

The Dylan Morgan Show

Season 1

by Jenny Frame



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This is a complete story. I aim to release two episodes per week.

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Thanks to my American interpreter Amy, who tried to teach me my oatmeal from my porridge and my pants from my trousers! :)

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For my partner Lou. Your help, love and encouragement are my inspiration.

Episode One

How the hell did I get here? Dylan Morgan pondered as she took her place for her latest stunt.

In the large aircraft hanger sized studio, three cars sat lined up, side by side. Ahead of each car were a series of four hurdles which sat taller than each car roof. Dylan Morgan, the star and host of the show, a popular Hollywood actor named Danny Boyd, and a contestant from the show's audience, stood on their respective car roofs. The object of the game being that as the cars raced along, each contestant would jump each hurdle and the first to jump the final hurdle and burst through the paper finish line would be proclaimed the winner.

These were the circumstances one Dylan Morgan found herself in while appearing on her own prime time television show.

As she listened to the audience count down to the starter's klaxon, she thought back to the events that had brought her here.

Dylan and her brother Joey were born to Tommy and Patricia Morgan, living an unremarkable life in Brooklyn, New York. Dylan was always a loner, preferring her own company to a crowd, which was remarkable considering her current occupation. Dylan was blessed with a tall, muscular athletic body and excelled in sports. Her father Tommy was a taekwondo teacher and ran his own club so, naturally, Dylan became a student. Tommy adored his daughter and she motored through the ranks, showing exceptional fortitude for the sport. Her brother Joey showed no interest in his Father's livelihood, and

so was not as close to Tommy, preferring the company of their Mother Patricia.

What Dylan's Father didn't know was that his daughter had secret loves; entertainment and comedy. Young Dylan, though normally quiet and moody, came alive on stage in school productions. Something happened to the quiet girl when put on stage in front of a crowd. It was as if she flipped a switch and became an entertainer. On stage Dylan found her voice and came into her own. Dylan knew this was what she wanted to do with her life, but she was unsure how to do it. She found her joy in comedy, but was no stand-up comedian. She loved comedic acting but didn't feel that a career as an actor was for her. Dylan knew deep down there was something she could do but it continued to elude her.

The young Dylan went to her community theatre group and spent as much time with them that her taekwondo training would allow.

Her father made clear, in no uncertain terms, which came first. He wanted her to achieve what he never could, the top honor, an Olympic medal. In contrast, her mother encouraged the teenager's artistic side, sympathizing with her love of entertaining. The tension between Dylan's two loves was constant.

When she was 16 and the Olympic Games were four years off, the dam broke. Father and daughter had a falling out over the amount of time she was spending with her theatre group. Tommy loved his daughter fiercely and wanted her to be happy but also wanted her not to waste her skills and athletic talent, so he cut her a deal. If she gave him the next four years in training and dedication up to and during the games, then she would be free to do what she liked with the rest of her life.

And this she did, throwing everything into her Dad's dream. The games came and she gave him everything he wanted; a gold medal. Dylan came home a hero with the other U.S. medalists, which brought her fame and notoriety.

Dylan, now released from any obligation to her father, went to acting school and took any comedy courses she could find.

All through acting school she had cultivated a small following at performances in Greenwich Village hosting a few shows, doing whatever she needed to make a few extra dollars.

After school she did get a few low-key TV parts, but her reputation was growing in the village bars and comedy clubs. Over the years she cobbled together an act that consisted of a little comedic interaction with the audience, a few sketches and a special part of the show called Dylan's Dares. Her tall solid build and natural athleticism made her generally good at most physical pursuits, so early on she started to take dares from the crowd or went up against a member of the audience in some physical feat. The stunts started out really simple like, beat Dylan at one-handed pushups or beat Dylan in a race around the

block. The club or bar would put up prizes for the audience member to win, but Dylan Morgan did not lose.

The dares grew as Dylan's confidence grew. She knew this was the type of entertaining she could do, mixing her comedy with her physique. The dares grew bigger, like dare Dylan to walk a tightrope, or some bike or skateboarding stunt. For the bigger dares, she would record the segment and show it on screen at the club that night. The comedy clubs were packed for Dylan's shows. It wasn't only the dares, but Dylan's rapport with the audience. She would talk about the week's events, ad-libbing for a while on various subjects.

As her popularity grew, local TV reporters would come and talk to her about her stunts, her show. Her clips were appearing on YouTube and she had followers from around the world on her Facebook page and Twitter. Dylan's love of all things technological gave her the wherewithal to cultivate her following using social media. She recognized its power at a time when people were just waking up to it.

Dylan fascinated people. She was a woman doing the things guys would normally do. She was very good looking, 6-foot-1 with collar length dark hair and sparkling blue eyes. Dylan wasn't shy about the fact she was a lesbian and so had a huge gay following.

After one particular show, a TV producer asked to see her and offered her a segment on a popular late night talk show. Dylan felt she was finally getting somewhere. The segment was a hit and the network was soon offering Dylan her own show. Dylan remembered one particular conversation she had with the network.

'You're not going to put me back in the closet, because I've never been in one.'

'Don't worry Dylan; I don't think we could even attempt it! You kind of scream butch dyke!' he laughed.

'Well I don't take that as an insult, you know. I'm out and proud.'

'We know Dylan. Listen. The network wants your show, you are so popular right now and we think we can make you huge. In addition, gay is cool right now, with Ellen and Portia never out of the headlines. Out and proud as you say.'

They reworked the show format and the rest was history. The network presented her show in prime time every Friday and Saturday night during the season. The format was always the same. First, a celebrity guest would be introduced, they would chat a bit, perform some sketches and end with the final dare where Dylan took on the celebrity and a member of the public. If the celebrity or Dylan won, the money would go to charity. If the audience member won, they would take home the cash. It became a huge hit, and five years and four Emmys later, The Dylan Morgan Show was at its height.

Along with fame came money. Ads and sponsorship money made her a worldwide star. She had everything and was the most eligible single gay woman in the world. Although Dylan came to life on screen, she was the same awkward loner who preferred her own company when the cameras were turned off. Women threw themselves at her but she didn't indulge, looking for that illusive woman who would get her, understand her.

Dylan dated and was always seen at premieres with someone; usually an up and coming actress whom her agent would force upon her. But any person who dated her expected the Dylan Morgan from the show. In reality, she was quiet, read, worked out intensely and craved a family life, not a glitzy glamorous relationship.

Her agent had once remarked, when telling her which actress or celebrity she was taking to the latest awards show or premiere.

'Dylan, you could have anyone you want. Women throw themselves at you. Why not just indulge yourself and enjoy it?'

