottom of the bed and very gently covered the smaller body with her own, feeling the need to somehow protect her gorgeous wife. She kissed the burn mark on Kate's upper chest and felt her heart constrict at the thought of the love of her life in pain. She moved upward and kissed the full lips tenderly.

Kate inhaled the scent of her spouse. "Hmmm, that feels incredible. How long since we...?"

"I have no idea... too long," CJ replied, too busy kissing her way along Kate's cheek to think about it.

The actress moaned pleasantly and lifted her chin to give CJ more room as the agent licked a trail down her jaw. She grabbed handfuls of long, dark hair as her wife took her tongue on a journey across Kate's collarbone and down between her breasts. CJ palmed one of the full mounds, chaffing the nipple and feeling it harden under her caress. Her mouth found its way to the twin and she poked her tongue out to taste the creamy flesh.

Kate gasped when CJ began to suck on the sensitive point. "Oh baby, yes..."

CJ moaned and was very aware of the dampened blonde curls that were pressed against her stomach. Her heart fluttered at the thought of what awaited her and she took a deep breath before letting the nipple go. She kissed it lovingly then headed south. Kate's hips left the mattress - almost of their own accord - as she felt her wife descending to her most intimate place.

The agent positioned herself between Kate's thighs and in the dim candlelight, she could see the precious flesh glistening with desire. "Oh honey, you're so ready."

"Yessss..." was the only response. Kate's head rose up to look at her spouse, but when CJ's hot mouth covered the engorged ridge, the actress arched her back and threw her head back onto the pillow. "Oh, Ciara!"

CJ was in heaven. The taste, smell and feel of Kate was like a balm to her soul... like some magical elixir that would replenish her spirit so completely. Sliding her tongue from the warm, wet opening to the top of Kate's clit, she breathed in the scent and smiled at the reaction her touch invoked. The actress' hips were already swaying very slightly as if to urge her lover on.

CJ needed no encouragement. She started slowly, flicking her tongue back and forth very lightly, barely touching the very sensitive nodule. Kate cried out and pushed her center toward CJ's face. Feeling the amount of wetness already there, CJ decided to quicken her pace and give Kate what she wanted. She added more pressure and swirled her tongue in small circles around her wife's clit. As Kate begged for more, CJ upped the intensity, batting her tongue as fast as she could over the swollen skin. She brought her hand underneath her and paused her oral ministrations to suck her fingers. Returning her tongue to its most pleasurable duty, she entered Kate slowly, feeling the inner muscles resist briefly before welcoming the digits. CJ gasped as the flooding wetness quickly surrounded her and she felt her own orgasm rising.

Kate was there. CJ was inside her and the hot mouth between her thighs was driving her insane. When the agent sucked Kate's clit into her mouth, still manipulating it with her tongue, and continued to thrust her fingers into her wife, the actress could not hold back. Her hips bucked off the mattress and she cried out as her orgasm shot through her. "Ciara! Oh, oh... yes!"

The desire ran out of Kate and CJ hungrily consumed all that she could, making sure to get every drop of the delicious offering. She stilled her fingers inside her wife as the blonde fell back onto the bed. She barely touched Kate with her tongue, gently licking and kissing the tender flesh as the afterglow settled over them. The agent inhaled gustily then blew her warm breath out slowly over Kate's clit, drawing a whimper then something resembling a groan and a giggle from her wife.

The smaller woman massaged CJ's scalp when her lover rested her head on her abdomen. "You came with me, didn't you?" she said quietly.

CJ chuckled. "Yep."

"Nice."

"It sure was." The agent crawled over her wife. "That was so amazing. The thought of never making love to you again was too much to-"

"Hey," the blonde whispered, "there was no way we would never make love again, honey. I wanted you even without the memories. We would've made new ones, I'm certain of that."

"I was just so scared... for us... about everything. Katie, I can handle the FBI stuff, the horrible murders and all the crap I deal with in the Bureau... but I can't handle the thought of losing you," CJ said, still feeling a little worried about how she fell apart without her wife.

"You won't lose me, CJ. You and I are too tough. I mean, look what's happened to us since we got together. We could make a movie," Kate smirked.

"Uh huh. As long as there's a happy ending," CJ replied, sporting a cheesy grin.

"Oh yes, always a happy ending. But right now, there's a long and wonderful love scene to be finished. Now, where was I?" the feisty little actress said, pushing her groin up into her wife.

CJ rolled her eyes and laughed. "Oh, if I must..." she pretended to grumble.

They didn't know how many hours passed before sleep claimed them, but those hours were spent with the two women constantly joined together in one way or another, and they were the best few hours of their lives so far. Reconnecting was always a wonderful experience and they didn't care how many times they uttered the words 'I love you'. They had to be said... over and over and over again.

Chapter 6

CJ awoke the next morning, vaguely wondering what the noise was. She opened her eyes and looked at the clock, stunned to find that it was 10.30am already. "Wow, I must have been really tired." She decided that the statement was absolutely true when she noticed she was in bed alone and hadn't felt Kate leave.

The agent sat up and listened more closely to the noise. Hearing the water from the shower was one thing, but her face took on a whole new expression when she realized Kate was singing Michael Jackson's 'Remember The Time', very much off key. The tall woman laughed heartily and figured her wife was glad to have her memories back. Throwing off the sheet, her tall, nude form shuffled through the closed door into the ensuite, where the singing was much more painful. But she decided it was the best sound ever. Kate was happy and that was all that mattered.

"Do you remembaa... when we used to talk... ya know, we'd stay on the phone from... night 'til dawn... Do you remembaa..." Kate belted out as she danced under the warm spray.

CJ snickered and coughed loudly to get her wife's attention. The actress spun around and looked through the slightly misted glass partition. She smiled and wrote 'hi' in the condensation with her finger.

CJ laughed again and decided she had to pee before her bladder burst and made a mess all over the floor. "I'll be right in," she said, sticking her tongue out at the blonde.

"Hurry up or I'll start singing again," Kate chuckled as CJ sat down.

"Sing if you want, baby. I love seeing you happy... no matter how painful it is for my ears."

Kate squished her nose against the shower screen and gave her wife the evil eye before starting on 'Give In To Me' by the same artist. CJ smirked and decided not to flush until after they'd showered. As she stepped into the cubicle, Kate's hand landed on her upper chest immediately. The smaller woman watched the water hit her wife's tanned skin and when she followed the droplets with an inquisitive finger, CJ knew they would be here a while. But what better way to spend the rest of the morning?

* * * * *

Jamie drummed her fingers on the car door waiting for CJ to pick up the phone. After about sixteen rings, she was about to give up when a rather out of breath special agent came on the line.

"Hey... Penfold."

"Why are you...? Oh, never mind. How's Kate doing?"

"Uh, fine. You coming over today?" CJ asked.

"That's why I was calling. Would it be okay for Sam and I to visit? We have some news."

"Of course. Gimme a time and we'll be ready."

Jamie sensed a smile but couldn't figure out why. "About an hour?"

"Great. See you then... ooh -"

The line went dead and Jamie frowned at her friend's strange behavior. She turned to her right and looked at Sam who was sitting in the passenger seat. "She's acting really weird. I hope things are okay."

Sam raised an eyebrow. "Weird? Like, more than usual?"

Jamie barked out a laugh then bit her lips. "Only one way to find out what's going on. Let's go."

* * * * *

"Katie, seriously... Jamie is gonna think I've lost my marbles," the agent said, holding off her wife's tickling fingers.

The blonde had her pinned to the couch and was not fighting fair over the last chocolate brownie. Tony had baked... yes, baked a batch for the actress coming home and they were almost finished already.

CJ decided enough was enough and used her full strength - while trying to stop laughing - to get on top of her wife. "Okay, now I have you under control, can I tell you that Jamie and Sam are on their way? They'll be here in an hour."

Kate sighed. "All right," she pouted.

CJ leaned down and kissed the burn mark near her wife's neck. "And we have to calm it down... how's your head?"

"It's fine, honey. No pain, no dizziness. Tough nut, that's me," she smiled up at her beloved spouse.

"There's a joke in there somewhere..." CJ grinned.

"Uh huh. Kiss me."

"Haven't you had enough kisses for one day?" CJ joked.

"Never enough when they're your kisses, baby," Kate purred, still submissively pinned to the couch cushions.

"Now, now. Don't start." CJ kissed her softly, releasing the smaller woman as she stood up.

Kate followed her partner into the kitchen. "Do you think it would be too cruel to mess with them when they get here?"

CJ turned and looked at her devious little wife. "Yes. They love you. No messing."

Kate huffed for a moment then relented. "Okay. I just remember... ya hear that, *remember* ... messing with Jamie at our party and it was fun. But you're right, this is different."

"I'm glad you agree," CJ said, wrapping Kate in her arms. "This thing was pretty serious and it was your health that was at risk. They were very worried."

"I know. I can't wait to see them, actually. At the hospital, none of it made sense. I thought it was years ago and back then, I never knew Jamie at all, and Sam and I barely said hello to one another." She sighed. "I'm so happy I got my memories back. Just think of what I would've missed. Everything we've done... I love my life with you, CJ."

