

IN THE ARMS OF ANGELS PT. 02

NoMoreMisterNiceSpy

The reunion with Jason, Elin, and Paige begins to heat up.

Novels and Novellas

4.85

15.7k words

This is a continuation of In The Arms of Angels Pt. 1. It is long, which is why it is in the novel/novella section.

Recap: Jason Hughes is torn from his mother and sisters by his useless father after a messy divorce, moved across the country, and never sees or hears from them again. Fast forward 15 years and his father dies in a horrific accident. After years of his father poisoning him against his mother for not contacting him, Jason finds an unopened letter in his dead father's bedroom indicating that she has been trying to find them the entire time. He reaches out, they make contact, and as any loving mother would do, she immediately flies across the country to be reunited. It's awkward at first, but his mother and 18-year-old sister begin to mend old wounds.

All characters in this story are 18 years of age or older, and this is a work of fiction.

The meal Elin had prepared, with Paige's help, was a hit. Not long after they began eating, Jason had a sense of déjà vu, realizing he'd had the same meal before. And not just spaghetti with meatballs, but *her* spaghetti and meatballs. It tasted different; better than any other he'd had in a long, long time. Elin teared up as he commented on it and told him that it had always been his favorite meal when he was young. The conversation continued as Jason told both women more about himself and described the circumstances around David's death. It broke his heart when Paige went silent, and then tears began falling.

"I'm sorry," she whispered as Elin comforted her. "It just made me very sad." She looked at her brother. "I know that you're very cross with him, but he was still a person. That's a very, very horrible way to die."

Elin saw her son's face scrunched up in anger, but when he glanced again at his little sister's honest tears, his anger quickly abated, and he actually felt a bit of shame. It's like she brought out the best in everyone she was around with her honesty.

Elin cleared her throat and said. "Please, continue."

"That was it," he said. "I didn't have anything else, really."

Now that her tears were under control, Paige gave him a kind smile. "I'm glad you told us all of that. Not great memories, but you are a good, strong, and handsome person."

Jason stammered a bit. "Ah, I mean, I-I don't think I had a hand in the handsome part. DNA, you know? But thank you, Paige."

His sister then let out a long, protracted yawn. "I'm so sleepy," she said with a deep sigh and a frown. "I was enjoying this."

Looking at the time, Elin frowned. "It's 9 o'clock here, which means it would be midnight back home," she said, standing and gathering the plates. "It's past our normal bedtime, young lady. We should probably turn in."

Paige nodded and stood to help clear the table, but Elin stopped her. "I'll take care of it. Go on. Get to bed."

Paige nodded again, hugged her mother, and kissed her cheek. "Goodnight, Momma," she said before she rounded the table and hugged Jason, followed by a kiss on his cheek as well. "Goodnight, Jason."

"Uh, goodnight," he said. He heard her door close and decided to help his mother clear the table.

"Are you okay?" Elin asked as he began loading the dishwasher.

"Yeah," he replied softly, then chuckled lightly. "She really does just kind of know what you need, or at least what you need to hear, doesn't she?"

"She's an incredibly perceptive young lady. I don't know how she got this gift, but I know that I appreciate it." She looked down the hallway almost as if she could still see her daughter. "It's as if she's wise beyond her years but delivers her wisdom in riddles or very obscure ways."

Throughout the rest of dinner, Elin had noticed that Jason still did not want to make eye contact with either her or Paige. Apparently, he was still upset about what had happened earlier. She needed to get him over that hump if they were going to make progress this week. He'd told her that he wanted to come home, which meant that he wanted to go back to Vermont with them. But now he could barely look at her or his sister, presumably out of shame. Going home to a house with not two, but three beautiful women, which Elin was proud to say, would be much worse if she couldn't get him over this particular issue.

"Jason," she said, finally deciding on the direct approach, "may I ask you a personal question?"

"Um..." he started.

She huffed lightly. "Normally, I would just ask, but my relationship with you is different than it is with the girls, or if you had been with us—" she stopped before she finished her thought. "Ah, heh," she let out a nervous chuckle. "I-I didn't—" she stopped again.

"It's complicated," he said, finally looking at her with a weak smile. "You can ask."

After a moment of hesitation, she asked, "Are you seeing anyone? Like, a steady relationship?"

He almost said yes, but Willa wasn't exactly what he'd classify as a steady relationship. And having one glorious night with her wasn't really what he'd refer to as seeing someone. "No."

"It's been a while, I take it?" she asked, but before letting him answer, she added, "I want you to know, Jason, that boys—ah, I mean, *men* your age get easily excited sometimes. So, I really did not take offense to what happened earlier. And I know Paige doesn't either." She stopped, wiggled her head back and forth with pursed lips as she seemed to briefly consider her statement, then said, "To be honest, I'd be surprised if she even noticed. But she's more comfortable about that sort of thing."

He didn't say anything, and instead just rubbed the back of his neck nervously.

"I'm making it worse," she muttered. "I want you to come home with us, if that's what you want, Jason. But I want you to be comfortable around us. It's just been you and David—"

"Not exactly a great role model," Jason growled.

"—and I don't want you to think that you can't be welcome in our home."

He chuckled. "Three whole pairs of boobies, though," he joked, and to his surprise, she laughed with him.

"Hard to tear your eyes away, right?" she asked, then her eyes flared open as she realized what she'd insinuated.

"This—"

"Don't say it," she said as she grasped his hands. "Don't." She was breathing hard as fear rippled through her. "I can't lose you again, Jason. And definitely not for something as silly as this." She touched his cheek. "You're a good man. The fact that you're even upset about this tells me that."

He turned away from her and started the dishwasher, and then leaned on the counter with his eyes closed. "Yes, I'm only 19. No, I don't get much action," he said, and he wasn't wrong. It had been almost seven months since he'd had sex before Willa visited him last night. "And to suddenly have two ridiculously beautiful women here who are family but are more like strangers and are talking about...stuff," he said with a frustrated sigh, "is a bit difficult to process."

It wasn't his intent, but his words about incredibly beautiful women made a shy smile appear on her face. It had been so long since someone had called her that in a genuine way, as opposed to the normal "Damn, you're hot!" comments she regularly received at the country club from men who just wanted a quick fuck.

"You're right. It doesn't help that we don't really even know each other," she said, realizing what he was saying.

"So, you see the issue, then," he said. "I was scared to death to meet you in the first place, worried that I would be seen as a disappointment. Then Paige wanted to come along, another person that I could disappoint. And then two stunning strangers show up. My brain knows that you are family. Other parts of me, not so much." He let out a shaky breath. "I'm so ashamed," he said, barely loud enough for her to hear him, then added, "and couldn't possibly be anything but disappointing."

"Because you find your mother and sister attractive?" she asked, then clicked her tongue at him. "Don't be ridiculous. As I said before, I think you're a good man. You're also a very handsome man. It thrills me to no end that someone like you would find me attractive," she said as a quick thought entered her mind, *Did I really just say that about my own son?* She quickly continued, "And you'd have to be deaf *and* blind to not find Paige attractive. Elaina as well, but you've not met her yet."

"I'm sure she's just as beautiful as her not-at-all-old mother," he said, stressing the last few words as he wagged a finger at her and rolled his eyes. He then let out another chuckle, relaxing at her words. "I don't know. Maybe I'm just making too big of a deal about this. I'm just so worried that you won't want me."

"You couldn't be more wrong," she replied. "I'd be overjoyed if you came home with us. Maybe you could just visit for a week or two? You could see how it goes and then make a decision. If it falls

through, you always have this place." She stepped closer to him, taking his hands. "But if it helps you make up your mind, just know that I'd like you to be with us, and to do so as long as possible."

"Okay, no fair," he said, smirking at her. "Giving me puppy dog eyes is dirty pool."

She shrugged, nonplussed. "Hey, if it works, it works." She covered her mouth as a yawn escaped. "It looks like I'm a bit worn out as well, but I hope that I've helped assuage your fears a bit."

He nodded. "Yeah. Thank you."

Without hesitation, she tiptoed up to kiss him on the cheek as if it were something she'd been doing for many years. "Goodnight, Jason."

"Goodnight, Elin," he replied, then looked pained. "Er, I-I mean—"

She turned to him. "It's okay, sweetie. Maybe in time."

As she walked away, he realized how horrible he felt at not being able to call her mom. It was as if there was an insurmountable hurdle in front of him that kept him from being able to say it. Letting out a deep sigh, he wandered around the house checking the locks on the doors before making his way down the hall. He stopped in front of David's room and peered inside without entering. Was he being silly not taking the large room as his own? A small smirk appeared as he realized he hadn't had a problem sleeping in there with Willa, but with someone else there it didn't seem abnormal.

He heard a small click and turned to see Paige's door opening. The short, slim young woman stood in her door a moment, clad in a nearly sheer cropped pajama top with thin spaghetti straps, and equally sheer pajama shorts. He could make out her pert nipples through the fabric and he had an incredibly difficult time tearing his eyes away. She then crossed the hall and wrapped her arms around him.

"I love you, big brother," she said softly. "You will be fine. You'll see."