To which Dylan replied. *'If I ever meet anyone who is interesting or at least isn't interested in my bank balance, I'll do just that. In the meantime, you can sort out my dates for events.'*

Two years ago, Dylan's younger brother died. After coming out to his mom and dad, who hadn't taken it too well, Joey came to live in the village to be near his sister and enjoy the gay scene. Hanging on to her celebrity status, he was invited to celebrity parties and events. He got into drinking and drugs very badly. Dylan and her Father tried to help him but he finally fell victim to an overdose. Her parents had not spoken to Dylan since, blaming the death of her brother on her lifestyle and fame. Being estranged from her dad hurt her deeply, and her mom who had always stuck up for her, couldn't bring herself to go against her husband this time. The man she had given up her childhood to please now wanted nothing to do with her.

All this brought Dylan to the roof of the speeding car, trying her utmost to win her latest crazy challenge.

Dylan led the field leaping over the first three barriers, with Danny Boyd coming up just behind her; the third contestant had fallen at the first hurdle. Struggling to keep her balance, she leapt over the final hurdle and burst through the paper finish line. Unbeknownst to Dylan, Danny had clipped the last hurdle and fallen, not making it to the end of the course.

The crowd whooped and applauded. *There's gonna come a day I get too old for this!* she thought as she pulled herself up from the foam mats. As she took the applause, she received the message from the floor that they had gone to break.

The studio was alive with people and paramedics checking over all three participants. Dylan ran her hands through her sweat-drenched hair.

"Dylan we have one minute." someone from the floor shouted.

"Thanks for doing that, Danny." She shook the actor's hand.

"No problem Dylan, I had a blast! I need to fit that stunt into one of my movies!"

She turned to the audience member, who was struggling to get his breath, and clapped him on the back.

"Good try Bob. If you stand on this mark here, we'll wind up the show and then you can get cleaned up.

"10 seconds, Dylan!" came the cry.

Dylan put her game face back on, ready for action. Danny Boyd looked Dylan up and down taking in the long muscled legs, emphasized by tight shorts, with a black crop top and thought, *No wonder the guys and girls love you, Dylan. I don't think you even realize the effect you have on people!* He knew from people in the industry that she was no player, even though she had every opportunity. *You're one of a kind Dylan Morgan.*

Dylan got the word from the floor and launched into her wrap up.

"Welcome back. I think that may be one of the most fun and exhausting Dylan's Dares we've done so far!"

The crowd responded with laughter and cheers as they watched a replay on the big arena screen. At the break, she was given a microphone that she held out to the audience member.

"Well Bob, you didn't win the cash prize but we've got this for you from our friends at Apple." The screen in the studio cut to footage of Dylan making calls on her iPhone and playing games on her iPod.

"I hope that'll make up for the grey hair! Big hand for Bob, everyone!" The crowd rose to their feet, clapping. She then turned to the actor.

"Danny, was that harder than fighting the Aliens in Monster Blast?"

"I tell you Dylan, it came pretty darn close. I'm exhausted!" The girls in the audience screamed for him.

"Well, thanks so much for being on the show the past two nights and remember everyone, you can see Danny Boyd in Monster Blast at all good movie theatres starting next Friday.

I will see you next Friday when I'll be trying to hit the target with the star of the new hit comedy, Head of the House, and one more lucky audience member will get a chance to win our top cash prize. Goodnight and take care till we meet again next week!"

The three waved to the cameras and audience as the titles rolled. After Dylan was finally given the signal that they were off air, she turned to Bob and said, "Thanks again Bob, it's you guys that make the show".

"Thanks a lot, Dylan! Do you think I could get an autograph? For my girlfriend, you know," he asked excitedly.

"Sure thing, I'll have some stuff sent to your dressing room, okay?"

Turning back to the movie star, she said, "Thanks Danny. I hope you'll be back for a rematch?"

"You try and stop me, Dylan. I don't like being beaten by a girl!" he joked, as his PA came over with a robe. "Do you want to get a drink after the show, Dylan?" he asked, walking away.

A member of the floor staff was helping her into a robe. "No thanks. I need to have my wrap up with the studio audience. But thanks." Dylan knew as she said it that it was an excuse.

Her Personal Assistant, Lynn Roberts, said she was positively antisocial and needed to get out more. Dylan had always lacked the skills to make social situations comfortable, unless she was on stage; that was where she excelled.

After thanking the audience for their support and part in the show, she made her way off stage and was met by her PA. Lynn organized Dylan's life; she told her where to be and when to be there. She had no idea how she would cope without her. Lynn was in her late fifties, exceptional at her job and could handle Dylan's changeable moods. She was more like a mother than an employee.

The short, well dressed woman watched Dylan coming towards her. The 'game face' as Dylan called it, was already starting to fall. Lynn worried about her. At twenty-eight, she had no one in her life and ever since the problems with her parents, Dylan had become even more isolated. Her career was all she had.

"Hey Lynn! Did I do okay?"

"You were funny and charming as always, as you well know, Dylan. Go on! Get yourself into the shower."

After her shower, she dressed in her usual blue jeans and, today, a black t-shirt.

"So, when you come in on Tuesday and meet with your guests, you'll get your training schedule for archery. I think they lined up an Olympic medalist."

"Sounds fine, I've got some good sketch ideas, what's this actress' name?"

"Katie Phillips. She doesn't have a rep for being difficult, so she should be up for whatever you have in mind. We had an interview request from a reporter for Monday morning; the network is pushing for it." Lynn knew before she asked what the reaction would be.

"No. Tell them no. It's my day off, for God's sake! I need time to train. What do they think, that I'm some sort of performing monkey? I need to put the work in to do what I do, you know that!"

"I do. I'll tell them Dylan, don't worry."

Dylan's week was strictly organized and she liked it that way. Sunday and Monday were her days off. Sunday she would laze around her apartment, catching up with the news, TV, playing computer games or shopping for gadgets. Dylan was a total technology geek and nothing relaxed her or made her happier than puttering around a computer store or the Apple store, seeing what new toy she could buy. She didn't really have a lot else to spend her money on. Since her ad campaign with Apple, she received free products before the public release date.

She ran every day, but Mondays were her gym days when she worked on her martial arts. Mondays were sacred to her. Dylan believed it was her discipline that kept her sane in this mad business of celebrity and television.

Since returning from the Olympics, she had taken up some other techniques, namely kickboxing and Mixed Martial Arts. At one time, she had considered getting into Ultimate Fighting Championship competition, but then the show came along.

Tuesdays, she would go to the studio, meet with the celebrity she would be working with that week, discuss her ideas for the sketches and her monologue with the writing team, and start rehearsal.

Wednesdays, she and the celebrity would be trained on whatever the task was for the week and have a full day of practice.

Thursdays she split between event training and sketch rehearsals. The week for the crew was not easy. It was known to be the most physically demanding show to work on. They had to be fit to keep up with Dylan.

"Oh before I forget, can you get some show merchandise to Bob's dressing room? I said I would sort out some autographed stuff for Bobs girlfriend."