"Damn, you're gonna make me cry again. If you'll notice, I can't seem to keep my hands off you... and I don't just mean when we're making love. I mean, I want to hold you constantly. It could get slightly inconvenient."

Kate smiled and kissed her tall, beautiful spouse. "Let's make a little snack for our guests. You can hold onto me while I work at the counter."

"Great idea."

* * * * *

Jamie and Sam stood - slightly nervously - shoulder to shoulder as they waited for someone to answer the door. The agent studied the chunky antique door knocker and was about to comment on it when a petite, blonde, smiling actress appeared. Kate looked at the two women briefly before stepping toward them and wrapping one arm around each neck. Both appeared a little taken aback but before long, a tangle of arms held tightly around Kate's body.

She let go and smiled again. "Hey, you two. Come on in..."

Sam frowned. "You're different... you..."

"Are you trying to ask me if I'm all better?"

The producer only nodded, not daring to hope for the best possible answer. Jamie held her breath and clenched her knuckles.

"Yes, I'm all better. I remember everything... so come in, will ya? CJ is on the phone with Mark."

"Oh gosh, Kate, that's so fantastic!" Sam blurted, her eyes filling up with tears.

Jamie was biting her lips in an effort not to bawl her heart out. The blonde agent was shifting from foot to foot, like she had so much nervous energy she needed to run a mile.

"Are you okay, Jamie?" Kate asked.

"I... oh screw it, I love you so much. Can I have another hug?"

Kate was overwhelmed and she tried to figure out if she had heard the woman correctly. Sam decided honesty was the best policy and told Kate she loved her too. All three ended up in a group hug in the middle of the hallway. CJ appeared from the living area and saw the huddle.

"Aww, hey! I'm missing out on groping three hot chicks. Lemme in!" the agent shouted, wrapping her tall body around the pile.

After many squeezes and chuckles and a few tears, they headed to the couch. Once everyone was seated, Kate looked at her friends with a goofy grin on her face.

Sam was the first to speak. "Well, what a great day. We were so worried, Kate."

"I know. CJ told me. Thanks, you guys. I remembered how fun it was to mess with you, Jamie, but CJ warned me not to... not this time."

Agent Green narrowed her dark brown eyes. "I may have had to kick your ass if you had done that."

"Pah!" Kate barked. "Kick my ass? I'd like to see you try, Missy."

CJ interjected. "Okay, give the violence a rest," she said, sliding her arm around Kate's shoulder. "I'm just so relieved we have you back. Let's not have any mud wrestling for a while."

"Mud wrestling?" Kate said, eyebrow raised. "What goes on in that brain of yours?"

"Uhhh..." Three women broke into a round of chuckles as CJ's face reddened rather quickly. The agent rolled her blue eyes and licked her teeth. "Okay, okay, so I got a mental image... I couldn't help myself. Leave me alone."

"Aww, sorry, DM. So, did I hear Kate say you called Mark?" Jamie said, giving her friend an out.

"Yeah. I had to apologize... and thank him. God, I hate groveling."

"What did you apologize for?" Kate queried.

"Oh... well... I wasn't very nice to him when I... uh..."

"What she's trying to say, Kate, is that when she found out your accident wasn't an accident, she went storming into the AD's office and yelled at him to put her on the case-"

"Jamie!" CJ spat, semi-seriously.

"What? You did!" the blonde agent retorted.

Kate was kinda impressed and appalled at the same time.

The raven-haired woman turned to see her wife bite back a smirk. "What you grinnin' at?"

"Aww, baby, I know how stressed you must have been. Did Mark forgive you?"

"Actually, yeah, he did... kinda... then he seemed to do a happy dance when I told him you had your memories back. I'm assuming you updated him about the amnesia, Penfold," CJ said, looking at Jamie.

"Yeah, he was really worried too. You have a lot of people who love you, Kate, including our boss," the blonde agent said, squinting at how weird that statement was.

"I know that, Jamie. I'm very lucky. So, what's happening with the investigation?"

"Oh well... do you know Jody Morgan?"

Kate raised two sandy eyebrows. "Yeah. She's a bitch," she deadpanned.

"Seems like the only suspect. And she seems to be missing," Jamie continued.

"Are the cops treating her as a missing person now?" CJ squeaked.

"Looks like it, DM. But there's more going on and I want to know what her motive would be."

Sam cleared her throat. "I think I can shed some light on that. Jody was seeing Jack Bannerman but he dumped her... rather coldly, I'd imagine - when she got too clingy and crazy. Nicole's been seeing Jack for a while now and it seems the schedule change that day at the studios, meant that Kate was on set instead of Nicole."

"That's true," Kate said, pinching her lips with her fingers. "And we use the same set for Nicole's character's office, just with a few pieces of furniture changed and moved..."

"I might have known Jack would be in the middle of this somewhere," CJ grumbled. She still wanted to rip the guy's throat out. The agent's cell phone rang, interrupting their conversation. She picked it up. "Hello?"

" *CJ?* "

"Yes... Shannon?" the agent said, recognizing the little voice.

" *Yes* ," the girl replied.

"Are you okay, sweetie?"

" *I was a bit sad and Mrs. Hunt said I could call you* ."

"Mrs. Hunt?"

" *The foster lady* ," Shannon sniffed.

"Why are you upset, Shannon?" CJ asked, a little concerned at the subdued voice on the line.

Kate looked at her wife with a worried expression as the tall woman got up from the couch and left the room.

"Do you think Shannon's okay?" Jamie said.

Kate sighed. "I hope so. It can't have been easy for the two of them. We need to go pick them up as soon as possible, I think."

"Don't you need some more time to recover?" Sam asked her friend.

"The way our lives go, I think living in the moment is how we should do it, before the next adventure takes over. I feel fine and once I've checked in with my doctor, we need to get the girls settled once and for all," Kate said, with a nod.

When CJ got off the phone, she had managed to cheer Shannon up a little by promising to see her soon. What Shannon didn't know was that Kate and CJ were coming to pick both girls up and bring them home.

* * * * *

Jamie and Sam stayed a while and had some lunch. An hour later - promising to update the LAPD with the new information and keep CJ and Kate in the loop - the two women left in Jamie's car.

The rest of the day was filled with CJ making sure her wife got plenty of TLC and love. Kate called her director and, after finding out that the studio would be cleared for filming in a day or so, she told him she would be back by the end of the week. Phil suggested that she not come back until Monday at the earliest, as he had meetings with the studio bosses lined up anyway.

Kate also called her Dad and Jeffrey to give them the good news of her recovery and as usual, Eddie was over-emotional and blowing kisses down the phone. He told her he was about to fly to LA but she dissuaded him until the kids were settled. Of course, the thought of having grandchildren made him bawl again and Kate had to hold the handset away from her ear until he calmed down. After the call, she sat back on the couch, pondering her parents who were such polar-opposites to one another.

CJ came through the door from the kitchen diner and tilted her head to watch her wife. Kate was wearing an old pair of sweat pants and a tee shirt. Her hair wasn't particularly tidy and she wore no make-up... and she was still the most beautiful woman CJ had ever seen. "What you thinking about, honey?"

"Dad... and my mother," Kate responded, staring at the blue material covering her knee.

"Want to talk to me about it?"

The actress sighed and took her wife's hand as she settled next to her. "I don't like talking about mother."

"I know that. In fact, you've never really told me why you two are so distant," CJ said gently, giving Kate's hand a squeeze.

"I guess... I guess you could say she mentally abused me. Even after I ran away to California, she still managed to get to me, by phone or whatever... always telling me I'd amount to nothing... and would never find love because I wasn't worth anything. It was like that for years. I suppose that's why I came to LA in the first place. I was looking for success and... well, attention... to prove my mother wrong."

CJ was angry with Elizabeth Emerson - even without meeting the woman - and wanted to make sure her spouse knew that she was so very loved. "Katie, I don't know how to say this strongly enough so that you never feel that way-"

"CJ, I know she was wrong. I mean, look at us. I've never heard of... never known a love like we have. But I was young and it cut deep, you know? My own mother never really loved me... or if she did, she had a funny way of showing it. She's always been so bitter and hurtful and I, for the life of me, cannot figure out what I did to deserve it."

"Nothing. You did nothing to deserve that kind of treatment. You are the most incredible human being I know. And I want to make sure your mother hears that from me. It'll have more impact coming from someone she hates already. I can't believe she doesn't know how lucky she is to have a daughter like you. I bet if my mother..." CJ faltered.

Kate knew what her wife was going to say. "Oh, CJ, I'm sorry. Here I am rambling on about how awful my mother is and you don't even have... sorry, honey."

"Don't apologize. It's just a shame your mother wasn't more like Dad. I guess you should concentrate on how awesome he is," the agent suggested.

"We're quite a pair, where parents are concerned. I have to say, from the things you told me about your Mom, I feel closer to her than my own mother... and I never even met her," the blonde said, rubbing her thumb over CJ's hand.

"She would have loved you so much, Katie. I bet she's looking down here thinking, *wow, CJ, you got real lucky*. And you know... she's so right."