After getting over the shock of how alluring she looked, and the warmth of her embrace, he gently wrapped his arms around her as well. "I hope so, Paige."

Their hug continued until she looked up at him, raising her arms in the air. "Up," she said sleepily.

He hesitated. The petite beauty had her eyes half-closed, and he noticed she had changed her hair into two, long pigtails on either side of her head. She looked adorable, and he just couldn't deny her request. Leaning down, he scooped her up, holding her against his chest as she wrapped her lithe legs around him, her arms doing the same around his neck. Her head was now on his shoulder, and she seemed to find comfort in his arms.

Not knowing what else to do, he kept one hand under her bottom while the other gently rubbed her back as he twisted back and forth at the waist. It felt good holding her. He could feel the stress of his actions throughout the day just melting away like they'd never happened. He began to seriously consider if this perfect little angel in his arms did have some sort of mysterious power that she was unaware of.

"Thank you, Paige," he whispered once he felt better.

"Bed," she said through a small yawn.

He dutifully walked into her bedroom, lowering her to the bed, and pulled the blankets up to her chest.

"Mhm..." she sleepily murmured, followed by, "Boobies."

He snorted, put a hand to his mouth, and darted out of the room before he began laughing and woke her. His shoulders shook as he laughed silently, making his way to his own room. "Ah, man," he said as he shut his own door. "That's one incredible little lady."

In Elin's bathroom, she sat on a stool in front of the mirror to brush out her platinum blonde hair. Having changed into a mauve, camisole night dress that fell to her mid-thigh, she stopped brushing and looked at her reflection. She ran her hand over the fabric on her chest before slowly lowering the thin shoulder straps, letting the top fall around her waist. It had been a while since she had truly looked at her body beyond ensuring she was keeping her trim figure. She knew that she was still desirable, at least to some degree, since she would get hit on by club members at the golf course weekly, but did she believe it?

She studied the shape of her teardrop shaped breasts, and the size of her nipples, turning sideways to see herself in profile. Jason was 19, and men in that age group were normally horny all the time, so it hadn't been surprising at all that he'd been caught looking, even inadvertently. Suddenly, her nipples hardened as she recalled Jason's gaze upon her chest, and she remembered the look that had been on his face. It wasn't the face of a young boy seeing a woman naked for the first time. Instead, it was the look of a man who knew what he wanted, a man with experience. And he looked as if he was briefly imagining what he could have done with them had he been given access.

Rolling her eyes, she silently chastised herself at being turned on by her own son's gaze, but he'd had a valid point when he said that they were strangers to each other. She had given birth to him, and they knew that they were mother and son, but it wasn't much different than if they had been separated, met by happenstance in public, and became infatuated with each other, not knowing at all that they were blood relatives. She'd even read true stories of situations somewhat like theirs, but the mother had given up her child for adoption. Then, many years later, without knowing who each other was, they found each other and struck up a sexual relationship, only to find out after their love for each other had blossomed that they were mother and son, or in some instances, brother and sister.

He did look quite a bit like his father, albeit a vastly improved version. When Elin and David had met, he was a very handsome and desirable young man, full of passion and a desire to succeed in life. But Jason had turned out to be even more handsome than David had been. Probably due to his athleticism in middle and high school, and then his focus on martial arts training. He was very well built, she admitted to herself. He was at least six feet tall, and his ruggedly handsome features were accentuated by the beard he kept on his face. His jet-black hair and kind, blue eyes, mixed with his charming smile, would instantly draw women to him, especially because he kept himself fit on top of it.

Letting out a deep sigh, she realized she was beginning to get warm all over and felt a dampness between her legs. "Steady, girl," she fussed as she pulled the thin straps back up to her shoulders, covering herself. "Yes, he's handsome and...sexy, but he's your little boy." She turned off the lamp on the bedside table and pulled the blankets up. "Little boy, all grown up."

* * * *

"Jason!"

His eyes popped open in surprise as he felt someone pounce on his bed, giggling maniacally. Sleep had come quickly for him the night before, possibly from the amount of stress he'd dealt with throughout the day with the family reunion, and he was still a bit groggy despite the wild ball of energy who was currently bouncing on his bed.

"Ooh!" the little voice said with curiosity as the pouncing stopped.

Paige had been sent to retrieve Jason for breakfast, Elin having gotten up early to make something filling for them. With Paige being Paige, she didn't care much for boundaries and decided to barge right in, flinging herself onto her brother's bed. It was then that she noticed that he slept nude.

Her eyes were focused on the large erection standing tall and in the open, her brilliant, blue eyes wide as her slender finger extended toward it. She poked his stiff cock and giggled. "Huh. Cool!"

"Wha--?" Jason tried to say, then realized that he was lying on display for his sister. "Paige!?"

"Come onnnnn!" she said, her attention now focused back on her brother. "Momma says breakfast will be ready as soon as you come out." Her eyes flitted back to his now-covered erection as she smiled happily, and then back to his face. "Tomato, basil, sausage, and cheese frittata," she said with a knowing nod. "It is amazing," she sang, and then bounced off the bed. "Come on, sleepyhead!" she urged as she stood at the door before glancing down at his crotch again, biting her bottom lip. She then disappeared just as quickly as she had come in.

Jason stared at the door, his mouth hanging open. "What the—" he began. "Did she just—?" His head fell back down onto the pillow as he wondered if he had imagined that whole scenario, but the smell of Elin's cooking found him, and he realized he'd need to get up for his guests. Scratch that. For his family.

While he emptied his bladder, Paige bounded back down the hall and into the kitchen, pouncing onto a bar stool, landing with her elbows on the counter and her chin resting on her hands. "He's excited," Paige said with a dreamy look in her eyes.

"Really?" Elin asked. "For frittata?" She chuckled as she pulled the dish out of the oven and then found the plates and silverware to set the table. With a small smile, she crossed the room to the small breakfast nook. "I kinda' like that. I don't think anyone has told me they were excited about my cooking."

"It's really big," Paige said softly. "And thick, and long, and warm..." She let out a satisfied sigh as she thought about what she had seen just moments before.

"Sorry. I'm here," Jason said, appearing from the hallway. Both women turned to look up at him as he pulled on a t-shirt, but their attention was on the shorts he wore.

Elin did a double-take and nearly let a plate slip from her hands. *Jesus!* she thought. *Is he hard right now?*

"I, uh, don't really have much by way of pajamas," Jason said sheepishly, "and these shorts are quite old. I had to dig into the bottom of my drawers to find it."

Paige's smile was wide as she enjoyed the gray, cotton shorts, along with the thick bulge contained within them. It appeared smaller than it had been earlier. She wondered if he had just urinated, or maybe handled the excitement himself, possibly thinking of her. He was her brother, but in her mind, there was no better man in the world for her. It just seemed natural.

Jason walked up behind Paige to give her a quick hug. "Thanks for waking me," he said, then whispered in her ear. "And I'm sorry you had to see that."

"It's okay," Paige said, not bothering to speak quietly. "It was nice."

"What was nice?" Elin asked as she came back to the kitchen island to begin cutting out pieces of the frittata.

"Uh—" Jason began, but Paige cut him off.

"His big ol' penis," Paige said. "He sleeps naked, and BOOM, there it was. Big and huge, like a—"

"Paige Elizabeth Hughes!" Elin snapped angrily, and then tried to downplay it by chuckling nervously. "Stop," she added through gritted teeth.

"It's not nearly as big now, though," Paige continued, unabashed. "Did you—"

"Paige!" Elin said, slamming her hand down angrily on the counter. "What has gotten into you?" The room fell uncomfortably silent with only the sound of Elin's angry breathing to be heard. After a few moments, and an embarrassed look at Jason who looked very pale at the moment, she let out a quick huff. "Go to your room, please, Paige," she said in a soft, very controlled voice. "I will be there in a moment."

Elin knew her daughters well enough that her reaction was plenty of admonishment for her youngest. The girl only ever wanted to make her mother happy, and seeing Elin's anger at her almost always made her break down in tears. Paige had gotten a bit better at not instantly melting lately, likely from getting older and understanding things more, but she still knew when she needed to stop talking. She'd witnessed enough arguments between her mother and Elaina to know that she didn't want to have a heated argument with their mother. Despite Elin's normally warm and sweet disposition, both daughters knew they'd never win.

"Sorry, Momma," Paige said, her face forlorn. "Sorry, Jason."

Jason actually felt bad for his little sister. Seeing her face, and her slumped shoulders, he wanted to stop her for a comforting hug. But to be honest, he was a little scared that Elin would turn on him if he had. He felt it better not to say anything.

Elin's narrowed eyes watched her daughter as she walked away and closed the door to the bedroom. She closed her eyes and shook her head in frustration. But as much as she was upset with Paige, did she say that it wasn't as big now? Elin had gotten a pretty good look at Jason's shorts and had assumed he'd woken up with morning wood. Now she realized that his morning wood was what Paige had gotten a good view of, and what was in his shorts now was not the same thing. Just how big was her son's cock?

"I'm going to put on some proper pants," Jason said softly. "I didn't mean for this to happen."