"Sure thing. Anything else?" "No that's it. I think I'll head off."

"I'll call for the car." Lynn started to dial her cell.

"Don't bother, I think I'll walk tonight for a bit and maybe grab a cab."

"You know I hate it when you do that, Dylan. I don't think you realize how recognizable you are. Your show and your face are up in Times Square for God's sake."

"I'll put sunglasses on. Nobody cares in New York, Lynn, calm down. I just feel like a walk."

The truth was she wanted to put off going back to her empty condo in Greenwich Village. She felt her solitary nature the most at night. Dylan grabbed her leather jacket and set off. "I'll see you Tuesday, Lynn. Have a good weekend."

Lynn sighed, knowing the woman would probably spend it alone. As Dylan made her way out the stage door, she sent a tweet to her followers. Twitter was the sort of social interaction she could manage, short messages at a distance. It was an excellent way to keep in touch with her fans and to bring some publicity to the causes she believed in.

Out on the street, the usual journalist and his photographer were waiting for her. Jimmy Daniels both hated and admired Dylan Morgan. She'd had the world at her feet for five years, the public loved her, and even the incident with her brother had made her more popular. The public saw in the papers the faithful sister trying to save her brother from himself, and since his death she had done great things working with substance abuse charities. She was too good to be true. When his editor had first charged him with the task of finding some scandal, he thought it would be easy. Famous rich lesbian? There must be tons of scandal on her, but no. Three years later he still had nothing.

Yes, she turned up at the right places with a date on her arm, but there was never anything more. He had offered money to all sorts of people in the industry and found nothing. Either she was very ordinary or people were keeping quiet. The magazines had even tried to Photoshop her into various salacious pictures, but she'd slapped a lawsuit on them and won.

Jimmy made it his mission to get something on her.

"Got any words for your fans, Dylan?"

"Now, now, Jimmy, we both know you don't want any words for my fans but I'll be sure to tweet them to let them know you care." *Asshole*, she mumbled under her breath.

Jimmy's tactic recently had been to be there every time she left the studio or her house; be there at every event, firing out questions, hoping she would lose her temper with him or

his camera guy. At least that would be something on Miss Perfect.

He started to follow her then heard her shout back. "You can follow me all you want, Jimmy, I'm just walking home; nothing more and you know it."

"What do you want to do, Jimmy?" his cameraman asked.

"Just leave it. This is a waste of our time. I'll get something on you, Dylan Morgan. You've got to have an Achilles' heel." He watched as she walked down towards Times Square.

Dylan wandered through Times Square, not in any hurry to get home. She looked at all the people milling around the Square. Some were tourists enjoying themselves in the bright lights. There were couples having fun, families having fun, other people making their way home to loved ones. At times like these, she felt her isolation. She always could get company if she wanted it, and she succumbed to the occasional one- night stand. It never worked. She didn't seem to have the skills to relate to women in a relationship. They expected the Dylan Morgan from TV and she just wasn't that person offscreen.

She wandered on, hefting her backpack back up on her shoulder. It started to rain and was getting heavier. Her leather jacket wasn't giving her much protection. She thought of hailing a cab but then a little diner on the corner caught her eye. *I might as well grab a coffee where it's dry, rather than head home to no one*, she thought.

She entered the diner and took a stool at the counter. It was very quiet, being 11 o'clock at night and much less glitzy than its competitors in Times Square around the corner.

There was a server behind the counter, who currently had her back to Dylan.

The TV host put her bag up on the counter and brought out her iPhone to check her email and twitter then she heard. "Hi, how can I help you?"

Dylan brought her head up to be met by the most beautiful pair of green eyes she had ever seen. *Wow! She is stunning!* Dylan's eyes wandered down the petite women's figure.

She was about 5-foot-3, and had the most luscious blonde hair that, when the light was right, had reddish strands running through it. The silken locks were currently tied back but looked long enough to go down to the middle of her back.

Dylan sat with her mouth open, struggling to form words. *What did she ask? What did I want? Yes, that was it! Uh you? No can't say that. Um...go for coffee. That's easy to say. Now say it! Come on Dylan! Speak!*

Emily Taylor looked over her dark brooding customer. She was tall, huge in fact, and looked well built. *A whole big hunk of good looking woman. Yes, you make my heart pound faster!* thought the waitress. Then she realized the woman was still wearing sunglasses. *I bet you know you're good looking as well. Oh well, my hunt for Princess Charming goes on!* When Emily asked for her order, the big woman seemed lost for words. Awkward, goofy even, and it made the young woman smile. *I'll try again.*

"Can I get you something to eat? To drink?"

Dylan's eyes fixed on the server's nametag and said, "Emily. Your name is Emily."

Oh my God! Why did I say that!

The girl giggled. "Yes, my name is Emily, now what can I get you?"

"Um ... coffee please. Black." *Oh well done, Dylan! No one would believe you spoke for a living!*

"Sure be right back."

Dylan watched the young woman's hips sway as she walked away. *This isn't normal. Women don't normally affect me like this. She's just...just perfect and she doesn't seem to recognize me.*

The coffee was put in front of her and Emily asked, "Are you sure you don't want anything to eat?"

"Um ... yeah I guess, I haven't really eaten since lunch time and it's quite late. I usually just zap a meal in the microwave when I get home; I can't cook you see, but it started to rain and I thought I'd duck in here." *I'm an idiot! Just tell her your life story why don't you?*

"Wow. You are funny. One minute you can barely string two words together and the next you're talking like a machine gun!" she laughed.

She thinks you're an idiot.

"I'm sorry; I guess I'm just not very good at talking to people."

"Well, let me see if I can help you. Since it's late, how about the breakfast plate? Omelet, bacon, hash browns?"

"Sounds delicious. Yeah, I'd love that. I don't know the last time I had that."

Emily found the woman sweet in a childlike way. "Coming up, won't be long."

Dylan dreamily watched Emily cook up her food quickly at the grill, her head propped up on her hand. Emily returned with an overfilled plate and placed it down in front of the dark woman.

"This looks amazing!"

"It's just plain home cooking."

"I don't get that, so it's amazing to me."

Emily looked down at the big woman devouring the huge plate of food with gusto.

She's so goofy but so intriguing. Seems like she needs looking after. "Can I ask you something, uh...?"

"Oh, sorry. Dylan. Dylan Morgan." She waited for the inevitable recognition and change in the petite server. People always changed when they knew who she was. But it never came.

"Okay Dylan. Why do you wear sunglasses indoors? Usually it means you're a gangster or extremely full of yourself."

"I'm neither, I hope. It's just in case I'm recognized, I'm a very private person."

"So, you're famous or something?" Emily joked.

"Yeah, I guess so." Dylan put her head down shyly.

So bashful and sweet, Emily thought.

"Sorry." Dylan lifted her glasses to the top of her head.