"I love you, CJ."

"I love you too, Katie."

The actress sighed. "So, do you want to talk about anything else? Would you tell me about your... about your father?"

The agent's face suddenly changed. She scratched uncomfortably at her forehead. "Uh, no. I..."

"CJ... look what just happened? You shut down. I can see it in your face. I'm not asking you about this to hurt you. There are two subjects we always avoid... my mother and your father. I know the pain runs deep for you... probably more than my mother hurt me."

"I've managed fine so far by burying it and trying to forget-"

"But you haven't forgotten. It's part of your past. Listen, I'm sorry I asked. I... I'll go clear up in the kitchen," Kate said, feeling guilty for ruining their conversation.

Getting to her feet, she felt a larger hand pull her back. She turned to find CJ fighting with her emotions. Kate sat on her wife's lap and wrapped her arms around the agent's neck. She kissed the dark hair on the head that fell onto her chest, and remained silent.

"You've changed since your accident, Katie," a quiet voice said, muffled by the blonde's soft, white tee shirt.

Kate tensed momentarily. "In a bad way?"

"No, of course not." CJ looked up into the green eyes of her wife. "You just seem so open and direct about everything... more so than before if that's possible. It's like every moment counts and you... oh, I don't know."

"You're right, I guess. When I remembered everything again, I didn't want to waste another second with regrets or hidden heartache. Maybe it's a blessing that my mother wants to talk. I can tell her to go to Hell and move on."

"I won't tell you not to do that, because even just speaking with her a couple of times, I already dislike her... sorry, honey."

"Don't say sorry to me, CJ. What did she say to you on the phone?"

"I don't want to repeat the insults."

"Tell me..." the actress requested, lifting her spouse's chin.

"Let's just say that she believes I've poisoned your mind and I'm a disgusting, evil lesbian who must have you under some kind of perverted spell... and also, because I wouldn't let her talk to you, she said I probably had you held captive... strange woman."

"I... God, I'm going to kill her..."

"No, you're not. She just seems very cold-hearted and bitter... and incredibly naïve about the world today. I'm sorry you had to put up with her abuse when you were growing up."

Kate sighed. "It's amazing when you're younger, and someone you think should protect you and know everything about the world, tells you you're a stupid, no-good weight for her to bear. And when she tells you you're ugly and useless, you believe it." A few harsh tears stung the back of green eyes and CJ saw it.

"Don't you dare believe that now, Kate Carson. It's so far from the truth... I can't even measure the distance in this Universe," CJ said firmly.

"That's far," Kate said, trying to joke and biting her lips to avoid crying. "I used to think I didn't deserve you."

"Oh God, don't be ridiculous. I was the one who didn't deserve you!" CJ almost screeched.

Kate shook her head. "Of course you do... we both deserve one another. And we're perfect together. Let's not forget that."

CJ thought for a few long moments. No hidden heartache, Kate had said. Her own heart lurched at the thought of voicing the next words. "Okay... I'll tell you about my father, if you want to hear it," she said shakily. "What I remember anyway..."

The actress was still on her spouse's lap and cupped CJ's face with one hand. "Tell me..."

CJ leaned her forehead on Kate's chin, unable to look her in the eye right now. "He... he was physically abusive. He would wait 'til Mom went out. She had to work because he lost his job when I was little and didn't get another one. He'd get drunk and use me as a punching bag. I was pretty small... and... from what I remember, he threatened to kill me if I ever told Mom about it... it was terrifying. I would stand frozen still in a corner, so that he would have nothing to get angrier about. Sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn't and he would beat me anyway..." The agent trailed off, reliving some of the fear.

"Did he ever... I mean, did he ever abuse you... sexually?" Kate asked, her heart convulsing at the thought of her wife ever going through any kind of pain.

"No. He never touched me that way. But... but he would walk around... oh fuck... I can't..."

"CJ, look at me," Kate said, anxiety threading through her tone. "You can... just tell me and I'll never ask again. I just want you to have talked to someone about this... to share the pain somehow. I bet you never talked to anyone... not even your Mom, right?"

The tall woman shook her head in the negative. "When Mom found out he'd been beating me, she threatened to shoot him with a shotgun our neighbor had. But she never really spoke about it afterwards... she just got us out of there, so that he couldn't hurt me again." The agent's voice quivered and she paused to bury her face in Kate's chest. She turned her head to the side and continued. "I never told her about him walking around... naked, in front of me. I was a little kid then, but now I know he was... he was aroused. But he would never touch me... and he was always fully clothed when he beat me... that was different. Oh God..."

Kate held the agent as tightly as she could. "It's okay, honey. It's out now. I love you so much."

CJ sniffed vigorously a few times and absorbed strength from her spouse. They sat for what felt like hours - but it was probably more like fifteen minutes - and the agent matched her breathing to her wife's. Kate never said a word, she just held onto CJ until the taller woman looked up at her. "Thank you, Katie. Man, that feels strange... speaking about it... and now there's nothing I haven't told you. Feels... feels good."

Kate nodded and looked into her partner's blue orbs. "It does feel good. We can talk anytime about anything, CJ. I want to be clear about that. And we're about to be parents... so we need to be stronger than ever. I'm always here for you."

"I'm always here for you, too. And we are stronger than ever, honey. Wow, we'll be parents... scary, huh?"

"It is, a little. And we'll do our best to be good ones. Like my Dad and your Mom," Kate whispered, kissing the dark hair once more. "I think, from now on, I'd like to think of 'Dad' and 'Mom' as those two people. It would help to heal my heart where 'Elizabeth' is concerned. Is that okay with you?"

"Well, I call your Dad... 'Dad' already. And I love the fact that you want to call my beloved Alyssa Carson your Mom, too," CJ said, her eyes shining with devotion.

"Good." Kate thought for a moment. "So, Mom changed her name back after they divorced?"

"Yes. Mine too... and I'm so happy about that."

"I am too, honey. I love that it's my name as well," Kate beamed.

CJ kissed her wife gently on the lips. "So, Kate Carson, are you ready to be a mother of two?"

"Ready as I'll ever be. You?"

"Terrified, but ready," CJ grinned.

"Let's set a date to see Marion next week then... and we need to go shopping!"

Chapter 7

Tony drove up to the big, whitewashed farmhouse. CJ had called and asked him to come over as soon as possible. She hadn't sounded worried or anything, so he just figured there were errands to be run.

When the agent opened the door, she only got out a 'hello', before her giddy blonde wife skipped through the hallway. The tall woman turned back to the driver, who had a strange look on his face. "She's baaaaaack," CJ grinned.

Tony's eyes widened as Kate approached. "She's... back?"

"Tony!" Kate exclaimed. "Come on in."

"Hi, Kate. I... uh..."

CJ put her hand on the young man's shoulder as he walked into the house. "Relax, Tony."

Kate threw her arms around his neck. "It's good to remember you, Tony!"

"Oh!" the young man gasped. "You're *back* . You remember?"

"Yes... everything. Isn't it great?" Kate smiled.

"Fantastic, Kate. Oh, I'm so happy for you guys."

Both women could see Tony's whole demeanor change and they shared a quick glance at one another. CJ bit her bottom lip and smirked at her wife.

"So, Tony..." the tall woman said, "we have things we need to discuss. How about a nice cup of coffee?"

"Great, CJ," he replied, wearing a huge smile. He was so happy for his employers, knowing only too well, how hard the past week must have been for them.

They headed into the kitchen - Kamali following at the driver's heels - and settled around the island unit.

* * * * *

"Two kids? Wow..." Tony said, rubbing his chin.

"Yep, and we want to know if you'd like to help care for them while we're at work," Kate said, not sure how the young man would respond.

"Oh... I'd love to help but I don't have much experience... except my nephew... and I have my other duties too."

CJ smiled. "It's okay, Tony, we just wanted to check with you."

"Well, when you're at the studios, Kate, I could help out here. It's really up to you. I tend to come back here to walk the dog anyway," the driver shrugged.

"We'll take it as it comes, I think," the actress said, nodding. "We need to find a nanny. I'll start looking."

"Sounds sensible," CJ responded.

Tony finished the last of his coffee. "I can't get into the studios to collect your mail, Kate. Do you guys need me to do anything?"

The blonde thought about it for a moment. "Would you like to take me shopping, Tony? We need to buy car seats before we pick up the girls," Kate asked.

CJ coughed to interrupt. "Are you sure you should do that today, honey?"

"Sure. I feel fine and it's only one store. Tony will take care of me... right?" Kate said, looking at the young man.

"Yes," Tony replied.

"And anyway," Kate persuaded, "you said you wanted to go and see Mark. Why don't you pop into your office while I'm out?"

"Hmm, good tactics, Katie. All right. But if you need me, you call me," the tall woman warned.

"Absolutely," the actress grinned.

Tony smiled at the interaction. "Okay, I'll go and give the Mercedes a wash, then we'll go. Is that okay?"

"Perfect," Kate said. "CJ, want to come for a walk with me and Kamali?"

"Sure."