"You have nothing to apologize for," she replied. "Paige was out of line. And I don't know if I need to say this, but her behavior of late makes me feel like I should. She doesn't have any mental deficiencies. She just sees things a bit differently than everyone else, and she sometimes doesn't know how to filter herself."

"Luna Lovegood," Jason said. "Just quite a bit perkier."

Elin looked at him curiously for a moment and suddenly began giggling, followed by a loud laugh. "Yes! Just like that."

She needed that release to help ease the tension, and it seemed that Jason hadn't really taken offense at Paige's antics, thankfully. Letting out a cleansing breath, she looked over at her son, her eyes only briefly stopping on his crotch before she looked him in the eyes.

"In complete honesty, since you had such trouble with it yesterday, I feel that I must admit that I looked." She shrugged. "So, you see, it's not just men who look at women." She chuckled again; a bit embarrassed at her honesty about checking out her son's package. "Since she's not here, though, I would like to apologize about Paige barging in on you like that, into your private space. And this is your house, so you should be able to sleep in, or not in, whatever you wish."

"She didn't mean anything by it." He sported a bashful smile. "I really like her attitude, to be honest. She's just so...free, I guess is the word for it."

"That's a very open-minded attitude to have, and I appreciate it." She took the frittata over to the table and began cutting pieces out, putting them on the plates. "But she still shouldn't have been talking about the size of your dick like th—" She froze and swallowed hard as a fork clattered onto the table at her shock. Letting out a ragged breath, she could feel the heat in her face and imagined that she looked like a blonde tomato.

"I'll just go change," Jason said, smirking. Now that the tables had turned from the day before, he was actually beginning to enjoy having them around.

When she heard his door close, she relaxed. "What the fuck is wrong with you, Elin?" she hissed softly. She hurriedly placed the food on their plates and went to visit Paige.

In Jason's room, he pulled on a pair of jeans, remembering how mesmerized Paige had been when she'd seen his full erection. "Did she say it was cool?" he asked aloud, then shook his head, chuckling.

Elin sat on the edge of Paige's bed while her daughter sat cross-legged beside her. "I'm sorry for getting angry," Elin said as she put a hand on Paige's leg.

"It's okay, Momma. I know why you were upset."

Elin nodded. "You can't just go around talking about people's privates like that. You know that."

"Yeah, but it was worth mentioning." Paige looked at her with a goofy grin. "Huge, Momma."

Her first reaction was to chastise Paige again for bringing it back up, but her curiosity seemed to get the best of her. "How...huge?" When Paige held her hands apart to indicate its length, Elin's eyebrows shot up. But Paige went further, circling her fingers to show how thick it was. "Holy shit," Elin whispered.

"Holy shit, indeed, Momma," Paige replied, waggling her eyebrows.

Elin cleared her throat and turned her eyes away. "He's your brother, Paige. It's inappropriate."

Her youngest daughter shrugged. "It's just nature."

Both Elin and Elaina had gotten used to Paige's odd comments many years ago. Like everyone else she met, they had both assumed that Paige was just speaking gibberish until her words began to make more sense, sometimes in an almost clairvoyant way. But now, Elin didn't know where her daughter was going with this.

"He's your brother, Paige," she said again, more pointedly this time.

"I know, Momma." Paige's shoulders were raised playfully as she produced a beaming smile. "I love him. I'm glad we have him back."

Elin could only sigh, not fully understanding if Paige was just commenting, or if this was supposed to be one of her Nostradamus-type moments. "Come on, baby girl. Let's eat. We have things to do today."

Somehow, Paige just popped right up to a standing position from having been cross-legged, hopped down from the bed and was out the door in seconds. Elin followed her amazing little girl out.

Their breakfast went without further incident, and they all retreated to their separate bathrooms to freshen up before they went out on the town. Jason met them in the garage and Paige quickly ran around to the front passenger seat calling out "Shotgun!" so he opened the back door for his mother.

"Nice ride!" Paige said as she immediately put the window down before they had even backed out of the garage. "Do you like it? Can I drive? Ooh! Can we open the sunroof?"

With a glance in the rearview mirror for Elin's input, Jason saw an amused smile and a slight nod. It made him happy to see Paige clap excitedly when he lowered all the windows and opened the sunroof. "When we get on the freeway, I'll have to close the windows," he said. "But I can leave the sunroof open."

"Where are we going?" Paige asked.

"I thought I'd treat you both to some shopping before we go to the grocery." He waved at the guard who waved back and opened the gate for them.

"Do you know him?"

Jason smiled at his sister's continual questions. "Yeah. That's Teddy. He's worked here for about six years, I think? He's a good guy. I used to come up here and hang out with him, on occasion. I didn't like the idea of him just sitting there all alone."

"That's kind of you," he heard Elin say from the back seat.

It was a thirty-minute drive to the mall due to the traffic, and after both women fussed at his offer to drop them off at the entrance while he parked, he lucked into a spot not far from the entrance he'd chosen. He smiled, walking slightly behind both women, as he watched them holding hands. Both women were so similar, other than their height difference and hairstyles, and he briefly felt it unfair that he had taken after David so much instead of Elin.

Paige's platinum blonde hair was in some sort of crisscross braided pigtail style, with the braids falling to the middle of her back. He hadn't yet seen her hair down and he wondered how long it actually was. She wore skintight, black leggings that graced him with an excellent view of her well-

formed swimmer's ass, and a white, sleeveless, crewneck t-shirt. Elin, on the other hand, looked equally beautiful, but in a more refined way. Her long, platinum blonde hair was worn in a fluffy ponytail plait, and she wore tight, white, low-rise jeans with a navy blue, V-neck, long sleeve button up. The women were the same, but different, and he realized that the women could easily switch outfits and look just as incredible as they do now.

"Come on, silly!" Paige said as she turned and waved a hand to beckon him. When he joined them, he went for his sister's free hand, but she joined his hand with Elin's, and then took his other hand so that Jason was walking in the middle. "There. Much better. You'll see," she said with a happy smile on her face.

Elin looked down at their joined hands, smiled, and asked. "Where are we going, then?"

"Oh, we're not here for me," he said as he opened the door for them and was surprised when they both took his hands in theirs again. "I brought you here so you two could shop for whatever you want. My treat."

Elin stopped, squeezing Jason's to make sure he stopped as well. "That's not necessary, Jason. I know the money you got from your father's holdings was probably quite a bit, but you need to save that. I want you to be set up for your future."

"It really is okay," he said, trying not to boast. "If you wish, we can just window shop. But I fully intend to buy both of you, and Elaina at least two things each."

"Mommmma," Paige whined like a child, her bottom lip stuck out in full pout mode. The only thing she hadn't done was stomp her foot in defiance.

She narrowed her eyes at Jason and quickly found that he had no intention of backing down, unlike when she did that with her daughters. Relenting, she nodded. "Fine. But this is it, okay?"

"We'll see," he said, giving her a noncommittal shrug and a side hug. "I do appreciate your desire to protect me, though. It's not necessary, but I appreciate it nonetheless."

She wanted to ask what he meant by that but decided against it. She looked around and spotted the entrance to one of the fancier clothing stores. "Shall we?" she asked.

"Lead the way." Jason followed along, happy that she hadn't pushed further. He chuckled when Paige squealed with delight and ran ahead of them.

They spent an hour in the store. Jason dutifully followed along, not complaining one bit as both women became more and more involved in their search for something they liked. Paige had no problems finding several articles of clothing she loved, and Jason just couldn't say no to her. Despite Elin's urging to put some of the clothes back, Jason was successful in changing her mind and Paige was elated. Elin, despite her reluctance to let Jason spend money on her, found a nice blouse and slacks that she liked and, after more urging from Jason, she finally nodded in agreement that she wanted it.

"You know, it's usually the parent who purchases clothes for their children, not the other way around," she said under her breath as they stood at the register. Her eyes widened when she saw that the total cost had been close to \$500, and she put her hand on his arm.

"It's fine," he whispered reassuringly. "Please, let me do this."

At this point, she felt she had no choice. She nodded silently, her jaw set, and she still felt bad about allowing him to do so.

"Momma, it really is okay," Paige said as she put an arm around her mother. "You'll see."

Looking at her youngest, spouting out what seemed like more nonsense, Elin reluctantly nodded.

They wandered the massive mall for another few hours, going in and out of several stores and shops before Jason pointedly steered the group to a bath shop. He firmly directed them to find some luxurious lotions, shower gels, moisturizers, and bath bombs. Paige was in heaven in this store, snatching up a variety of items that she liked, even filling up a hand basket with so many containers that Elin shot her a dirty look.

"What?" the youngest asked with an adorable, disarming look on her face. "For Elaina. He insisted, Momma."

Elin grumbled. "Fine. That would make her happy."

After paying for the massive amount of bath items, Jason felt his stomach grumble. "Am I the only one who is hungry?"

"Ooh! Is it food court time?" Paige asked, bouncing on her feet. "I like food court food. So many choices to make. So much food!"

"I'm paying for lunch," Elin quickly said, trying desperately to feel like she wasn't fleecing her own son on this shopping trip. "No objections."