Oh my goodness! She's gorgeous! Handsome. Hmmm and those blue eyes!

"I'm sorry I don't recognize you. You on TV or something?"

Dylan was delighted she didn't know her. It was so refreshing. No expectations.

"Yeah, I have a TV show. An entertainment, comedy sort of thing. I've come from the studio just now."

Emily was astonished. She couldn't imagine this tall awkward woman fronting a TV

show. *Well, what do I know?!*

"Unless you're on a children's show, I wouldn't know you. That's all I get to watch these days."

Dylan's stomach dropped. *She has a kid, must be straight. Well of course she is, idiot! She wasn't gonna be interested in you anyway.* "You have a kid?"

Emily had no idea why she was being so open with this woman, but there was just something about her. "Yeah, a little girl. She's three. If I'm not working here, I'm taking care of her at home."

Dylan looked around the deserted dinner. There was only one guy propped up at the other end of the counter.

"You always work this late?"

"No, just my turn, that's all."

Dylan eyed the young woman carefully. She was sure there was a story there. She was well-spoken and looked very bright. *I wonder why she's working in a diner.* "Your husband look after her when you're here?"

Emily smiled shyly. "No. No husband. Never has been, never will be a man in my life. I have a very good sitter."

Dylan brightened at the statement. *Never will be a man in my life. I wonder.* "Well this was great. I'm stuffed."

"You sure can eat!"

"Well I use a lot of energy."

"I can see that." Emily looked over Dylan's bulky figure.

Dylan flashed a smile. She was amazed at how easy it was to talk to Emily and before they knew it, it was 12:30 a.m.

"Well, look at the time. I better get the place cleaned up."

"Oh I'm sorry, I'm keeping you back." The other customer had long departed.

"Don't worry, it was really nice talking to you. The end of my shift flew by."

Dylan hated to think she wouldn't see her again. She felt an ease with Emily, one she'd never felt with anyone else.

"Uh ... do you lock up by yourself? Is that safe?"

"Don't worry about me, Ms. Morgan. I've been doing this for four years."

"Dylan, please. You said your little girl was three? Did you work here when you were pregnant?"

Dylan saw a look of pain cross Emily's face. "Yes, you've got to pay the bills. I'll be cleaned up in no time and catch my bus."

"Of course, well I'll get out of your hair. Could I get you a cab?"

Dylan hated the thought of the young woman on buses and on the streets at one in the morning.

"I don't mean to be rude, but I do this all the time."

"I'm sorry if I offended you. Will you be working tomorrow?" asked the tall woman, already planning a visit.

"No, Sunday's my day off," she smiled.

"Mine too." Dylan thought quickly and said. "I don't suppose ... no, nothing. Sorry."

"Tell me, what were you going to say?"

"I ... wondered if I could take you out tomorrow ... maybe lunch or dinner or both or ..."

Emily's heart soared at the thought of seeing Dylan again, but then reality set in.

"I would have loved to, but I have my little girl and it's my only day to spend time with her. I'm sorry."

Dylan was stumped. Then before her brain engaged, her mouth spat out, "Bring your little girl. I'll take you both out. I'd love that."

Emily looked at her skeptically.

"Dylan, as much as I've loved meeting you, I don't know anything about you, and to bring my little girl, well you have to be really careful."

"But ... but look, go out into Times Square, you'll see my face and name up on a billboard. Um ... here's my studio pass. Look, if I were going to murder you or something, I hardly think I could keep it a secret. I know, look."

Emily smiled as the big woman fumbled with her phone. *Why is she trying so hard to*

take me out? She's famous, probably rich, unbelievably good looking. She could have anybody she wanted.

Dylan had looked up a clip of her show on YouTube and showed it to Emily. It was a clip of Dylan doing a sketch with Julia Roberts.

"Wow! That's you?" "Yeah. See. You know exactly who I am now. It's safe, I promise."

"Why do you want to take me out, you could have anyone? Do you feel sorry for me?"

"God, no. I'm not what people see on TV. I don't speak too well, I find talking and socializing torture but I came in here and just felt so at ease and relaxed talking to you. Come out with me. I'll take you both to the zoo, three year olds like the zoo don't they? And then I'll buy you lunch."

I know I shouldn't but I think I can trust her and I'd love to get to know you, Dylan Morgan.

"Yes, she'd love that. Alright then, I'll write down my address and phone number for you. I live in Maspeth, Queens, here's my address. What time should we be ready?"

Yes! Yes! I'm going on a date with Emily...? Shit I don't even know her last name...

"Is 10 o'clock alright?"

"That's fine. I look forward to it."

Dylan lifted her backpack onto her shoulder. "By the way, what's your last name?"

"Taylor. Emily Taylor."

Dylan flashed a smile that made Emily's heart skip a beat.

"Goodnight Emily Taylor." Then she headed out, leaving Emily a bit stunned.

"Well. That was some evening shift!"

Dylan jumped in a cab and made her way home to her condo on Fifth Avenue, in the heart of Greenwich Village. The building was pre-war with a 24-hour doorman, state of the art security and a full fitness center. When Dylan had been looking for something a

bit nicer than her old place, she didn't want to leave the Village. She had lived there ever since acting school and she loved to live in an area that was so gay friendly, with the bars, clubs and restaurants.

She was sitting on the sofa in her large living room. It was a very light room, cream walls and hardwood floors and some wonderful pieces of artwork. Dylan had no idea how to furnish a place like this and had gotten Lynn to hire a decorator.

Dylan picked up her phone and dialled the first number on her speed dial.

"Lynn, sorry to wake you, and please apologize to Tom but I need some help." Lynn and her husband Tom were used to odd phone call requests. That was part of a PA's job.

"It's 1:30 in the morning, Dylan. What do you need?"

"I'm going to take someone out tomorrow and I need to take flowers; I have no idea what to choose at a florist. Could you order some first thing in the morning and have them delivered to me?"

"You're taking someone out? You never go out."

"Well, I am tomorrow. Could you get some kind of toy delivered as well, one for a three year old girl?"

"Dylan what happened to you between leaving the studio and getting home?"

"I met someone. Someone I really like, and I'm taking her and her daughter to the zoo tomorrow."

"You need to be careful, Dylan; she could want anything from you."

"Lynn, she is the first person I've ever connected with and it happened in a few hours so I don't want to hear anymore."

"Alright Dylan. Calm down. Now what sort of toy? What does she like?"

"I don't know. What do little girls usually like? You know I know nothing about kids." In truth, Dylan was nervous about meeting the little girl, as she had never been around kids before. "Something that'll make her think I'm great."

"Oh! I'll come up with something, Dylan, I always do. Now the flowers, is it a roses situation? Or?"

"Roses are a bit too much for a first date, aren't they? I don't want to scare her off. Just a big, really nice, normal sort of bunch."