* * * * *

After a leisurely walk around the farmland with her beautiful wife, CJ headed into her office. She wanted to catch up with Ethan and Mikey, and apologize to Mark again. And her boss would, no doubt, want a full update on Kate's recovery. She smiled and shook her head at Mark's friendship with her wife as she drove into the underground parking garage.

She knocked on Mark's door, recalling how she'd stormed in here not a few days ago, and cringed to herself in embarrassment.

"Come in," the AD shouted from within the room.

CJ opened the door and walked in hesitantly with her hands up. "It's only me, Sir."

"Oh, CJ. Please sit down," she said, hiding his grin at her pose. "I didn't expect you in today."

"Ah well, I came to apologize again. I'm really sorry about..." The agent paused when her boss held his hand up.

"No need for more groveling, CJ. I'm sure that phone call was enough. How is Kate?"

"She's doing great, Sir."

"CJ," he warned, wiggling a finger in the air.

"Oh... she's doing great, Mark," she smiled sheepishly.

"Did she remember everything?" he asked.

He was being quite abrupt and CJ thought that maybe she wasn't completely forgiven. "It seems like it. She remembers our life together."

"That's the main thing then. Means I can get my special agent back in one piece. So, have you been in touch with Marion?"

"Yes. She's been very helpful, as have you, Mark. I need to thank you again for that."

"Noted. And you're welcome. But I have a lot of work to do... so if there's anything else?" Mark asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Uh, no. Sorry to disturb," CJ said and got to her feet.

"You're not disturbing. I'll see you next week, CJ. Have a good break."

"Thank you."

As she left the office, she wondered why Mark hadn't disciplined her further. Perhaps the lack of conversation was her punishment. She was amazed to find that she didn't like the feeling of letting him down, having never really cared about her bosses in the past. She sighed as she entered her own office, finding only Ethan present.

"Hey, man. You all alone today?" the tall woman probed.

"Hi, CJ. Mikey and Connor went out to investigate something. How are you?"

"I'm good. Who's Connor?"

"Oh, he's the guy we have in covering for Jamie. He hasn't done much yet... quiet week," Ethan said, meeting CJ's hand in a routine high five. A quiet week meant no murderers. "How's Kate doing?"

"She's great. Got her memories back and her injuries are healing, so I'm happy. But we're going for a check up tomorrow, just to make sure," CJ babbled, dumping her butt into the chair across from Ethan.

"So, what you doing in here? Go be with your wife!"

"I will. She went with Tony to get stuff for the car. I needed to suck up to the boss. I was a little... uh, nasty the other day."

"Yeah, I heard," the young agent chuckled. "I bet he understood, though."

"Kinda. So, do you know where I can find a nanny?"

Ethan blinked at the change in conversation and his eyes widened. "Are you looking? Are you definitely getting the kids?"

"Yes. And we need some help while we're both out at work. Know anyone?"

"Congratulations, CJ. And well, actually..." he paused, wondering if this could help solve his financial problems.

"Out with it, Ethan," CJ said, seeing the cogs in his brain turning.

"Well... you remember Alice's Mom was really sick recently?" he asked. CJ nodded. "Well, she never had insurance that covered her long stay in hospital and she couldn't afford to pay, so Alice and I are footing the bill." Another pause. "You see, Alice was looking for a job because we were struggling a little but we have the twins and it wasn't going to be worth it if we had to get child care."

CJ waited. "And the punch line is?"

Ethan fidgeted slightly in his seat. "Alice has a child care qualification," he said quietly.

The tall woman turned the information over in her mind and her eyebrows crawled up her forehead. "Ooh, that could work out. You mean, Alice would be our nanny? But wait... could she cope with four girls at once?"

Ethan looked worried about suggesting it but he answered. "I'm sure she could. It would really solve our dilemma. Of course, she would be at your house and I understand that you might not-"

"Quit rambling, Ethan. It's a good idea in principle, and it helps us out too. Let me speak with Kate. If she agrees, we'll get together this week sometime to discuss it. Does that suit?"

"Yes! Thank you for considering it, CJ. I'll wait to hear back from you before I tell Alice."

"Okay." CJ thought for a moment. "Alice's mother is better now, right?"

"Yes. She's fine. It just put a lot of pressure on us."

"I can understand that. Okay, I'm gonna head home. I'll keep you posted, man."

The agent pondered this new information as she drove home. Ethan's proposition was a good one. And what's more, Kate and CJ trusted Alice and that was a huge load off CJ's mind. She wasn't sure about getting a complete stranger to come and take care of Shannon and Lucy. This person would also have access to their house all day and that thought had made the agent uncomfortable. They were quite a private couple. Yes, Alice working for them would be a good plan. Her only concern was the young woman coping with four active kids. "Hmmm," she muttered aloud.

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"Well, that looks good, right Tony?"

"Yes. Great," the driver nodded.

Kate turned to the qualified assistant who had fitted the car seats for them. "Thank you for doing that. It saves me spending time with instructions."

"Keep hold of the instructions, though. And here's your receipt. If you have any problems, come back in and we'll try and sort them out. And when the little one is ready to move to the next stage, I hope you'll come back here for your purchases, Miss Marshall," the smiling assistant replied cheerfully.

The blonde nodded. "You've been very helpful. Thank you. Goodbye."

Kate and Tony got into the Mercedes. The actress decided to get in the front passenger seat, since the back seat was where the new child safety equipment was fitted. "This is new. I guess I'll have to get used to some changes around here," she smirked.

"You could always squeeze in the back, between the kids," Tony offered helpfully.

"Ha ha." She thought for a second. "Sometimes I might just do that. Don't you like having me up here?"

"Actually, yes. It seems more relaxed somehow," Tony responded tentatively.

"Yeah. I like it too." As the driver pulled out onto the freeway, Kate turned the CD player on to see what Tony had been listening to. "Ooh, The Killers... good choice."

A short while later, the Mercedes turned into the long driveway and Kate sighed, happy to be home again. Her brows drew together as she spotted a car in front of the porch. It was an unusual sight - not a lot of people knew where they lived - and she didn't recognize the vehicle, which made her nervous.

"Were you expecting a visitor, Kate?" Tony asked, slightly concerned about his boss' worried expression.

"No. I don't remember that car. Have I forgotten?"

"No, you didn't forget. I've never seen it before."

As they neared the dark, luxurious Chrysler, the uniformed driver stepped out. The actress got a bad feeling in her stomach and couldn't shake it. She knew her gut instinct was spot on when the tall man opened the back door and her mother appeared from the car.

"Oh crap. I can't deal with this right now... and how the hell did she get my address?" Kate asked to nobody in particular.

Tony felt compelled to help. "Do you want me to turn around and leave?"

Kate glanced at him, seeing his anxious face, and smiled wanly. "No. I'll have to deal with her at some point. I just wish CJ was here."

"Who is she?" Tony asked, removing his seatbelt.

"My mother. I'm sorry you'll have to witness this, Tony. Just let me do the talking."

"No problem. I'll be right behind you if you need me," the driver stated as he watched the cold, angry face of the older blonde woman who was now tapping her foot on the ground. Boy, she didn't like to be kept waiting.

Kate got out and approached the woman. "How did you get my address?" she blurted.

"Well, I see the damage she's done to you is more extensive than I thought! Not even a hello!" Elizabeth spat.

"Mother! How did you get my address?"

"I know people, dear. Money can buy anything," the older woman stated with a look of disgust on her face.

"Jesus Christ! What do you want?" Kate almost growled, feeling the prickles of hatred emanating from the woman, causing so much negativity and old emotion to rise from within her own body.

"What a foul mouth. I want to get you out of here and away from that abomination of a woman. She's poisoned your mind, Katherine. It's intolerable. I had to endure those awful pictures all over the press of you and your 'wife'. It was not pleasant and it's obvious she has led you astray... and lets you curse when you feel like it. Disgusting..." Mrs. Emerson ranted, pulling at the ends of her white-gloved fingers.

Kate's face was growing redder by the second. "How dare you! You need to leave... right now!" The actress was dying inside, memories of her mother yelling at her came flooding back, but she'd be damned if she would cry. There was no way this God-awful woman would make her cry again.

"I can see my task will be harder than I thought. You're wicked and delusional."

Tony gritted his teeth together and stepped forward, only to be stopped by Kate's arm coming up across his stomach. "It's okay, Tony. She's not worth it."

"Not worth it? Not worth it? Katherine, I brought you into this world and raised you to respect your elders. And you tell this... this attack-dog I'm not worth it? You are the one who is not worth anything. Honestly, I need to give this *wife* of yours a piece of my mind. I will not be humiliated by anyone, Katherine-

"I am not listening to your resentful and hurtful comments anymore. And you do this in front of an audience? And how dare you insult Tony! Leave now, *Elizabeth* !"

The older woman put her hand to her chest to emphasize her shock. "I am your *mother* !"

"No. A mother cares for her child. She does not tell her she's useless and ugly and not worth anything. You are heartless and bitter and you can't stand the fact that I'm happy. I'm HAPPY here. CJ makes me HAPPY! I want you to leave, right now!"

Tony looked over his shoulder and spotted CJ's truck coming up the drive. '*Oh shit* !' he thought, '*CJ will freak if this woman says stuff like that in front of her* .'