He held up his hands in defeat. "Fine by me," he said with a charming smile.

When they found the food court, Paige's eyes glistened at the sight as a big grin crept across her face. She took a few steps in front of Elin and Jason, but stopped, turned, and held out her hand. "Keys, please."

"Huh?"

She tilted her head and smiled at him. "Too much to carry. I'll take these to your fancy car. You and Momma have a talk. Then we get food." She held her hand again, palm up, fully expecting the keys to be deposited.

With a confused look, he fished the key fob out of his pocket and put it in her hand. "What kind of talk?" he asked as he handed the bags to her. There were quite a few, and he worried that she might struggle getting them all the way out to his SUV.

She held up the bags, her knowing eyes sparkling at him. "Let her know that it's fine," she said. "I'll be okay. I'm strong."

He watched as she did an about-face and strode off in the opposite direction.

Does she know? Jason wondered in astonishment. *How would that even be possible?*

"What is she talking about?" Elin asked. "What's fine?" She watched Paige walk away having zero issues with all of the heavy bags she carried. "I love that little girl so much, but I swear, sometimes I don't understand what she's trying to say."

"I think I do," Jason said as he took his mother's hand and led her to an empty table. They were far enough away from the crowd who were busy stuffing their faces with pizza, Philly cheesesteaks, or large plates of Chinese food, so he felt comfortable enough to break the news to her. "This will do."

When he pulled a chair out for her, she looked at him curiously. "Jason, what's happening? This is making me nervous."

He sat in a chair next to her, instead of across from her, so he could still speak in a lower tone and be heard over the din of the mall. "There's no reason to be nervous," he said, smiling at her. "But it is big news."

Elin swallowed hard and grasped his hand. "You're not sick, are you? H-How could that be okay?"

Her hand was trembling, and he put a hand on her cheek in hopes of calming her. He was surprised when she closed her eyes, appearing to enjoy his tender touch. "I'm very healthy, no worries there."

Pulling his hand from her face, he put both hands on hers. "So, do you recall what I told you about David's death?" When she nodded, he added, "Sooo...I left a few things out."

He went through the incident again, this time telling her exactly how David and his lady friend had died, with the large directional sign falling and cutting through the car, killing them. Almost immediately, he'd been contacted by several injury lawyers to bring a lawsuit against the highway department, but he wound up taking the settlement that he'd been offered just to have it over and done with.

"A settlement," she repeated, beginning to understand.

"Before I go on, I made a decision the day that I took over David's accounts." He scooted his chair closer, even though he was almost sitting in her lap by now. "He didn't do his duty as a father to Paige and Elaina, and he ruined this family. His actions caused you undue hardship and could have easily left my mother and sisters homeless, despite whatever paltry payments he may or may not have made each month. We both know he could have easily paid much more and sure as hell should have."

"Jason—" she said, shaking her head.

"You know it's true," he countered, not letting her come to David's defense. "Regardless, the decision I made was that every single cent that he had in his accounts, including his investments, would be given to you to make up for the years of pain and struggle that he caused you and my sisters." He was fighting back anger and regret at his father's actions, and it was his turn to enjoy his mother's touch against his face. "I won't let you say no. He owed you so much more, and this would have been yours anyway, had he not been a cheating leech."

She shook her head, wanting to refuse.

"No," he said, his face wrought with emotion. "You will not refuse," he said weakly, trying to push the issue, but his tone fell flat. "Please...don't refuse. Let me do this."

"What about you? I make pretty good money, but you've not mentioned having a job or any other income. You need this more than I do, honey."

"That's where the settlement comes in. The California State Highway Department offered me \$20 million dollars, which I promptly took. I didn't want to endure a court case, and I didn't want to hear

about how I could have gotten more because David was some big shot doctor, or for someone to argue about how much good he'd done for the community. I took it, they deposited it within the week, and I was done with it."

Elin's hand fell from his face, shock in her eyes. She just sat there, staring at him, her mouth slightly open in surprise. She only began to move again when he gently lifted his fingers to her chin to close her mouth. She cleared her throat and pulled her hands from his to wipe at her eyes, which were beginning to get wet.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

Through her tears, she smiled and wrapped her arms around him. "I was so worried that you would run out of his money eventually. I just wanted you to be safe and financially secure." She pulled back from him, now looking at him happily, despite her tears. "This makes me happy—relieved, actually." Her tone suddenly turned serious, and she pointed a finger at him. "But this money demands responsibility, young man. If I hear that you're out spending it frivolously buying several cars and six vacations homes, I will be very upset with you. I am an accountant at heart, you know, and I won't stand for it."

"Warning received and understood," he replied, his tone easier now that the mood had changed for the better. "But now you see why I kept saying it was okay for us to take this shopping trip. I'd buy you this mall if it would somehow make up for the time we lost."

Her serious look relaxed as she took his hands again. "I don't give a damn about *things*, Jason. I want you. Even if you had been completely destitute and on the verge of homelessness, I came here to get my baby boy." Suddenly, she looked upset and turned her head down. "I guess you don't need to come home with me now, though."

"I still want that." It dawned on him that this conversation was beginning to feel quite intimate, and it felt more like he was talking to a lover than to his mother. Their gentle, reassuring touches were more affectionate than they should have been, but neither seemed to take issue with it. "I want nothing more than to be with you."

As his mind continued to think about how deeply personal this conversation seemed, his last statement sounded even more intimate than he'd meant it to be.

"Yay! You told her!" Paige said, suddenly appearing in a chair on the opposite side of Jason, wrapping her arms around his to hug him. "See, Momma? It's fine. Aren't you happy?"

Jason leaned away from Elin and wrapped his arm around Paige, looking at her with a curious smile. "How did you know?"

"Know what?" she asked with all seriousness, her smile never wavering.

"About the money. The settlement."

She looked confused now. "Huh? What money?"

Jason and Elin exchanged looks, and the latter just closed her eyes and began laughing. "I don't think she knew about it. Just that something had happened that would make all this okay."

"You have money?" Paige asked, and Jason couldn't find a bit of sarcasm in her tone. "That's great!" She squeezed him tightly, her slim arms like a vice around him. "That makes me happy. So, are we

eating? I want to eat. I'm hungry. Your breakfast was good, Momma, but it didn't last long," she said, leaning back and rubbing on her exposed tummy. Paige hadn't missed her brother's eyes looking at her taught stomach when she did so.

"Paige," he finally said, pulling his eyes away from her delectable body, "don't ever change."

The three stood and both women wrapped their arms around his as they walked. "We can talk more about this later," Elin said. "But we should get her something to eat soon. As happy as she normally is, she gets incredibly irritable when she's hungry."

"Foood," Paige said in a low, grumbling voice.

The trio shopped a few more hours and Jason saw that Elin was still reluctant to purchase things she liked, but finally gave in. She did make it a point to pick out several more items for Elaina, and Jason had hoped it would make things a bit smoother when he finally met his older sister. Remembering the first phone conversation with his mother, he realized it was Elaina who had sounded angry about reconnecting with him, and he assumed she was upset at David. It was very likely that the anger toward her father had spilled over onto him by association. That was a bridge he'd have to cross when he got to it, though.

The trip wasn't a complete bore for him, though. In two of the shops, Paige had insisted on modelling her outfits for him for his input. Elin decided to join in, and Paige kicked it into high gear by darting around the store grabbing other items of clothing for both women to try on. She surprised everyone when she came back with several different swimsuits for both women. Paige had no shame whatsoever in modelling them for her brother, and there was no doubt that she was proud of her tight little body, which suited Jason just fine. His reluctance in looking melted away with Paige's bright, sunny attitude, and he enjoyed the sight of his little sister in increasingly skimpy swimsuits. It seemed to him that she had chosen more revealing swimwear just to expose more skin to him. He wasn't going to complain.

"I like this one. Do you like this one?" she asked, striking a coquettish pose.

He felt the air leave his lungs when he looked up at her last option. There was very little fabric covering her breasts, and when she seductively turned, he realized it had a thong bottom, which allowed him to see her incredible ass. The straps were made of a clear material, so when she turned back to him, it appeared as if the white fabric was magically attached to her body. He licked his lips, trying to form words that wouldn't make him sound like a horny teenager (which he definitely was).

"I—I, um," he hesitated with quick nods. "Oh, yeah. I like that one."

She stood up, resting her hands on her sides, her legs spread a bit, knowing exactly what she was doing and where his eyes would be drawn. "Good. I'll take it."

He nodded silently again, his head jerking oddly at the incredible sight in front of him. "Mmm hmm," was all he could muster.

With another turn, she seemed to wiggle her mostly exposed bottom at him before disappearing back into the room.

"What do you think?" he heard Elin ask.

When she appeared, she wore a one-piece swimsuit in royal blue, which looked amazing against her pale skin and platinum blonde hair. It had a scoop neck, which showed off the ample cleavage

of her c-cup breasts, and the cut out front put her flat stomach on display. "Whoa..." he breathed, then realized what he was doing, and tried to avert his eyes.

"Jason," she chastised. "It's okay. This shopping trip was your idea anyway, and since Paige is still changing, I need your honest opinion."