"That's a great help, Dylan. What time do you need them?"

"I'm picking her up at ten."

"Okay, I'll take care of it first thing."

"You're the best, Lynn. I'll send you and Tom somewhere nice next summer, I promise."

"You better. Goodnight Dylan."

"Good night." Dylan clapped her hands together and whistled as she made her way to bed.

Dylan was up and out early for her run this morning, she wanted to make sure she wouldn't be late for her date. She came to a halt outside her plush apartment building, bracing her arms on her legs as she tried to catch her breath.

"Morning, Ms. Morgan. Nice day," the friendly man said.

Dylan looked up and smiled. "Yeah Morris, I think today's gonna be a great day. Better get going." She ran off into the elevator with a spring in her step.

Morris looked at the tall woman quizzically. *I don't think I've ever seen that woman so cheerful.*

Dylan entered the large apartment and went straight for the kitchen to grab a bottle of water. She leaned against the counter and checked her phone, and with a smirk sent out a twitter message. 'Nothing better than an early run on a bright September New York morning! Happy Sunday my twitter buddies!' "My God, they'll think I've been hit on the head with a happy stick! Okay then; get showered, get dressed and get ready to go!"

"Come on Molly. We need to get up early this morning." Emily tried to rouse her little daughter for the third time. She got no response but a whine, so she lifted the dark haired girl out from her warm covers onto her lap. Molly immediately cuddled in tight to her

mother. "Sweetie, come on. We're going out. Don't you want to go out?"

"We go the park, Mama?" the girl said tiredly. The park was their usual Sunday outing. Molly and her mom treasured the time they spent together, as Emily worked so hard and couldn't spend as much time with her daughter as she wanted. Plus the park was free and money was tight.

"We're not going to the park today, sweetie. Mama met a new friend named Dylan, and she would like to take us to the zoo to see the animals. Would that be okay?"

Molly thought hard for a minute, she wasn't used to sharing her Mama.

"She's really nice, Molls."

"See penguns?"

"Penguins? Yes, we'll see them and lots of other animals. What do you think?"

"Otay Mama."

"Great! Let's get you dressed." *I hope you two hit it off Molls or this could be over before it's begun!*

Dylan agonized over what to wear but finally settled on jeans with a designer hooded, sleeveless black ski vest, hooded sweater and black boots. As she looked in the mirror, she worried as she always did. *What if her daughter doesn't like me? That would be a disaster. I mean how do you act around kids? What do you say to them? Shit.*

Dylan's little brother had only been a year younger so she had zero experience with kids. She heard her iPhone ring and grabbed it quickly seeing it was Lynn.

"Hey Lynn, what did you get me?"

"Good morning to you too, Dylan. You sound anxious. You okay?"

"Sure. I'm fine." She lied.

"Well if you say so. A rather large bouquet of flowers is winging its way to you as we speak; I hope she likes them. I did some intensive research with my granddaughter. Apparently, the girl toy of the moment is a Fijit Friend, and I got the DVD of Mr.

Popper's Penguins. I think that should please a three year old, although as I know from experience, you'll be praying for the Fijit's batteries to run down!"

"What would I do without you, Lynn?"

"Um ... wander around aimlessly looking for where you need to be?"

"Probably. Oh, I hear the doorbell, better go. Have a good day off, Lynn."

"You too. Be careful Dylan."

Lynn knew her employer and friend was an innocent in the love department. *I hope this woman doesn't hurt you, Dylan. I've never heard her so enthusiastic.*

"I will. See you Tuesday, Lynn. Bye."

Dylan ran to get the door and signed for the packages. The flowers looked great and the toy and DVD were gift wrapped in cellophane with a balloon attached.

"Lynn, you've outdone yourself! She's gotta love me!" She grabbed her keys and wallet and went to get her car.

"Let's get your shoes on, sweetie." Emily had just managed to get her little girl dressed.
"Okay, go and play until Dylan gets here."

"Otay, Mama." Emily watched as the little girl trotted off to play with her toys on the floor. Sometimes she thought her heart would burst when she looked at her little girl. She was all she had in the world, and even though they didn't have much, they had each other. She looked around their small two bedroom apartment. The main room was open plan with the small kitchen and dining area at one end of the room, at the other the couch and TV area. She wished she could provide Molly with more but she worked all the hours she could as it was.

Life wasn't supposed to be this hard, Molls, Emily thought sadly. A knock at the door interrupted her sad thoughts. Emily jumped up and opened the door to Dylan, who was obscured by gifts. "Dylan is that you?"

"Yeah, these packages are bigger than I thought. Could you take the flowers? They're for you. Uh ... I hope you like them."

Emily took the large bouquet from the big woman. "They're beautiful, Dylan. You shouldn't have."

Emily spied the other big package. "Uh ... I got this for Molly. Is it okay?" Dylan said a little shyly.

"Yes of course, but it's too much. Honestly."

"Well, I haven't had the chance to buy toys before."

Emily smiled. "Come in then. I'll pop these in the kitchen and introduce you to my little girl."

Dylan stood nervously looking over at Molly who hadn't spotted her yet. She was quite surprised. She had expected a little blonde girl, but Molly had dark brown hair that hung just below her shoulders.

Must take after her dad. Wonder who that was? She's really pretty and cute, too. Hope she likes me.

Emily came back from the kitchen area and went over to get her daughter.

"Molly, I'd like you to come and meet my new friend Dylan."

"Otay." Molly lifted her head and when she saw Dylan's face, her eyes went wide. She jumped up and came running over shouting. "Dien! Dien! Big bird! Where big bird?" the little was jumping up and down on her toes reaching up for Dylan.

Emily and Dylan looked at each other strangely. "That's odd, she seems to think she knows you and what's this big bird thing?"

"I have no idea what that's about."

"Up! Dien! Up!"

The big woman put down the gift and lifted Molly. "Hey Molly, nice to meet you."

Molly hugged Dylan and said. "Ou no bing big bird wiv ou?"

"Uh ... no, but I do have a friend for you."

"Dylan, why don't you two sit down and open up her gift and I'll get these flowers in water."

"Sure." Dylan carried Molly over to the couch. *At least she seems to like me. Whoever she thinks I am.* "Uh ... Molly I brought this little friend for you. Here let me help you open it

up."

"What's its name, Dien?"

"Well this one's called Logan, I think. Um ... it talks to you and dances. Here, I'll get it out of the package for you. And look, there's a movie too. Maybe we can watch it sometime?"

Dylan jumped up when Emily came over.

"You didn't have to do that Dylan, but that's really kind. Thank you."

"Mama! Popper's peguns!" the little girl squealed.

"That's great Molly, did you say thank you to Dylan for your presents?"

"Thank ou, Dien," taking hold of her new toy from the big woman.

"No problem, little Smurf."

Molly giggled. "Me no Smurf, Dien!"