Elizabeth's driver had quietly disappeared back into his car when the shouting had gotten a little too personal. As CJ's truck stopped behind the Mercedes, Kate tried one more time. "Please leave. I don't want CJ getting upset."

"I don't give a damn if she gets upset. I'm taking you out of her foul clutches. No daughter of mine lives with a woman like *that* !"

CJ had heard the last comment as she stepped out of the vehicle and her face hardened even more when she saw the pain and distress Kate was in. "Katie, is everything all right?" she asked with forced calmness, putting her arm on her wife's shoulder.

Before Kate could speak, Elizabeth butted in. "Of course she's not all right. You are a predator and a deviant, and I'm taking her away from you..." the older woman trailed off as she saw CJ's eyes change.

The tall agent stood protectively in front of her wife and Tony backed away. Kate held CJ's forearm gently from behind but did nothing to stop her. The tall agent snarled and took a deep breath to control her anger. She didn't want Kate upset anymore. "Elizabeth, I presume?"

"Don't even speak to me. I'm not interested in you. Lesbians are an affront to God. I will not have my Katherine under your influence. It's bad enough her father is a complete failure at life, too. Katherine should have married that nice boy, Jason-

"Enough!" CJ shouted, moving towards Elizabeth with her jaws grinding together. "How dare you speak his name. Don't you know what he did? Now, get out of here before I call the police. You wouldn't want all your tight-ass friends to find out you have a criminal record, would you?"

Kate remained silent for the time being. She had flinched harshly at the Jason comment, having not told her mother who abducted her. But CJ was doing just fine and the actress let her continue.

"Don't threaten me. I am powerful. And I know there is nothing to have me arrested for."

"Lady, let me introduce myself again. I'm Kate's wife... *Special Agent* CJ Carson... and we own this property. Quite frankly, I don't want you within a mile of my land. I'm sure I can find a Federal law to slap on your head. Shall I start looking for one now?" she drawled.

Elizabeth seemed to wince slightly, or maybe it was CJ's hopeful imagination. The older woman looked around the tall body to her daughter. "Are you going to let her talk to me like this?"

Kate shrugged. "Yes. We own this property and I believe you are trespassing. Nobody wants you here. You are free to go. But wait much longer, and you won't be free to do anything. Now, like I said before... please leave," the blonde said, stepping beside her wife and taking CJ's hand.

Mrs. Emerson saw the gesture and was very obvious about her disgust. If she didn't watch out, her face may get stuck that way.

Kate moved her other hand up to grasp CJ's forearm lovingly. "Leave, Elizabeth. I don't want or need to hear from you again. And don't ever speak about Edward Marshall in that way again either. He is a wonderful father. He knows what being a parent means. You do not. Goodbye, Elizabeth." She paused to turn to Tony. "Tony, let's go inside..." She guided a very tense CJ into the house, hearing her mother get the last word.

"I am disowning you, do you hear me? You are no longer my daughter. And what a relief that is. I have no daughter!" she shouted as she violently pulled the car door open. "Get out and close this door!" she growled at the driver.

The Chrysler left and Tony closed the house door behind his employers. "I'll make some coffee," he said, excusing himself quickly.

Kate could see that CJ was a mass of pent-up tension and anger, so she waited until her wife calmed before saying anything. She stood by the couch, turning her back to the agent, thinking about what had just transpired. Elizabeth Marshall Emerson was indeed a very bitter woman. She had always told Kate she would amount to nothing and that nobody would ever love her. Kate knew that her mother seeing pictures of her and reading about her winning an Emmy, most likely induced a near heart attack in the older woman. And surely Elizabeth could see the strength of the love Kate shared with her wife, even through the green haze of envy. It was a sad state of affairs. Her mother could be quite beautiful if it wasn't marred in a blatant veil of hatred.

Kate sighed and used both hands to rub her face, trying to stop the onslaught of tears. She felt two long arms slide around her waist from behind and CJ's chin fell onto her shoulder. "Are you okay?"

Kate sighed again, but this time with relief that her wife was calm. "Yes, honey, I'm so sorry that had to happen."

"You have nothing to apologize for. How did she find us?"

"I don't know. She said she knows people and that money can buy anything," the blonde said, taking her hand up to the back of CJ's head and turning to kiss her cheek.

"Clearly, it can't. She will never know a love like we have. I hope you didn't take anything she said to heart, honey?" CJ asked quietly at Kate's ear.

"Not this time. But it still hurts. I'll never understand her way of thinking."

CJ kissed her wife's hair and rubbed her cheek on the blonde strands as she spoke. "I think I'm kind of glad we don't understand that hatred, Katie. I hope we don't see her again. I'm not sure I could stop myself from hitting her."

"You have a lot of self control, honey. I thought you might hit her today, but you were amazing out there."

"I wanted to punch her... I have to admit that. But it would have solved nothing and I don't want her to hurt you anymore. If I had hit her, she would've called the police herself. Can we put this behind us, somehow? I hate seeing you hurting. I love you."

"I love you too. And yes, with my new-found outlook on life, I won't let this get to me. We have so much to look forward to, CJ, and I'm excited about our future," the actress said, rubbing her hand on the agent's arm.

"Good. But if you need to discuss it, we'll talk anytime. Right now, I need caffeine and I believe Tony has the machine on."

"Yes, coffee," Kate agreed, pulling her tall spouse into the kitchen.

* * * * *

"I was amazed at your restraint, CJ," Tony said, taking a gulp of coffee.

The agent laughed at his unsure face. "It's okay to say that, Tony. I was too. I wanted to punch her lights out."

"So did Tony," Kate piped in, grinning from ear to ear. "He was ready to defend me in your absence, CJ."

"Well, that's good to know... not that you need defending, Katie. You're tougher than I am! Still, it's a shame it had to happen at all," the tall woman mumbled around the half muffin she had stashed away after Kate demolished most of the others. "These are awesome, by the way. When did you learn to bake?"

Tony smiled. "Oh, that's my Dad's famous recipe. He taught me many years ago."

"Your Dad?"

"Yeah. He used to be a baker. Really good, too," the young man said proudly.

CJ nodded and Kate looked longingly at the last bite of muffin in the agent's hand. When the blonde licked her lips, CJ couldn't resist the silent begging. "Since I love you so much..." she said, reaching over to put the food in Kate's mouth.

"Aww, you two are *so* cute," the driver teased.

CJ punched him playfully on the shoulder. "And your lips are sealed, right?"

"Oh, absolutely. You're real scary when you're mad. I don't wanna be on the receiving end of that!"

Kate laughed and took a slurp of coffee to wash down the muffin. "She is scary... especially when she's in protective mode."

CJ turned to respond and saw Kate's bashful look. The agent softened immediately. "Yeah, well, I have a lot to protect," she winked at Tony.

He gave an exaggerated nod. "And you'll have more to protect real soon."

CJ's stomach flipped. "Yep."

"What was that?" Kate asked, seeing her wife's change of expression.

"I just got excited about it for the first time. I guess there's been so much happening..."

"Aww honey, I'm sorry."

"No, no. I didn't mean it that way. None of this would be exciting without you, Katie," CJ explained.

Tony got up to put his mug in the sink and decided to leave the two women to the rest of their day. "I'll head off and let you two have some peace."

Kate stood up to show the driver out. "Thanks for today, Tony. If you come over in the morning, I'll make you breakfast before we go to the studios."

"You're going into work tomorrow?"

"Yes. I want to catch up with Phil and I think they're opening up three of the stages after Health and Safety cleared them. Don't worry, CJ is coming with me."

"Okay, good. I'll see you at eight?"

"Eight sounds good. Bye Tony."

"Bye Kate."

After he left, Kate decided that she and CJ truly needed to relax and drew them a deep bubble bath. She wanted her spouse to surround her, to wipe out the coldness of the afternoon's events. But even though her mother's words had hurt, the blonde still felt surprisingly cheerful. She had so much love and light in her life... and there was about to be even more. She decided that sometimes, you can't keep destructive people around, whether they're your family or not. It was a sad but true realization.

As she sunk into CJ's arms under the hot water, feeling her loving wife kiss her ear, she knew she had done the right thing by telling her mother to never come back. She wondered briefly if Elizabeth felt any pain at the loss, but the thought was drowned out by a soft, 'I love you' from CJ's healing lips.

Chapter 8

Jack stood nervously at the studio door. As he watched the blonde FBI agent and Samantha Morris talking with a couple of cops, he felt oddly guilty, even though he hadn't done anything to hurt Kate. He knew they would be waiting for Jody Morgan. He had found out that she had gone AWOL after the rig had fallen and the police were looking for her.

Nicole was in the studio already, talking with Phil about what would happen now. Until Jody was found, Nicole didn't feel safe and she wanted to make sure her director knew that. Jack thought it was all a little over-dramatic but then, he was a self-obsessed, egotistical actor and didn't really worry about the feelings of his women.

He suddenly became aware of the blonde agent and Sam coming towards him. He shifted his pose to try and look cool, and smiled at the women. "Hello, Sam."

"Jack. You remember Jamie?"