It took him a moment to turn back to her. When he did, he looked her up and down, and Elin seemed to find it a bit thrilling to have her body judged by him while in this swimsuit.

"You look incredible," he said softly.

Feeling like having a little fun with him, playing on his embarrassment, she said, "I know that. I'm talking about the swimsuit."

He saw the smirk on her face when his eyes shot up to hers, and he gave her a flat look. "You look incredible in that swimsuit, and it looks incredible on you."

She nodded with approval. "That's what a woman likes to hear," she said, then turned to go back into the dressing room. "One left," she said.

Paige came out with a handful of clothes and sat on the bench beside him. "Thank you for buying this stuff," she said as she leaned her head against his shoulder. "I love you."

He smiled and leaned his head against hers. "I love you, too, Paige. I'm glad you're back in my life."

She grimaced, her lip curling momentarily, as if something wasn't right in his words, but she continued on. "Momma is so sexy, isn't she?" She didn't give him a chance to react to her wording. "She thinks she's old. El and I keep telling her she's beautiful. Timeless. She doesn't believe it. Daddy hurt her. He shouldn't have done that. You can help her. She likes to hear that she's beautiful. That she's sexy."

Her words came out as quick, rapid-fire sentences, and it was hard to keep up with her if you didn't pay strict attention. She definitely had a strange way of speaking, but she also didn't hold back when she spoke, so you knew where you stood with her, and what she wanted.

"She is beautiful," he said.

"Mmm," Paige agreed. "Sexy, too, right?"

"Uh..."

She sat up and smiled at him warmly. "It's okay. You'll see."

"Sometimes I just don't get you," he said as he bumped his shoulder against hers.

"It's okay. You get to have me. You'll see."

"So," Elin's voice said nervously as she stuck her head out of the door, her body hidden inside, "I don't know about this one, Paige. It's just a little too revealing."

"Nope. It's sexy. Come on, Momma," she called out, grinning wide. "Show us the goods."

Jason whipped his head around to her, wondering what she had chosen for her mother to wear. His mind went into high gear, hoping to see more of Elin's body, but also of the nervousness he felt at

being able to look at her without looking like a drooling moron. He studied Paige briefly and wondered if she was doing this on purpose. She seemed to be awfully flirty lately, but even Elin had said that Paige saw the world through a different lens, and not everything with her was what it seemed. Surely this was more of an attempt to bring Elin out of her shell, to give her more confidence. And if his mother needed confidence, something that David must have robbed from her, he was going to help her feel that way.

Elin slowly stepped out and Jason's jaw nearly hit the ground. It was the same swimsuit Paige had just modeled, but in royal blue like the last one Elin had tried on. Once she stood in front of them, she looked nervous with her hands to her sides, her fists opening and closing in nervous apprehension.

Jason couldn't tear his eyes away from her. His heart was pounding in his chest, and it felt as if he was having difficulty breathing.

"Well?" Elin prompted, her voice uncertain. "Say something."

"Sexy as hell, Momma," Paige said, nodding in approval. She then bumped her brother. "Sexy, right?"

"Very—" He took a moment to find moisture for his mouth. "Very sexy," he agreed. "That color looks amazing on you."

At his words, Elin let out a breath she hadn't realized she'd been holding, relaxing now. "Thank you, Jason," she said, suddenly feeling hot as his eyes began to roam over every inch of her body. As if his eyes were bringing out a long, lost emotion, she turned to give him a view of the thong. "It's not too skimpy? I'm not too old to be wearing something like this, am I?"

She saw a visible change in his attitude. Gone was the nervous boy, replaced by a self-assured, confident man. Jason stood and walked to her. "You are not old by any stretch of the imagination, Elin," he said with weight to his words. "You are absolutely breathtaking. You may have seen it in me when you first came out." His hand slid down her forearm before taking her hand in his, and Elin could swear that she felt an electric charge from his touch. "I may be young, but I have never seen a more beautiful goddess in my entire life. Stop talking like that, okay?"

Elin knew she was blushing under his gaze, and from his words, but she enjoyed hearing what he'd said. It felt like everything he'd told her had unlocked something within herself. She could feel the arousal from between her legs, and the tightening of the skin on her breasts that hardened her nipples. And she had seen his breath catch when she'd first come out. Was that what men meant by breathtaking?

She felt like a teenager again at his touch, and she suddenly felt shy in addition to being incredibly aroused. "Okay," she agreed, pushing a lock of hair behind her ear. "I'm sorry. It's just—"

"It doesn't matter," he said, putting his forehead against hers. "All of that is in the past, and the demon who caused it has been vanquished. You're free." He stepped back and looked her up and down again, unashamed in the act. "Men would fight wars just for a kind look from you."

She let out a shaky breath. How did he become so good at this in his young age? If they weren't in the middle of a store, she could have let him take her right then and there. But her eyes flared, and she snapped out of it. No. This was her son. What was she thinking?

"Thank you," she said, giving him a curt smile. "Paige?"

"Looking good, babe," Paige replied, giving her two thumbs up.

"Weirdo." Elin quickly disappeared into the changing room and sat on the small bench, her head in her hands. What the fuck just happened out there? He was just complimenting his mother. That was it, wasn't it? And why was it affecting her in this way? She got undressed and put on her own clothing, then began gathering the items she was going to keep. Several shirts, shorts, and pants were in her arms, and she took the one-piece swimsuit as well, but paused as she looked at the bikini she'd just taken off. She snatched it and added it to the pile, hiding it under other articles of clothing.

"I think I embarrassed her," Jason said as he sat beside Paige again. "I shouldn't have said those things."

"She loved it. She needed it. She loves you. It's okay. You'll see."

Instead of trying to dissect her words, he simply asked, "I didn't embarrass her? I can't mess this up, Paige. I haven't seen you all in fifteen years. I just feel like I need you all in my—"

He stopped talking as Paige planted a quick kiss on his lips, then quickly shushed him. "Shh. It's fine. You'll see."

It was a very quick kiss, but the world seemed to stop when her soft lips touched his. Her actions hadn't even phased him, not after she had awakened him by poking his morning erection and calling it cool. She really didn't have any restrictions, but he really liked her being around him. It was very freeing and made him feel alive.

He noticed Paige studying his face, a serene smile on her face. "You liked it. It's okay. You'll see," she said with a reassuring nod.

He was about to ask what she meant, but Elin had joined them with her armload of clothes. "Jason, are you sure about this?" she asked, holding up her items. "There is quite a bit here, and in Paige's stack."

"Some of it is for El, Momma," Paige reminded her.

"Regardless," she started, but Jason stood and put a hand on her arm.

"I am one-hundred percent sure," Jason said. "Let me have this, okay? I'm enjoying it."

"Okay," she said after a moment, and then gave him a lingering kiss on the cheek. "We should go to the grocery, though. If we keep shopping here, we won't have room in your vehicle for what we need to get there."

At the register, Elin tried to keep talking to Jason so he wouldn't see that she had added the skimpy swimsuit to the pile. It seemed to work as well, but she noticed Paige had seen it. Her youngest gave her mother a big grin but chose to keep her mouth closed with an amused smile on her face.

Jason carried the bags, and since his hands were full, both women walked together with Paige leaning against her mother. "Momma," she started.

"Oh, just...shush," Elin said, a smirk on her lips.

Paige smiled up at her before leaning her head back on her mother's shoulder. "We love him, Momma. He loves us. We need him. You'll see."

They walked silently for a bit before Elin spoke. "I wish I could see things the way you see them, honey. You seem to have more clarity than anyone in the world, even if you sometimes are surprised by the result."

"I'm helping," Paige said, hugging her mother's arm. "It will all work out. You'll see."

"Can you just, for once, tell me what I'm supposed to see?" Elin asked, chuckling.

Paige sighed dramatically. "I don't know it. I just feel it."

"Hmm. That must be frustrating."

"Nope. I like it. It's mysterious. Exciting!" She stood upright but didn't let go of her mother's arm as they approached Jason's Explorer. She opened the back door and began to get in.

"You don't want to sit up front?" Elin asked.

"You need to sit there. I'm already happy. You need it."

Having not heard the conversation, Jason took the driver's seat and looked back at Paige in the mirror. "Already tired of sitting up from with me?" he asked.

"Nope. I loved it! It's Momma's turn. Can you open the sunroof again? I like the sun. It's feels nice here." She turned to her mother who had gotten into the front passenger seat. "Can we move here, Momma? This place is nice. It's so beautiful. I love the sun."

"That's not a discussion we can have in a single car ride, sweetie," Elin said, buckling her seatbelt.

"Hmm," her daughter replied. "Nope. We can't do that. Wouldn't be accepted. Have to go further." Her attention was drawn to the sunroof opening, and then her window, and the thoughts she was spewing were lost just as quickly as they had come.

Jason just chuckled as he backed out and made his way to the supermarket.

"So, when did you want to come, uh, or visit us in Vermont?" Elin asked. "I-I'm not pressing, but it'll give me a better idea of how much food to get. If you come back with us, we won't need as much. But if you're going to stay here a bit longer," she said, and Jason could see her worry at that thought, "I'll need to get more so you'll be able to eat something other than takeout."