"Sure you are! A cute little Smurflet." Dylan's heart fluttered as she looked up and took in Emily. She was dressed simply in blue jeans and a white low cut top, which showed off her ample cleavage nicely. "You look really nice, Emily." Dylan said shyly.

"You too." Emily said with a cheeky smile that made Dylan blush. *You look good enough to eat, Dylan Morgan, and just my type as well! Big, tall, hmm, yum!*

"So ... you want to head out? I've got my car out front."

"Sure let me get Molly's jacket on and we'll be ready. Come on, Molls!"

The three new friends came out of the building with Dylan still carrying Molly, and the little girl had her new Fijit friend under her arm. Emily was pleased at how quickly her daughter took to Dylan. They actually looked more related than she did, the same dark brown hair and sparkling blue eyes.

"This is me here." Dylan pointed to a top of the line, black Jeep Grand Cherokee.

"Wow, that's some car!"

"Is it okay if I strap her in?"

Emily smiled. "Sure, go ahead."

"Come on, little Smurf, let's get you strapped in." Once Molly was settled, Dylan went around and held the door open for her date.

A gentleman, too. Dylan, can you get any more perfect?

Dylan joined her in the front seat and watched as Emily looked around the luxury car, obviously impressed. It was big inside and had a full tan leather interior and every gadget under the sun on the dash.

"Wow! This is really nice. I've never been in anything like this."

"Thanks. I don't splurge on many things but I do like my toys." As Dylan pulled into the street, she said, "I was reading on the net that Central Park Zoo's got four new emperor penguins, polar bears and a rain forest zone. Sounds cool. I hope you both enjoy it," she said nervously.

"I'm sure we'll love it. We don't get many days out like this."

Emily found it hard to believe that the woman next to her was a famous TV personality. She was so unsure of herself, in such a sweet way.

"So Dylan, when's your show on. Now that Molly and I know you, we'll need to watch."

"It's on Fridays and Saturdays at 9. It's just a kind of entertainment show. You know, chat, comedy and then I compete against a celebrity in some challenges."

"You know something Dylan; you don't seem that sort of person. You know, the famous, outgoing type."

"I guess I'm not. When I'm at work I put on my game face and I suppose a different, well, more confident me comes out. But this is who I am, I'm not into all that showbiz stuff, I just want to do my work and have a quiet life."

"That's unusual in a celebrity, isn't it?"

"I guess. I think I disappoint people when they meet me in real life." Emily saw the look of sadness cross Dylan's face.

"I can't imagine why. I've only known you a day but you seem really sweet to me."

Dylan blushed again.

"Dien! We go see penguns?"

"We sure are, Smurf! And then we'll get lunch somewhere nice, okay?"

"Logan and me like dat."

"Cool. Won't be long now."

Little did Dylan know that she was being followed closely.

Well Dylan, this is new. I wonder who your new friends are? This could be the break I've been waiting for! Jimmy thought.

The trio soon found a place to park, and were making their way over to the zoo.

"Dien! Up! Lif me?"

"Sure thing Smurf, up you come." The little girl was whisked into Dylan's arms.

Emily frowned at her daughter. "Molly, Dylan can't carry you around everywhere. It's not fair." Molly pouted at her mother.

"Don't worry about it, Emily. Its fine, I like to carry my new little friend; besides isn't it safer up here?" Dylan had been worried about Emily's reaction if anybody came up to her, as they always did. *I hope my craziness doesn't scare you off, Emmie.*

Emily smiled and grasped Dylan's free hand lightly. "You're right. I'm always afraid she'll run off. She's so inquisitive, she sees something and she's off." *She looks so right up in your arms. I hope you are genuine, Dylan, because my little girl could get hurt.*

Dylan's heart pounded and her hand seemed to burn from Emily's touch. "Don't worry, Emmie, you've got an extra pair of eyes and arms to help you."

The blonde woman smirked at the sweet nickname and Dylan looked worried all of a sudden.

"Uh ... is it okay to call you that? It just came out?"

"Sure. No one's ever given me a nickname before. I like it."

"Great. You ready to see the penguins, Smurf?"

"Yeah! Penguns!"

Dylan marched up to the ticket booth. "Emmie, can you hold onto Molly for a minute?"

"Sure, listen let me ..."

"No. I asked you two out. This day is my treat, okay?"

Emily was a little uncomfortable. She'd been independent for so long it was hard to accept Dylan's generosity.

"Okay. Thank you. Come here, Molls."

Dylan turned and said, "Two adults and one child, please."

The zoo employee looked up and her eyes went wide. *Wow! That's Dylan Morgan! Oh wow! Oh wow! Right, stay calm, act cool.*

"Do ... do you want the ordinary tickets or the total experience? Which includes the Dora the Explorer show at the 4D theatre?"

Dylan turned to Molly. "Hey Smurf, you like Dora?"

"Yeah! Dora! Swiper! No swiping!"

Dylan looked at Emily with a confused look.

Emily laughed. "That's a yes, Dylan."

"Ok. Cool. We'll take everything, thanks." Dylan pulled out her wallet and paid.

"No problem, Ms. Morgan, hold on to these tickets and they'll get you in to the 4D theatre as well."

As Dylan was gathering up the stuff, the young woman looked at her nervously. "Ms. Morgan? Um ... do you think I could have an autograph?"

"Sure, you got some paper and a pen?"

Emily looked on, finding it amazing that the big goofy woman that she was getting to know was this famous celebrity that everyone was in awe of. She also felt the scrutiny of the ticket seller's gaze, she clearly wondered who this young woman with the famous

Dylan Morgan was.

"Have a good day, Ms. Morgan."

"Thanks. Right, Smurf, let's get going. Up you go." Dylan scooped the young girl up and then held out her hand to Emily. "You ready to see some penguins, Emmie?"

Emily smiled and took the big woman's hand. "You bet."

They made their way around the exhibits, both women sharing an easy, friendly companionship. Emily smiled as she watched her daughter up on Dylan's shoulders, allowing her to see into the polar bear exhibit better. *It's remarkable how well they get along, and me too. I feel like I've known her before. It's so easy being with her.*

The couple laughed and chatted their way around the zoo, each finding out a bit more about the other. Dylan was very attentive, always keeping hold of Molly and making sure Emily was alright at the same time by keeping her hand on the small of Emily's back, especially when members of the public approached Dylan for autographs. When they asked for pictures she made sure that they were not included in any pictures.

You're just too perfect, Dylan! Emily thought.

"Mama, look at the baby bear!"

"I see him, sweetie. He's very cute."

"Do you two want to grab lunch now? We could head over to see the Dora movie after?"

"Yeah me hungry, Mama," The little girl whined.

"Sure, I'm quite hungry myself." They found a place just outside the park that would suit Molly. Burgers, over stuffed sandwiches and ice cream. Molly dived into her burger and fries, giving the adults a chance to talk.