"Uh yes, hi."

"Hello Jack," Jamie said, observing the nervous mannerisms that were a dead giveaway to the fake confidence he was trying to show.

"How is Kate doing?" the burly actor asked.

"She's fine. Although I think I'd avoid CJ if I were you. She knows about the investigation... and Jody's possible motive for causing the damage," Sam said, slipping her tongue between her teeth and top lip.

"Why would I need to do that? I didn't do anything to Kate," he replied, sticking out his chest.

Jamie narrowed her eyes. "Perhaps not directly, but you dumped Jody and you are the reason she wanted to hurt Nicole. See... we know everything Jack. No secrets around here."

"Hey, hey, now hold on a minute," he said, holding his hands up in surrender. "I didn't force that lunatic into doing something stupid. She's crazy."

"Yeah... and you let her down gently, right?"

"Well, I treated her like I'd treat any woman," Jack shrugged.

Sam's nostrils flared. "Exactly. I'd say you contributed. Just stay out of CJ's way. She should be here soon."

At that, Jack made his escape without saying another word, sliding his large body round the wall and into the studio. Jamie and Sam shared a knowing look and went to get coffee before the producer had to start work.

* * * * *

"I'm not sure why I feel nervous," Kate said from the backseat – squeezed between the child seats - as the Mercedes entered the Olympian Studio lot.

"I don't know either, honey, but I'm right by your side," CJ replied, patting the smaller hand on her shoulder.

Kate took a deep breath and got out with her wife in tow. Tony followed and CJ told him to go and chill out until they called him. As the two women left the parking area and turned the corner, they spotted Jamie and Sam heading toward the Phoenix stages.

Kate waved. "Hey guys," the blonde smiled.

"Hi," they both said together. Jamie smiled and gestured for Sam to speak first.

"What's happening?" CJ asked.

"Not much. The cops are here, waiting to see if Jody shows. Jack is hiding and Phil, I believe, is talking with Nicole," the producer replied.

"Why is Jack hiding?" Kate posed.

"Uh," Jamie mumbled, "We kinda told him to make himself scarce."

"Good," CJ said pointedly.

"Well, we're going to see Phil and then I'm off to the LAPD. They want to take my statement now that I remember what happened. Then it's home to get the house organized for the girls' arrival next week," Kate said with satisfaction.

"What do you need to do in the house?" Jamie queried.

"We need to move the furniture out of the two bedrooms to make space for the new stuff we ordered for them."

"Ah right. Do you want some help with that?" the blonde agent offered.

CJ slipped her arm around Kate's shoulder. "That might be an idea. As much as Kate thinks she's indestructible, I'd rather she didn't move heavy furniture just yet." She waited for her wife to chastise her for being over-protective again, but it didn't come.

"I'll agree this time," Kate smirked, "but *only* this time."

"Great. That's settled then," Jamie smiled.

After a few more words to one another, they went their separate ways. CJ accompanied Kate into her meeting with Phil and as they were leaving, she spotted Jack Bannerman trying to make a hasty exit from the general vicinity of the agent.

"Jack!" she shouted.

He froze on the spot and muttered "Oh shit!" under his breath. "Yes?" he said innocently as he turned around.

Kate watched as CJ walked up to him and stood toe to toe. "May I make a suggestion?" she said snidely.

"Uh... sure."

"I'd advise you to keep your dick in your fucking pants for a while. If one hair on my wife's head is moved out of place because of you or the results of your... sexual activities, I'll be back to have more than words with you," she smiled sweetly.

"Uh..."

"I thought you'd agree. Bye Jack."

She walked away with Kate who never said a word to the man. Jack probably still thought she had no memory of him, when in fact, she just didn't have a damn thing to say to him right now.

Jack swallowed hard and raised his eyebrows. CJ did strange things to him and he was caught between arousal and terror in her presence. *'Well, that went well,'* he thought. *'At least I don't have a black eye, which is what I was expecting. Hmphh, maybe she does like me... just a little bit, after all.'*

* * * * *

At home that evening, Kate made dinner while CJ waited for Jamie to help her move the furniture out of the bedrooms. They decided to put it in that storage space above the gym until they figured out what to do with it.

When the blonde agent arrived she came bustling into the kitchen, dragging CJ with her by the hand. "Guess what happened not long after you two left this morning?" she said, her brown eyes sparkling with urgency.

"What?" Kate asked.

"Jody came in and gave herself up to the cops!"

"What? Holy crap!" Kate said in astonishment.

CJ was mute for a few moments. "Uh... wow. Did she confess anything?"

"Kind of... she basically said she didn't want to hurt you, Kate, and she didn't know that the director had changed the scenes again. Then she said she wanted that, and I quote, 'Nicole bitch, dead'. She also blamed Jack for her actions but we all know she is responsible for those. Anyway, the cops have her in custody and will question her tonight."

"Well, that's not the ending I was expecting but it's gotta be good," Kate said, waving at her wife who seemed to be lost in the information.

CJ cleared her throat. "Yeah. I hope she confesses to it all. And thank God I wasn't there. I may have throttled her."

"Uh huh, and Danny thanked me and Sam for passing info to him. So... what's cookin', Kate?"

The actress smirked. "Sesame chicken... your favorite, I believe."

"Ooh, nice."

CJ broke from her thoughts. "Right. Let's go work up an appetite, Penfold. There's furniture to be moved."

Kate kissed her wife before they two women left to go upstairs. Kamali looked up sleepily from his spot on the kitchen floor and sniffed the air longingly. "Don't look at me like that," the actress chuckled, "I have a nice bone for you to chew on later."

She went back to her cooking and shook her head at Jody's bad choices. The woman could've killed her. She tried not to feel anger toward Miss Morgan, but it didn't work. "What a bitch," she muttered.

* * * * *

The next few days seemed to pass incredibly slowly. CJ's time off was almost over but Kate was already back at work. The agent had insisted she be allowed to go with her wife and Kate accommodated her since she knew CJ was still feeling a little uneasy and protective. The agent actually enjoyed watching her wife do her thing in the studio. It was different to watching it on TV. She found it hard to drag her eyes away from her beautiful spouse, as the actress said her lines and played the forensic scientist with ease. The agent made sure to stay away from Jack, just in case she punched his lights out or accidentally tripped him and he fell flat on his face.

Marion had come to their home and loved the place, telling them that her visit was just a formality and that she believed the two girls would be incredibly happy there. The woman even went so far as to say she could feel the love in the household. She'd left after organizing the date when the new parents would come to her office to pick the girls up. She left a file with all of Shannon and Lucy's personal and medical information in it. CJ had gasped when she read that Shannon's birthday was the day before Kate's and that Lucy's middle name was Jane. Freaky coincidences really shouldn't have shocked her anymore but still, she laughed when Kate had the same reaction.

Change of name paperwork had been completed, with the two girls retaining Davenport until their related funds and policies were transferred. It could be a long process but the girls would use their new family name from the beginning to assist with the bonding.

And now, it was Thursday... the day before they would collect Shannon Anne Carson and Lucy Jane Carson, and bring them home. CJ and Kate were both nervous but full of excitement. The kids' furniture had arrived and after the deliverymen had taken it upstairs, they had fun positioning it where they thought would be best. Comforters and

pillows, cuddly toys and various other items to help them learn and grow, were placed in each room. They put a spare, small bed in Shannon's room, deciding to ask the girls if they wanted to stay together until they felt settled.

A few items of clothing were hung in the relevant closets. Kate had informed CJ - with glee - that another shopping trip would be required once they knew the girls' exact measurements.

* * * * *

Ethan and Alice left the twins with a friend and arrived at CJ and Kate's, mid-afternoon, as planned. Once the tea and coffee was served, they gathered round the island unit in the kitchen and discussed the Carson's proposal.

"So, what we're thinking is that four days a week, the girls will need someone here to look after them. Kate usually works four days but her schedule can change," CJ began. "What we're worried about is that you would be looking after Shannon and Lucy, who are just settling in, and your twins too. Do you think you'll manage, Alice?"

"Yes, I believe so. And this is such a wonderful place to have them. I don't see any problem keeping them occupied all day."

Kate nodded. "Well, Shannon will be at kindergarten Monday to Friday and we've worked out with Tony, my driver, that he'll take her to school after he drops me off at the studios. Tony is keen to help out wherever he can and will be around during the day when I don't need him. He'll also pick Shannon up after kindergarten. We need to spend some time with Lucy and let you know what her needs will be."

"How old is Lucy?" Alice asked, sipping at her tea.

"She's almost three but she doesn't speak. CJ and I want to spend time with her and figure out why. If you can start as soon as Monday or Tuesday, CJ will be here to help you out. Right?" the actress said, looking to her wife.

"Yes," the agent smiled. "What I'm thinking, Alice, is that I'll convert our spare room on the ground level... into a kind of crèche of sorts. It's right off the kitchen and over there, just under the staircase." CJ pointed to the door. "We thought you could have some of the twins stuff in there too, since they'll spend so much time here."

Alice and Ethan turned around to look at the door. Alice nodded agreeably. "That looks great, CJ. It'll be a good place for us to focus our day... that is if you want to hire me."