"I hadn't really considered it," he said as he changed lanes and got onto the freeway. He heard Paige grouching in the backseat when he closed the windows but continued talking to his mother. "The only thing I could think of when I found your letter and called you was that I wanted to come home. To be with my family again." He suddenly found his hand holding his mother's, their fingers intertwined. She seemed to enjoy it, and smiled as she looked down at their hands together like that. She even began to rub his hand with her thumb. "I don't have anything holding me here," he continued. "If you'll allow it, I wouldn't mind going back with you."

A wave of relief washed over her, and she pulled his hand up to kiss it. "That would make me very happy," she said, then furrowed her brow. "You found a letter?" she asked.

"Oh, yeah. That's how I put the pieces together that David had been flat-out lying to me." He changed lanes again anticipating having to exit the freeway a few miles ahead. "It wasn't even open, just tossed into the trash can in his room." Glancing at her, he knew she was angry with David, possibly as much as he had been with the man all these years. This time, he pulled her hand to his lips and kissed it several times. "Your words were beautiful. I put it together that you'd been calling or texting him, which led me to check his phone."

"So, that's why you called me from his phone," she said, everything making sense now. "I'm so glad that you did."

He kissed her hand once more, then signaled to exit. "And I'm not letting you go now," he said with a smirk. "You're mine." She cocked an eyebrow at him, and he got flustered. "I-I mean—"

She chuckled. "You're *mine*," she corrected. "I did give birth to you, you know." She winked at him.

"Windows!" Paige yelled playfully from the backseat as they exited the freeway, and Jason put them all down to appease his little sister. Looking in the mirror, he saw that she had adjusted herself so that she could put her face out the window like a happy little puppy. When he turned to Elin, the wind blew her hair back making her look like a supermodel in a photoshoot.

She saw him. "What?"

He shrugged and shook his head. "Nothing," was all he would say, turning his attention back to the road.

She watched him a few moments longer, wondering if he'd like what he'd seen. But she composed herself, wondering why thoughts like that were anywhere in her train of thought, and was relieved when he parked in front of the grocery store. She was glad that he hadn't gone to one of the big-name stores and had, instead, gone to one of the stores that sold only natural products.

"Apples, Momma," Paige said as a reminder.

"I know, baby," Elin replied, remembering her daughter's love of apples, particularly the Granny Smith variety.

Jason and Paige followed behind Elin as she expertly went through the store, packing the cart with healthy foods and extolling them with the ideas she had for their meals. The woman loved to cook, which made Jason happy. Living with David had always been take-out, frozen meals, or simple things that Jason could figure out on his own, which never really satisfied him. David regularly went out to eat at nice restaurants, but Jason was rarely asked to come along. That gave him an idea.

"How about I take you two out for a nice dinner?" he suggested. "There are quite a few nice places near the house. They just have a bit of a dress code."

"You should take Momma," Paige said. "I wouldn't like it. You could make it a date! Go back to the mall, get her a little black dress, then go out and have some fun. Like a date!"

"You don't need to do that, Jason," Elin said, ignoring her daughter's comments.

He narrowed his eyes at her playfully. "Which means that I'm going to do it anyway," he said, a big grin on his face. "How about Wednesday? The realtor was coming by in the afternoon, then we can go out for a nice evening meal."

"Yay!" Paige exclaimed, clapping. "It's a date!"

"It's not a date, Paige," Elin said, chuckling at her daughter. "Just a mother and son enjoying a nice meal."

Paige suddenly looked deadpan at her mother and waved a dismissive hand. "It's fine. You'll see."

With a frustrated groan, Elin continued shopping. "Are you sure you want to sell your house?" she asked over her shoulder as she looked through the apples for Paige, putting some back in favor of others. "It's beautiful. Is it paid off?"

"I haven't checked. I guess I should do that." He frowned, wishing he'd looked into that earlier. "I don't need it, though."

"Oh?" Elin asked. "I want you to come home with us, you know that," she said as she placed the bag of her chosen apples into the cart. "But I worry that you won't like it or won't feel at home there. You'd need somewhere to go if that's the case."

He could tell that the idea of him not wanting to move in with her worried Elin, so he put his arms around her neck from behind, hugging her. "I don't see an issue with it. I think it'll be okay."

Elin's eyes closed at his embrace, her head leaning back against his. "What about holding off until you're certain?" she offered. "I just—I worry, Jason."

Letting her go, he didn't miss how comfortable she seemed in his arms. And her scent lingered around him, filling his nose with vanilla. "I know you have your job, but...what about Paige's idea? You could move here. There's plenty of room."

"Nope. Wouldn't be accepted yet. Have to go further," Paige said, repeating her earlier response on the subject.

"What does that even mean, honey?" Elin asked.

Paige only shrugged. "How should I know?."

Elin groaned and continued pushing her cart down the aisles. "We'll talk about it," was all she said.

An hour later, they were back home. Jason and Elin unpacked the groceries, keeping out several items for their dinner later, while Paige took the ladies' purchases to their rooms. "What's for dinner tonight?" Jason asked, looking at everything Elin had put aside.

"Chicken pot pie," she replied, looking up at him. "I hope that's okay?"

Jason smiled. "I'm looking forward to it. But, uh, you do realize you don't have to cook breakfast, lunch, and dinner, right? I didn't want to reunite with my maid."

"Oh, stop," she said, chuckling. "I'm taking care of you. It's my job."

"I could take care of you, you know?" he said, suddenly realizing that sounded more like a double entendre than he'd meant it to. That had been happening quite often with Elin. "You should be here enjoying yourself, not waiting on me hand and foot."

"I'm only making food, honey. It's no big deal. I'm sure you could take care of me, though." She had the same realization that Jason had, and turned away from him, busying herself with sorting her

food items. "Uh, so...where is that cutting board?"

"It's El!" Paige announced, loudly, with joy as she came into the kitchen with Elaina's picture showing on a face chat app from her phone. "Isn't it beautiful, El?" she said, turning the phone back to her before turning the phone back around to the living room, then walking out the back door to show her sister the pool area. "It's really, really awesome. You would have liked visiting."

"I doubt it," Elaina said. "Take me to Mom."

"Okay!" Paige said, then skipped to the kitchen, handing her phone to Elin.

"Hi, sweetie," Elin said with a big smile. "How's work?"

"I see he has you cooking for him," Elaina said, avoiding her mother's question.

"I want to cook for him, El," Elin replied. "If you recall, I have to cook for you and Paige as well."

"When are you coming home?" Elaina asked.

"I'm not sure. Sunday? Monday, maybe?" Elin was pulling out everything she needed to prepare their meal as she talked, carrying the phone with her. "You would have enjoyed this, El. I wish you had come with us."

El's blue eyes turned hard. "I don't want anything to do with him. I hope you're not planning to bring the lost little puppy home with you."

Jason's shoulders slumped, and he felt as if he'd been kicked squarely in the balls. "She hates me," he said softly, then turned to walk away.

"Jason—" Elin said, her heart broken for him. But as he continued walking, Elin's own eyes turned hard as she glared at her oldest daughter. "He heard you. I hope you're happy. He's been nothing but kind since we arrived, overjoyed at being able to reconnect with his family. And I don't need to remind you that he had no choice in the matter."

Elaina scoffed, and began to reply, but Elin cut her off. "Knock it off, Elaina!" Elin snapped, and her eyes began to fill with tears, a mixture of anger and sorrow. "You should be ashamed of yourself. He was four years old! He couldn't have done anything about it, even if he'd wanted to! If anything, he shouldn't want anything to do with you with the attitude you have."

"Mom, I—"

"I don't want to hear it," Elin said angrily. "And, yes, he's coming back with us, so, you have two options: get your head on straight, and welcome your brother back with open arms, a brother who has suffered just as much, maybe more, than you have; or pack your shit and move out of the house."

"Mom!" Elaina said, fear obvious on her face.

"You keep talking about it, El. Now's your chance. It's time to put up, or shut up," she said as she wiped tears from her face. Her voice was shaking as she spoke, and the entire conversation was breaking her heart. "He loves us, Elaina. He was told that we hated him, that we didn't want anything to do with him. Your sister and I have made great strides in letting him know that wasn't

true. And then here you come with your...your shitty attitude about something he had no choice about." Elin sobbed. "Shame on you, El."

"Momma, I'm sorr—"

Elaina's sentence was cut off when Elin disconnected the connection. "Paige! Come get this damned phone away from me."

Paige rushed in, pausing when she saw her mother crying, and wrapped her arms around her. "I'm sorry, Momma. I--I didn't know. I should have known."

Elin chuckled lightly through her tears. "It's okay, baby girl. You can't know everything." She hugged her little girl, trying to compose herself. When the phone began ringing again, she let out an angry sigh. "I don't want to speak to her again."

"Don't worry, Momma," Paige said, tiptoeing up to kiss Elin on the cheek before snatching the phone and running down the hall to her room. "I'll take care of it. You'll see."