Dylan watched as Emily looked around nervously. They had been the center of attention in the restaurant since they arrived. "I'm sorry about all the attention we've had today. To me it's just my life, but I promise to keep Molly and you away from it as much as I can."

"You don't need to be sorry Dylan; it just takes some getting used to."

"I know, it was weird for me at first, too. As you've probably noticed, I'm quiet in my private life but I've had to get used to the intrusion and the press. I do love the public, it's why I love my show so much, they're often better guests than the stars we have on, so I try to be accessible."

Emily nodded in understanding. "Do you have any family, Dylan?" Emily saw a look of

pain on the big woman's face. "It's okay if you don't want to talk about it," she said quickly.

"No. It's fine, honestly. Yeah, Mom and Dad live in Brooklyn but we don't see each other. Uh ... I had a brother. He got into some difficulties with drinking and drugs, and ... well ... he died."

Emily immediately reached across the table, taking Dylan's hand. "I'm so sorry! I really shouldn't have asked."

"No, I'd like to tell you. When I made it big, he followed me here and tried to get into acting. He got a few small parts, but he didn't have any acting training. I didn't think it was the right choice for him. He hadn't shown any interest before. He wanted the fame without the hard work. People gave him a chance because he was my brother, I think, but he got fired from most jobs after a few days when they realized he wasn't up to it. It didn't stop him from getting invites to all the wrong sorts of parties because of who his sister was. He wanted to live the showbiz lifestyle, and he did. When he got into debt I bailed him out until I knew he using drugs. The drugs changed him so much. He was my baby brother, and we were so close growing up. He was gay too, so we always covered for each other with dad, before we came out to Mom and Dad. He became so angry when I refused to give him more money. I tried to get him into rehab but he just didn't want the help. One morning, I went over to check on him. I ... I found him dead; an overdose. I'll never forget that as long as I live. Mom and Dad blame me, said I brought this lifestyle into the family."

Emily felt sadness at what her new friend had gone through but also anger at the treatment by her parents. "It wasn't your fault, Dylan! I hope you don't believe them."

"Well, it's hard you know. I couldn't stop him but he was my baby brother."

"You told me you tried to get him help; if he wasn't willing to take it, what more could you do?"

"Nothing, I suppose. It hurts though. My father and I were always close. He was a taekwondo teacher, had his own Dojang ... uh training class," she said when Emily looked puzzled. "He trained me since I was little," Dylan explained.

"Wow, did you get belts and things, like karate?"

"Yeah. I'm a black belt 6th dan. I made a deal with my dad that I would concentrate on my training and try and make it to the Olympics, if I did I could get involved with comedy and acting like I'd always wanted to."

"And what happened?"

"I got there. Won a gold medal," Dylan said shyly.

"That's amazing! I've never met an Olympian before." *Dylan Morgan, you are some woman!*

"I am proud of it and I love the sport. I've kept it up faithfully through acting school and now. I even went into some other disciplines. Kickboxing and mixed martial arts. I train every Monday. It is a big part of my life and it allows me to do most of the stuff I do on the show, but I love entertaining. I hoped he would be proud of me for the career I've built, but he never was. He thinks I wasted my talent."

Emily didn't know what to say to help the hurt she knew Dylan was feeling, so she simply squeezed her hand tight in support.

I can't believe I'm telling her this. You trust her, that's why. I never trust anyone. You are special, Emily Taylor, thought Dylan. "I've never told anyone all this. You're a good listener. Still, that's enough about me. You okay, Smurf? You want an ice cream sundae with extra sprinkles?"

"Yeah! Spwinkles!"

"What about you, Emmie?"

"Oh yes, I love extra sprinkles!" Emily said enthusiastically.

"Great!" Dylan signaled the waiter.

Molly was asleep in the back seat of the Jeep, cuddling a stuffed penguin that Dylan had bought her, as well as her fijiit friend.

Dylan pulled up in front of Emily's building. They had seen every animal and every exhibit in the zoo, it seemed. Emily laughed at Dylan's antics of entertaining her little girl.

"That was a wonderful day, Dylan, thank you. I can't remember when we've had as much fun or laughed as much. You spoiled Molly too much though, buying her the penguin as well."

"I had so much fun, Emmie, I never get to have days out like that. To be honest, I don't really know too many people that I could do things like that with.

It's nice to have a friend." Dylan looked into Emily's eyes, the electricity between them crackling.

They were becoming lost in each other. "Yes, it's nice to have a friend."

Dylan took her hand and said. "Emmie, I'd like to see you again. Uh ... I think you can guess I like you, I mean really like you."

Emily thought for a second. "Dylan. I really like you too, and I would like to explore our friendship more but I have to be careful. I have Molly to think about."

"You don't think I would hurt ..."

"No I don't think that, but Dylan I'm a single mother who works as a waitress. Why would someone like me be interesting to you? Do you feel sorry for us? Are we some sort of project to you?"

Dylan looked very serious all of a sudden. "Have I given you that impression?"

Emily felt bad she had even suggested it. "No ... It's just, I have to be careful. You must understand. I've been let down badly before," Emily admitted sadly.

Dylan gripped Emily's hand a little tighter. "Emmie, when I first laid eyes on you yesterday, I was lost in you. I have never met anyone more beautiful, both inside and out. When I talked to you, I felt a connection. A connection I've never felt with any other woman. I was able to talk to you, just talk without wondering what I would say next. Do you know how rare that is for me? You didn't judge me for who I am or what I do for a living, why would I do that to you? Today, walking around the park with you and Molly, it just felt so natural. I can't describe it any other way. Do you understand?"

Emily nodded in agreement, smiling and feeling reassured at Dylan's explanation.

"Yes, I understand, thank you for explaining. I'm sorry. I had to ask."

"I know. I will never be anything but honest with you. You have my word. So when can I see you two again?" *Please say soon!* thought the TV star.

"I'm working days this week, so it would need to be in the evening and I'd need to bring Molly. I couldn't leave her with the sitter all day and night."

"Don't worry, I love spending time with her, too. What about tomorrow or Tuesday? Is that too soon? Things get kinda crazy during the week, getting ready for the show. I could take you both out to dinner; um ... what else do kids like doing?"

"Listen, you took us out today and I can't manage anything like that, so why don't you

come over for dinner tomorrow night. If there's one thing I can do, it's cook. We could watch the movie you brought Molls then, when she goes to bed we can have some time to talk."

Dylan's face was beaming. Her heart soared at the thought of spending time with her two new favorite girls. "Great! What time?"

"6 o'clock?"

"I'll be there. I'll carry little Smurf upstairs for you."

"Thanks, she's getting too heavy for me these days!"