"I think we do." CJ received a brief nod from her spouse and continued. "It's actually a really good setup for us, in that we trust you and feel comfortable leaving the girls with a friend. It helps you guys too, doesn't it?"

Ethan finally spoke. "It really does. You have no idea the amount of pressure it will take off us."

"Well, I'd say that's a deal then. We'll agree on a salary and shake on it," the agent smiled. "Oh... there's a guy coming in at the weekend to secure the fence around back. It will be completely child proof and there will be a safety latch on the gate so you can let them out in the back yard without worrying about the lake."

"Good idea," Ethan praised. He was glad they were thinking like parents already. He knew only too well how much they were taking on, having suddenly become a father of two not so long ago.

After only a little bartering, they agreed on a salary that the Carsons could afford - on top of Tony's salary and everything else - and that the Matthews family was satisfied with. Kate's recent increase in income after her Emmy win, would help no end. They weren't struggling for money, by any means, but they were still careful and they knew monthly expenses could mount up. But CJ and Kate weren't extravagant types and had plenty saved for the future.

They chinked their mugs together in celebration of a joint problem resolved. Once the details were figured out, Alice said she would start on Monday, which meant CJ would be there to do the introductions and make sure the girls were happy and settled around her. Tony was coming by on Sunday for a quick visit to introduce himself to both children.

* * * * *

When the evening finally arrived, CJ fell onto the couch after dinner, her stomach full and satisfied. Kate was popping a movie in the DVD player and they lay together in a tangled heap in front of the TV for a couple of hours.

They let the dog out at 10pm and went upstairs to grab a shower before bed. Of course, showering together started the teasing and touching that would inevitably lead to much more, both women deliberately washing one another in a very sensuous way. CJ dried quickly and went into the bedroom to light a few candles. She was feeling very romantic recently and wanted to create a warm, loving atmosphere each time they made love... not that they didn't have that before. The agent lounged on the bed to wait for her wife, her body pulsing in anticipation of their coupling.

Seeing a very naked CJ waiting for her, Kate exited the ensuite and pounced on the larger body on the bed. She kissed the agent until she had to break for oxygen. The actress could send her spouse into a frenzy with just a touch of those lips.

"I want you," Kate whispered in the tall woman's ear.

CJ shivered, feeling her center throb and her entire body ache. "I... think... it's kinda obvious that I want you too..."

"Hmmm, those nipples do look mighty perky," the blonde teased, rubbing her own breasts over CJ's.

"Since... you're being so open about everything now..." CJ drawled, kissing around Kate's neck, "tell me exactly what you want..."

"I... mmmm... I want you... to lick me... lick my clit," Kate panted, almost unable to breathe at the thought.

CJ growled deep in her chest. She gazed deeply into the green eyes above her. "Put it in my mouth..." she purred.

"Oh God..." Kate grinned mischievously. "Are you sure? It's really, really wet already..."

"Unnnnggg... yessss."

Kate slowly crawled up her wife's body and hovered over CJ's head. Hearing her lover moan loudly, she lowered her center onto her wife's face, seeing the agent grin and open her mouth before Kate made contact with her. The feel of the warm lips welcoming her very sensitive flesh was exquisite. "Oh, baby... your tongue... oh yeah..."

The agent was loving every second of this and she could feel Kate's clit becoming more engorged as she slid her tongue over the delicious ridge. The blonde began to thrust herself back and forth, riding her wife, and CJ almost came at the thought of what it must look like. She forced her eyes open to see Kate's breasts gently swaying as she thrust, and the thatch of dark blonde hair moving right in front of her eyes.

As the actress' thighs began to shudder, CJ grasped Kate's butt cheeks in her hands and maneuvered her wife a little. Rolling her tongue, she entered Kate and maintained a steady rhythm, moving smoothly in and out of her lover's drenched opening. Kate gasped loudly and repeatedly licked her lips to try and moisten them. She continued to grind gently over CJ and could feel the agent's upper lip and nose teasing her clit maddeningly. She concentrated on their contact and it soon became too much to bear.

"I'm gonna... come... oh..." she cried.

CJ didn't change her ministrations, knowing it was just right the way it was. But Kate lost her rhythm as her orgasm took hold, so CJ slid her tongue out and drove her wife through the climax, alternating between stimulating the sensitive bundle of nerves and entering her wife. Kate cried out and gripped the headboard so hard she felt her hands begin to spasm. She released her anchor-like hold and regained the strength in her legs so as not to smother her wife.

Breathing erratically, she swallowed a few times, trying to catch her breath. "Oh... Ciara... amazing," she murmured shakily.

"Hell, yes, it was... you have no idea... how much you turn me on," the agent managed to say while licking her lips.

Kate moved down her spouse's body and immediately took CJ's nipple into her mouth. Her questing fingers settled in the agent's swollen folds and Kate moaned around the flesh in her mouth, feeling how wet her wife was... and how huge the tall woman's clit had become. "Oh, baby..." she husked, releasing the nipple for a second, "what do you want?"

"Any... anything... I'm... there," CJ whispered, pushing herself against Kate's hand.

The actress sucked hard on the nipple, pressing it against the roof of her mouth with her tongue, and slipped her now sodden fingers inside her wife. CJ screamed... very loudly... and flooded her wife's hand with her desire. Kate's mind swirled around at the thought of tasting that desire and she began to lick CJ's breast ravenously.

As the taller woman twitched pleasantly, Kate carefully removed her fingers and kissed her way up to lock eyes with CJ. "Hey, baby," she purred with a very sexy grin on her face. "Here..." she added, holding her wet fingers up so that her wife could see. She kept her index finger straight and curled the middle digit. "You can suck that one... but this is mine." Kate moved her mouth over the curled finger and sucked the agent's juices off it, moaning as she did so. CJ also moaned and lifted her weary head, taking the other one into her own mouth and bringing their noses together in an 'Eskimo kiss' of sorts. Once they had finished sucking - the feel of which had aroused the horny little actress again - she retracted her hand and their lips met automatically.

The kiss was sensuous and filled with desire and love. CJ inhaled deeply when they parted and smiled from ear to ear. "You're not done yet, are ya?"

Kate giggled - again, being way too sexy for her own good. "No... we don't have to get up too early tomorrow, so I want to make the best of tonight. Do you have any objections?"

CJ tried to hold back her laugh, her eyes widening as she pinned her lips together. She watched Kate stick her tongue between her teeth, waiting for a response. The agent snickered. "I think you know me better than that. Now... what can I eat next?" she asked suggestively.

As CJ headed on a quest over Kate's body looking for nourishment, the blonde decided - like she did every day - that nobody in the world was better than her wonderful wife. The fact that they could laugh... *and* have incredible sex... *and* had the most powerful connection she had ever heard of, reminded her once again that their love was unbreakable and endless. 'Wow... *just wow* !' she mused silently, suddenly realizing she was lying on her belly and CJ was trailing a warm tongue up her spine. "Wow," she gasped aloud.

Her wife's breasts pressed against her butt cheeks and pert nipples dragged tantalizingly across the rounded flesh, making Kate grip the pillow under her as another flood of wetness trickled between her legs. She did not expect her lover to lift her hips and raise her onto her knees... and suckle at that wetness from behind. It was a new sensation for Kate and even though the position made her feel vulnerable, the fact that it was CJ who was behind her, made it very enjoyable. The blonde knew they had discussed what she did and didn't like but it never stopped the agent coming at Kate from various angles. However, this was a new one, and Kate's eyes opened briefly when she felt her

wife's nose brush past the crease of her buttocks. Surprisingly, it did not dampen her desire at all. Once CJ had drank her fill, she rose above her wife and slid two long fingers into Kate's wet opening, making the smaller woman moan at the feeling.

CJ had easy access and was enjoying the view she had of her hand as it pleased her wife. "God, you're so beautiful, baby..."

Kate arched her back as the incredible waves of arousal flowed through her petite frame. "I... oh!" she squeaked as she felt her climax building. And it was building fast.

The agent watched her wife's body intently. The way Kate's strong, finely muscled shoulders flexed as she held herself up; how her alluring back, curved and rippled in the throes of passion; how her blonde hair sprawled over those areas and also tumbled down the side of her face as she threw her head back with a rapturous cry. CJ was mesmerized for a few seconds before returning her gaze to her own hand, now glistening with Kate's wetness, thrusting steadily in and out of her spouse's body. She felt the inner muscles clench and knew it was almost time as Kate began to move against her. She pressed her mound against the back of the actress' thigh and wrapped her free hand around her lover's waist, her fingers reaching the top of Kate's clit. The smaller woman immediately pushed her leg back between the agent's spread knees. Kate knew her wife would be close to her own orgasm and wanted to feel CJ paint her skin with her arousal.

The raven-haired woman did just that, groaning as her clit make contact with her spouse's warm thigh. She couldn't hold back her audible gasps of utter pleasure. With her fingers still making love to her wife, she gyrated against Kate's leg, overwhelmed by all the feelings coursing through her.