Elin stood alone in the kitchen for several moments, trying hard to calm down. She just could not understand why Elaina felt such hatred for her brother. She had been old enough to know what had happened so many years ago, and she was there when Jason had cried, begging David not to take him away from his family. She knew one thing, though. Elaina was going to be a problem unless she changed her attitude. Jason had been kind and understanding after their reunion and the long talk he and Elin had about what had happened. Maybe having him come back to Vermont would be a good thing. He could speak with Elaina, telling her what had happened in his life. Hearing it from him might let her see that he had suffered just as much as Elin, Elaina, and Paige had.

Speaking of Jason, however, she needed to find him. She dabbed her eyes with a napkin but stuffed a few more into her pockets just in case. Walking down the hall, she knocked on his slightly open door and stepped in. The room was empty. Turning, she walked back down the hall and, out of curiosity, stuck her head into what had been David's room and found Jason lying on the bed flat on his back, his arm across his face to hide what were probably crying eyes.

She walked to the bed, sat softly beside him against the headboard, and when he looked up at her, she held her arms out to him. Without hesitation, he scooted closer to her and laid his head against her chest. For a moment, he hesitated as he realized where he was about to place his head.

"It's okay, baby," she said, feeling bad that he was so hesitant to snuggle her. Wiggling her hands to beckon him, she smiled when he finally put his head on her chest.

"She hates me," he said softly.

"She hates David, probably as much as you do," Elin said as she stroked his head before kissing it. "I think she's just let her years of hatred trickle over to you, unfair as it may be." She smiled lightly when he seemed to be snuggling his head against her, and she closed her eyes to enjoy their closeness, letting out a soft sigh of happiness.

"Am I uncomfortable?" he asked when he heard her sigh, mistaking it as discomfort.

"No," she whispered, leaning down to kiss his head again. "I like this."

After some silence, he looked up at her. "I'm sorry this is happening. I can stay here a while if you think it will be bad for me to come with you."

She stroked his face. "Not a chance. Elaina is the one who needs to adjust her way of thinking, not you. You're mine, too, remember?"

Her words helped to ease him as he lay his head back down on her chest. From the angle in which she sat, the button-up she wore, with the top few buttons undone, the fabric stuck up and allowed him to look into her shirt. He saw the sheer, white bra she wore and could make out the darkened area of the areola and nipple of her right breast. Moments later, he realized he was getting an erection. What made it worse was that his entire body was pressed against hers, and she undoubtedly could feel what was happening against her leg.

"I'm...sorry," he said quietly.

She had felt his cock against her as soon as he'd gotten close, likely due to its sheer size, something she had seen at their earlier breakfast through his shorts. It seemed that he was now getting excited, and when she looked down, she noticed her shirt was open and giving him a good view of her right breast.

"Shh," she said, stroking his head still. "Just relax. It's okay."

It was almost a point of pride that her body could excite him in this manner. And he wasn't even getting a good look at it. It made her wonder if he'd gotten an erection earlier in the mall while she had modeled the barely-there swimsuits for him, and a smile crept across her face.

"It's, um," he began to stammer.

"Hugs!" Paige said, suddenly bursting into the room. "Momma hugs are the best." She crawled right on top of both Elin and Jason, straddling her mother and placing her head on her chest right next to Jason's. Her right leg, however, had sunk between Elin and Jason's bodies, and she popped back up with a sultry giggle. "Cool," she said. "I like it excited."

"Paige!" Elin gasped, pulling her daughter back down to shut her up.

"You'll like it. You'll see."

Elin began to stammer, not sure what to make of her daughter's words. She stopped, however, when Paige sat back up and kissed her on the lips. "Don't be silly, Momma," she said, tilting her head as if she were thinking about something. "I like this. We should snuggle with him more often. He missed out."

"Yes, we should," Elin agreed, already having forgotten that her daughter had just indicated that she'd like Jason's excitement.

The trio lay there for ten minutes or so before Elin began to disentangle herself. "I need to get dinner started," she said. "You can keep snuggling your brother, Paige, as long as he doesn't mind."

Jason smiled as Paige crawled on top of him, laying her head on his chest. "I guess I don't mind. It's not like she's heavy."

Elin stopped at the door, looking back at her children. "I wish you two had been able to do more of this before now."

"I love you, Jason," Paige said softly, her breathing calm, and her face nestled against his chest.

He smiled and gently rubbed her back. "I love you too, Paige."

With that, she sat up, leaned forward, and kissed him on the lips, then laid her head back down on his chest. "This is your room. You should sleep in here. It's better than the room that's not your room."

He just couldn't keep up with this girl, but he was enjoying her body against his. "It's not really my room."

"It's your room," she said as she sat up and arched an eyebrow at him. "You'll sleep here tonight." She nodded as if she'd given him the final word on it. "I can sleep here too, if you're scared. We can snuggle." She lay her head back down and started to wriggle atop him trying to get more comfortable. "I like that idea," she said. Within seconds, however, her wriggling was rewarded, and a smile crept across her face. "You're excited. I like that idea, too."

He began to object but couldn't bring himself to say anything. She just felt so nice.

"You like it, too," she said as she began to grind her body against him subtly. "It's okay. You'll see."

The fireworks in his brain were firing off like crazy, and his cock was at full hardness, begging to be let loose from its denim prison. After several moments of her small gyrations, his eyes widened when he felt her little hand rubbing the outside of his pants, sliding against the bulge that he was making.

"I want it," she said. "But not yet. You're not ready. Mo—" she started to say, but tilted her head as if she were listening to silent guidance. "Someone else is first." She leaned up and ran a finger across his face before tracing his lips. She kissed him again, this one lingering much longer. To his surprise, he began to kiss her back, which made her smile against his lips. Without thinking, he slid his hands to her slim, toned bottom, giving it a squeeze. She giggled and began darting her tongue against his lips until he parted them, his tongue joining with hers.

"I'm glad you like it," she said. "Told you," she added in a sing-song voice. "I love you, dear brother. Not the way you think. And you love me, more than you think." She sat up and began grinding her crotch against his erection in earnest now, taking his hands and sliding them under her shirt up to her breasts, which were no longer contained in a bra. "This is how it is, how it must be." She let out a soft gasp at his touch. "It's nature. It's real. It's love." She bit her bottom lip and frowned, sliding his hands down her stomach and back to the bed before she leaned off him. She had been speaking to him with her eyes closed the entire time, like she was in a trance. But when her eyes popped open, she smiled wide at him. "Dinner will be ready soon. Hungry?"

His mouth hung open.

"Aww," she said, her bottom lip sticking out. "It's okay. I love you. Momma loves you. El loves you, but she's a doofus and doesn't know it yet." She looked down the length of his body and her eyes widened when they settled on his crotch. "Ooh! You're excited!" She grinned. "Cool," she giggled, then furrowed her brow at him. "You do that a lot." She smiled again. "I like it."

His mouth was still hanging open as she bounded out of the room. "What...the fuck..."

He sat up and decided to visit the bathroom to splash water on his face. After wiping himself down, he looked in the mirror. "She's your sister, man. But holy shit, she's fucking hot." He stood like that for several seconds. "Just like her mother."

"Jason?"

It was like he'd talked her up as he heard Elin's voice. He stepped out of the bathroom and found his mother standing beside the bed. "Hey," he said, and then felt like kicking his own ass for saying something as dopey as 'hey.'

"Are you feeling better?" she asked. "Paige said she talked to you, and you felt good."

He grunted, holding back a chuckle. *I bet she thought I felt good*, he thought before he said, "Yeah. She's pretty awesome."

Elin smiled, happy that they were getting along. "That she is," she said, and then held her arms out to him again. When he hugged her, she noticed he was keeping his crotch safely away from her body and she rolled her eyes. "This is a weird hug, you know?"

"I, uh...it's just..."

She tsked and pulled him closer. "Hug me properly, young man," she said. "You don't hug someone you love half-assed."

He smiled over her shoulder as he hugged her properly, feeling her perky breasts as they pressed against him. It felt nice hugging her, but he needed to back away before he embarrassed himself again. "Uh, is Paige clairvoyant or something?" he asked, realizing he probably sounded like a loon. But he pressed on. "I've never really believed in that sort of thing, but it's like she has some kind of magical ability to tell the future, or...something like that."

"Maybe?" Elin replied. "She's always done that. Did she say something?"

"Well, she said," he paused. "Honestly, I have no idea what it was. There was quite a bit."

Elin chuckled. "Sounds like her."

"The strange thing is that it felt right, you know? Like I understood exactly what she was saying, without actually understanding it." Jason let out a sigh, unsure how he was supposed to explain it. "What got me, though, was that it was the most I've heard her say like that in a long time. But when she finished, I noticed her eyes were closed, and when she opened them, it was like she didn't realize she'd been speaking."

"Hmm, yeah. I've seen that, too." She studied his face. "Does it bother you?"

"Not at all," he replied, shaking his head. "It makes me feel closer to her. I know she'll be honest with me, and she won't pull her punches. I've, uh, missed real honesty."

Elin took his arm and led him toward the kitchen. "You'll get that from her, for certain," she said. "But I will never lie to you, either. I know what you've gone through and lying to you would make me as bad as...well, you know."

"Sometimes telling the truth can hurt, though," he said. "I wouldn't begrudge you some tiny, white lies that were told to spare my feelings."

"I would rather be honest," she said. "I think you're grown up enough to have frank discussions, even if they're hard discussions."

He inhaled deeply and closed his eyes at the scent lingering in the room. "Wow. That smells amazing." Seeing her smiling happily made him feel good. "Would you like some wine with dinner?"

"Do you drink?" she asked him.

He shrugged. "On occasion. I know I'm not old enough, but I've had wine before. If it makes you uncomfortable, I'll skip it, but I'd like you to have some if you like."

She was conflicted. He wasn't old enough to drink, but he'd obviously done so before she came into his life. She also didn't want to cramp his style or pick something she thought innocuous that might set him off and make him rethink the idea of coming home with her. Surely this wasn't one of those things, was it?

"I guess it'll be okay if you want some," she finally replied. "I don't think I'd be comfortable with it on our date—I-I mean," she chuckled nervously. "I mean, at dinner on Wednesday."

With a chuckle, he pulled a bottle of white wine from a cabinet. "I've only tried it at home." He found two wine glasses, uncorked the bottle, and poured a glass for Elin. He hesitated before pouring the second.

"What's wrong?" she asked.

"I've reconsidered having some," he said. "I don't want you to think poorly of me."

"Don't be silly. If you want some, have some. You drank it before you met me, and I didn't come here to force you to change to what I want you to be." She slid a hand up and down his arm. "I want you to be you, no matter what that looks like."

He hesitated a moment before deciding to pour the second glass.

On the pool deck, Paige was talking to Elaina again. "She doesn't want to talk to you, El. She's very cross with you."

"I know," Elaina said, her tone sullen. "I fucked up, didn't I?"

"It will work out. You'll see."

"Not helpful, Paige," El said, rolling her eyes. "Can you use your super-wizarding vision to give me some real guidance for a change?"

Paige looked away from her sister for a moment. When she looked back, she only said, "I got nothin'. But me and Momma love him. You will, too. He's a good brother, El." She looked downcast. "He misses his family. We're his family. He wants to be with us. He loves us."

Elaina focused on Paige's words, having been a bit more understanding of the words she would regurgitate on occasion. This time, though, she came up empty. "So, it really is nice there?"

Paige's mood shifted as a huge smile appeared. "Oh, yes. I like it here. His house is nice. The pool is so fun! Did I show you the pool?"

"Yes, Paige, you showed me the pool," El said, chuckling at her odd sister. "I miss you, squirt."

"I miss you, too, El. You really should have come."

"I know," the older sister replied, feeling the shame her mother had mentioned. "I'm sorry. I'm an idiot, I guess."

"You're not an idiot, silly!" Paige replied. "Daddy was just a bad man. He hurt us. He *really* hurt Jason. But we'll be together soon. It'll be fine. You'll see."

"Can you tell Momma I'm sorry?" Elaina said. She had grown out of calling Elin 'Momma' several years ago, feeling it was too juvenile and opting just for 'Mom.' But when she knew she had royally fucked up, she reverted back to it. It told Paige how serious she was about her request.

"I will tell her. Will you be good when we bring him?" Paige put the phone close to her face, and El had to back up from her own phone as nothing but her sister's eye filled the screen. "I want you to promise, El."

Elaina let out a deep sigh. "I'll try. It's just—"

"Nope!" Paige said. "Not good enough."

"Fuck. Fine, Paige. I promise. I promise I will be a good little girl and will welcome my brother with open arms. Is that what you wanted to hear?"

Paige hummed happily. "It will do, I guess. But you will love him. It'll be fine. You'll see."

Elaina snorted a laugh. "You're weird. It's a good thing you're so damn smart, and so damn cute."

"I know," Paige said with a grin.

The two were quiet a moment before Elaina spoke. "I love you, sis. I'll be happier when you get back."

"I love you, too. Bye, El." Paige closed the connection and lay back in the sun on the deck chair. "She'll be happier with a full belly."

"It's a good thing dinner's done, then," Jason said as he came out to her. Paige was in the barely-there swimsuit she had modeled for him, the twin to the one Elin had tried on as well, and he tried hard not to ogle her.

"Huh?" Paige asked, raising her arms above her head, giving him a better view of her ridiculously beautiful, little body.

"Um..." he swallowed hard. "You said you'd be happier with a full belly. Dinner's ready."

She smiled up at him as he stood there, his eyes straining themselves to keep eye contact with her. "You can look. It's okay."

"I—I shouldn't," he whispered.

"You very much should. I worked hard for this. Did I do a good job? Lots of swimming, running, and weights."

His eyes slowly took in every inch of her slim but toned body, and he let out a slow breath. "You did a *very* good job, Paige."

She looked down at his crotch and pouted. "Not excited. I didn't do a good enough job."

He let out a nervous laugh. "I'm trying very hard to not get excited. Believe me, you did a stellar job."

She smiled again. "Oh. Good. I'm glad. But don't try so hard." She winked, stood from the chair, took his hand, and pulled him into the house so that they could eat.

The food was, as Jason had expected, amazing. That fact led to him asking how Elin had gained her skills in the kitchen. She had always liked to play around in the kitchen, but she eventually took a few semesters of culinary cooking classes at the local community college, just to learn more.

"You really are amazing," he said as he raised his glass to her. "Smart, kind, loving, one hell of a cook, beautiful, and you raise excellent kids. Well, this one, anyway," he said, jerking his head toward Paige, "since I haven't actually met Elaina."

When Elin raised her own glass in thanks, Paige's eyes lit up. "Ooh! I want a glass!"

"No!" Elin and Jason both said at the same time, causing them to laugh.

"Aww," she said, but brightened up when Jason held his glass up to her. She took a sip, made a face, and said, "Ugh. No. Yuck. I don't like it." She began flicking her tongue out and quickly grabbed her water to get the taste out of her mouth.

Elin and Jason chuckled, clinked their glasses, and drank. The conversation continued for over an hour, and Elin had three glasses of wine to Jason's one. He could tell that she was getting a bit tipsy, but he wasn't going to fuss. She was a big girl and could get hammered if she wanted to. He wasn't going to stop her. But once everyone was finished, he noticed just how much of the pot pie was left.

"Would you mind if I put some of this in a container?" he asked.

"Why would I mind?" she asked, steadying herself as she stood. "I was going to put it away anyway."

"A smaller container," he said. "I wanted to take some out to Teddy."

"Oh, that is so nice!" Paige said. "Remember, Momma? He told us he had to cover another shift. He might not have brought enough food. Jason is so good."

"That is sweet of you, honey," Elin said, suddenly incredibly proud of her son. She helped him scoop out a large helping into a lockable, glass container, and put two bottles of water with it. Jason found a pack of plastic utensils from one of his many food deliveries, and put everything into a bag.

"I'll be back in a bit," he said.

"Can I go?" Paige asked, her hands behind her back as she twisted playfully. It wasn't lost on Jason that her small, pert breasts were now sticking out quite a bit more than usual.

"Not dressed like that you're not," Elin said. "He won't be gone long."

"Fine," she said, pouting again. Once Jason left, Paige bumped her mother. "Put on your swimsuit. Pool time." She then waggled her eyebrows. "The *good* swimsuit."

Elin giggled, the alcohol influencing her. "Don't be silly."

"It's not silly, Momma," she urged. "You were sexy. Jason really liked it."

Her mother's face turned red, and she began to fuss, but changed tack. "You think so?"

"He was very excited after you went to change," Paige said with a knowing smile. "Of course, he is excited quite a bit around you."

"Paige," Elin said, sounding scandalized. "We shouldn't think about that. He's my son, your brother."

As they walked to Elin's bedroom, Paige shrugged. "It's nature. It's fine. You'll be happy. You'll see."

"Now you're just talking crazy, young lady," Elin said as she began removing her clothes. When she stood naked, something Paige had seen several times before, Elin noticed her daughter was looking at her more intently. "Paige?"

"Oh! Sorry, Momma. You're just so beautiful." She handed the skimpy swimsuit to her, nodding when Elin looked at her skeptically. "You should show it off more often. I sure like it." Before Elin could begin to cover herself, Paige gave her a hug, pressing their nearly identical bodies against each other. She'd never felt this way toward her mother before, but after meeting Jason, she just couldn't deny it any longer. She knew, though, that her mother wasn't ready for it. So, she let her go with a soft, lingering kiss on the cheek and bounded out of the room. "I'll be in the pool!" she said over her shoulder.

Standing alone in the room, Elin let out a deep breath as her hands lightly trailed up her body, and then down to her crotch. "Fuck," she whispered. "Why did I find that so hot?" Pulling on the bikini bottoms, she continued. "What the hell is happening to me? I'm enamored with my son? I'm turned on by my daughter?" She paused before putting on the top, gently caressing her breasts. "Jesus, I really need to be fucked." She shuddered, swallowed hard as she secured the top, and took several deep breaths to calm herself before joining her daughter in the pool.