Kate felt CJ's hard little nodule skidding over her skin and the long, skilled fingers inside her. Her mind went into overdrive and she silently moaned to herself. '*She's fucking me from behind... oh God, yes...*' She couldn't hold it in any longer. "Fuck me... fuck me, Ciara..." she panted.

"Oh baby, yes! I'm gonna... I'm coming..."

CJ thrust deeper inside her wife and at the same moment, she pushed her center against Kate, triggering her own orgasm.

The combination of everything at once pushed Kate over the edge and she climaxed, her body gripping at CJ's fingers so hard, she thought she might break them. The agent fell onto her wife's back, curling her body as the powerful spasms took over. The blonde's leg was soaked now and CJ continued to slide slowly across the skin as she came back down from the high. Kate's breathing was loud and forceful as she tried to hold the weight that had landed on her. She collapsed to the bed, with CJ following. The taller woman landed on her wife's back, still inside her spouse and they lay there, unable to move for a few long moments.

CJ felt the silky inner walls clamp down on her fingers again. "Katie... are you serious?"

Kate's body shuddered in a quiet giggle beneath her wife. "Maybe..."

CJ withdrew her hand and moved over to the blonde's side. "You are insatiable, woman!"

"I feel insatiable right now. I can't get enough of you... however, my body might protest if I come again so soon," Kate retorted, kissing CJ on the lips.

"I think I like this brutally honest approach. In fact, I really like it."

"Me too. I'm not even sure why we didn't just say all those things before. It's not like we're shy around one another," the actress sighed, snuggling into her wife's side.

"True." CJ felt Kate kissing the side of her breast and smiled. "Gimme a tiny break... I'll be ready soon..."

The blonde chuckled and pulled the quilt up around them. "Okay... I'll give you five minutes."

"Oh Jesus, I'm not gonna make it..."

Epilogue

CJ and Kate entered the children's room in Marion's office. The social worker waited out in the corridor and watched through the window between the painted animals and shapes. Shannon was sitting on the floor, playing with some building blocks and Lucy was standing at a low table, scribbling on a large pad with a crayon. CJ looked at Kate and then back at the girls. Shannon seemed very subdued.

"Shannon? Lucy?" the agent said, alerting the girls to their presence.

Shannon jumped to her feet but seemed to hesitate before speaking. "CJ!"

The two women were surprised to see Lucy smiling widely but she still didn't utter a sound. Shannon finally found some enthusiasm and walked over to the agent. She stopped in front of the long legs and looked up to the blonde actress.

"Hi Kate," the girl said with a hint of sadness.

Lucy had made her way over to Kate and was now tugging on her jacket. "Hi Shannon... and hello Lucy," Kate said, picking the smaller girl up. Lucy shoved Barney into the actress' face and smiled again.

CJ was concerned about how quiet Shannon was and picked her up, bringing all their faces to roughly the same level. "Shannon? What's wrong sweetheart?"

"Nothing. I'm glad you're here."

"You don't look glad. Is there anything I can do to help?" the tall woman said gently.

"Not really. Did you come to visit us?"

"We came to pick you both up. How would you like to come home with us?"

Shannon's big eyes instantly changed but she was still a little reserved. "We can come home with you? Me and Lucy?"

"Yes, honey. Would you like that?" CJ asked, raising her eyebrows hopefully.

"Yes. How long can we stay? We don't stay very long in people's houses."

CJ now knew what was wrong with Shannon. She sighed and looked to Kate, who gave her a 'go on' look. "Shannon, we want you and Lucy to come live with us... forever."

The little girl's blue orbs sparkled as she processed the information. "Forever?"

"Yes. Although, I'm sure when you're a grown-up, you'll want your own house, but yes, you can stay as long as you want. We'd like to be your family now."

Shannon looked at Kate. "Can we stay forever?" she repeated.

Kate nodded and smiled at the girl's wide-open eyes and raised eyebrows. She was a mini-CJ for sure. "Yes, sweetie."

"Lucy, did you hear?" Shannon squeaked, touching her little sister's shoulder. "We can stay with CJ and Kate," she added, clapping her hands.

Lucy quickly wedged Barney between her and Kate, and also clapped her hands.

Kate almost bawled as she watched CJ try to hide her emotion. "Well, I'd say that's a 'yes' all round. Shall we go home, girls?"

Two little heads bobbed up and down in the affirmative and Shannon gave CJ a very tight hug around her neck.

The tall woman took a deep breath. "Okay, where is Piglet?"

"He's in my backpack. It's over there," Shannon pointed as CJ set her down.

Lucy's little fist grasped tightly onto Kate's shoulder and she decided to keep the girl in her arms. CJ took the two backpacks Shannon handed to her and accepted the small hand that took hers. They turned to Marion who smiled at them through the glass, and they left the office after a few words from their social worker friend.

* * * * *

After a very exciting trip in the Mercedes, Shannon and Lucy arrived at their new home. A large black German Shepherd came to greet them at the door and CJ made him sit, then lie down. The girls approached the dog with CJ urging them on.

"This is Kamali. He's our dog and he needs to know you girls are part of the family. You can pet him and let him smell your hand. He's very gentle," the agent said.

Both girls patted the large furry head and Kamali was a perfect gent. Shannon turned to CJ. "Could you tell me his name again?"

"His name is Ka-ma-li," she said slowly as Shannon watched her mouth.

The little girl turned back to the dog. "Hello Kamali. Good boy."

Kate chuckled as the dog rolled over to have his belly scratched. Lucy giggled in silence - her little shoulders rising up and her mouth grinning emphatically - and took his large paw into her hand. She tilted her head to observe his face and the dog did the same - even though he was upside down. Once they were done, Kamali got to his feet, and CJ and Kate watched in astonishment as the dog followed Lucy on her journey to the living area, his head just behind her shoulder.

"He likes us," Shannon said happily.

"He sure does," Kate agreed. "Come on, let's go see the rest of your new house, huh?"

Shannon took the actress' hand as CJ hurried to check on Lucy, who had wondered off boldly towards the kitchen.

"So, do you girls want a drink of milk before we go upstairs and see your rooms?" the agent asked.

"Yes, please," Shannon replied politely. Lucy made a small hand gesture to her sister. "Lucy would like that too."

Kate and CJ took note of the signal between the siblings, knowing that communication with Lucy would take some time. Kate wanted to ask Shannon if her younger sister had ever spoken or made sound, but that was for later. Right now it was time for milk and a trip to the bathroom to empty two small bladders.

When Shannon saw her room, she laughed and plonked herself into the big beanbag in the middle of the floor. Lucy ran after her - with Barney in her arms, as always - and squished her free hand into the furry material.

"You have one like that too, Lucy," CJ said, smiling as the infant beamed with excitement.

Shannon looked around her. "There's a picture of Piglet!" she exclaimed, pointing to the wall.

Kate nodded. "Yes. We know how much you love Piglet. And here he is," she added, taking the soft toy from the backpack. She crouched down in front of Shannon who took the toy and shimmied forward to hug Kate. The actress felt tears rising, her emotion from the whole day getting the better of her.

Shannon moved back a little. "Why are you crying, Kate?"

"I'm just happy, sweetheart. Happy to have you both here with us."

"I'm happy too. This is a good birthday," Shannon said, nodding to reassure the blonde.

Kate leaned in to whisper and when Lucy came over to join the huddle, the actress put her hands on the back of the two small heads. "We have a little cake downstairs for your birthday, Shannon. We'll get you a gift when we go shopping soon, all right?"

Shannon thought about it quite seriously. "CJ, come over," she requested. The tall woman took a step toward them and knelt on the floor. Shannon giggled and spoke in a whisper. "I don't need a present, 'cause me and Lucy are here and that's the best birthday."

CJ looked at her wife, completely stunned once again by the girl's compassionate nature and her undeniable intelligence. "That is a wonderful thing to say, Shannon. But I think we'll buy you both a little welcome home gift at the mall, okay?"

"Yes. Lucy needs new sneakers," the caring big sister replied.

Kate and CJ laughed, which in turn caused the girls to join them - Lucy was silent, but they two women hoped that she would find her voice and laugh out loud one day.

CJ felt her tears of joy sting at the back of her eyes. She sniffed them away for now. "So, Shannon, I know you take very good care of Lucy, and Kate and I wondered if you wanted Lucy to stay on this little bed in your room for a while... just until you both feel a bit better. What do you think?"

The dark-haired girl nodded. "Yes. Just 'til Lucy is okay. I'm a bigger girl but she can stay here for a while," Shannon replied.

"Good. We'll go for a little walk now, with Kamali, and then it's dinner time," the agent said, standing up and offering her hand to whomever wanted it. Lucy grasped at it with tiny fingers and Shannon, who still had Kate in an embrace, took the actress' hand and used her as leverage to get out of the beanbag.

Kate smiled and turned to CJ, who had a look of such love on her face that the blonde couldn't help but kiss her. Observing the kiss, Shannon giggled as they left the room. They went downstairs hand in hand, to embark on their new life as a family of four.

Whatever hurdles or tribulations; whatever moments of joy and laughter CJ and Kate would encounter as new parents, they would face them together, and share their unending love with their children.

The End...