Dylan sat at her kitchen table drinking her protein shake and watching the morning news before she left for the gym. She trained every Monday with a couple of guys she met when learning mixed martial arts. Her phone came alive and the sounds of Lady Gaga's 'Born This Way' rang out.

"Hey Lynn. What's up?"

"I'm sorry to bother you Dylan, I know you're heading for the gym."

"It's okay. I'm not going for another half hour."

"Good. How did your date go?"

"It was fantastic! Emily's a great girl and her daughter is just a little cutie pie. She's asked me to dinner tonight, as well."

"Wow Dylan. A second date? That's virtually unheard of." *I don't think I've ever heard you so enthusiastic*, thought Lynn. She had set the big woman up with countless dates for different events and they were never heard of again.

"She's a special person. I hope I have lots more dates. In fact, I was going to ask, can you find some things I could take them to that are kid friendly? Molly is with a babysitter all day; Emily can't really leave her at night too."

Lynn was a little nervous about bringing this up when her friend was so happy but it was her job. "Sure. I'll do that. Um. Are you being careful? I mean you don't really know this woman too well and um ... people in your position have to keep their guard up. There

could be ulterior motives."

Dylan understood Lynn's worry, but knew Emily was genuine. "Lynn, she is an honest woman, she doesn't care about all the fame and stuff. I had to convince her of my intentions; she has a daughter to consider."

"I'm sorry. It's my job to worry about you."

"I know Lynn, and I thank you for it, but I'm fine."

"Alright. I'm calling because first thing this morning I got a message from a journalist asking for a comment about the rumors that you are in a relationship with a single mother."

"How did they find out? I've only had one date?"

"Well, you were in a whole park full of people yesterday, I'm sure your old buddy Jimmy got a tip off or was keeping tabs on you himself. I think you need to talk to Emily about what to expect. They will find out who she is eventually and she will need to deal with the press approaching her, whether you pursue this relationship or not."

Dylan sighed. "Yes. You're right. I'll talk to her tonight. I hope this isn't all too much for her."

On the contrary, my friend, I'll gauge this young woman's intentions by her reaction. We'll see if she is simply interested in your money and fame, or just you. If you aren't genuine, Miss Taylor, you won't know what's hit you.

"So it's a 'No Comment' to any enquiries?"

"Yeah. Head them off as much as you can. Look, I better get to the gym. The guys will be waiting. See you tomorrow at the studio, Lynn."

"Okay Dylan, have a good day."

"Thanks. You too."

Dylan grabbed her bag and headed to the gym.

Emily dropped Molly with her sitter, Mrs. Hill, and made her way to work. She walked in

the diner to see her supervisor Maggie and the part time girl Jane working behind the counter.

"Morning girls. How's the breakfast rush been?" "Quiet. Any more mornings like this and Mr. Jarvis will start asking questions."

"I'll just be a minute, Maggie." Emily went to the back room and changed into her apron. *I pray to God this place picks up. I can't lose this job!* Tom Jarvis was the owner of the diner and profits had been going down steadily over the last few months. The economy was in a nosedive all around the world, and money was tight for everyone.

Emily came out front and had no idea she was being watched from a booth in the corner.

"Jimmy? Yeah, I found out where she works. A little diner just off Times Square. First name's Emily," the man said into his cell phone.

"Great work. There's a story here, I just know it. If nothing else, the magazines will lap up a fairytale story. 'Famous star sweeps waitress off her feet.' We need to find out more. Give me the name of the place."

"It's called Jimmy's Diner and it's really quiet. It doesn't look like it's doing too well."

"Excellent, maybe the owner will cooperate with a little incentive. I'll get on it."

"You sending a camera over?"

"No, I want her story before I let anyone know about this. Thanks Sam."

I'm gonna make some bucks off you at last, Dylan Morgan.

Previously:

"Listen, you took us out today and I can't manage anything like that, so why don't you come over for dinner tomorrow night. If there's one thing I can do, it's cook. We could watch the movie you brought Molls then, when she goes to bed, we can have some time to talk."

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Episode 2

Dylan walked into the downtown gym. Her buddies Mark and Patrick rented the space out every Monday to train. Dylan met them when she started taking mixed martial arts during acting school. They hit it off and have trained together ever since. Mark Lawson and Patrick Kenny worked for the New York police department.

"Here she comes! Late as usual." They already had all the equipment set up.

"Give me a break, guys! Have I ever been late before? I had stuff to do, but I'm ready so let's get going. I have a date tonight and I can't be late finishing." Dylan slung her bag on a seat to the side of the room, having come dressed and prepared.

"A date? Shit! That's unheard of Morgan! She has met you, right?" Her two friends laughed.

"Ha! Ha! Laugh it up! I'll just kick your asses some more in the ring!" Both men knew this was not an idle threat.

Patrick walked up and clapped Dylan on the back. "Hey! We're just yanking your chain, buddy. I'm glad you've met someone. I hope we'll get to meet her."

"Thanks guys. You'd love her. I hope after tonight she won't be too scared off and wants to see me again."

"Have more confidence in yourself, Dylan. You're a good person, and any woman would be lucky to have you," Mark said.

"Thanks guys, that means a lot. Let's get going so I can kick your butts!"

The large hall had a ring over in the corner and various pieces of exercise equipment, which they used.

Dylan, Mark and Patrick were ready to start. They had donned weighted vests in order to challenge their muscles even further.

The training was hard and gruelling. The friends hit the machines in a circuit, each round lasting five minutes. The circuit was attacked at a relentless pace, not allowing the participants a moment to rest. It started with a run on the treadmill before moving on to the weight machines. The weight machines were not taken at a normal pace, each was performed with power and pace, and each movement was explosive.

By the time the circuits were finished, the friends were drenched in sweat and exhausted, but had to then go to the ring and spar.

This training gave Dylan the powerful, muscular body she needed for her work and also gave her a way to relieve the stress and tension her life brought her.

"Thanks for the workout, guys. I better run." Dylan grabbed her bag, opting to grab a shower at home.

"Sure buddy. See you next week!" Mark waved as she headed out the door.

"Bye Dylan. Have a great date," Patrick added with a smile.

"I'll try. Bye!"

Emily was in the kitchen finishing off her dinner preparations. She had rushed home from work, picking up Molly and some groceries on the way.

Remembering that Dylan said she loved home cooking, Emily decided on meatloaf, mashed potatoes and veggies.

"I hope this is okay for her," Emily said to herself.

To save time, she brought home an apple pie she made at the diner for dessert.

Emily looked over to the couch where her little girl was sitting watching a DVD cuddled into the Fijit and penguin toys Dylan had bought her. She was filled with a wave of love every time she looked at the special little girl.

"Molly? You okay, sweetie?"

"Yeah Mama."

Emily put the potatoes on the stove to boil and checked on the meat loaf.

Mm! Looks good!

"Mama! Mama! Dien! On TV! Look!" Molly jumped up and down on the couch excitedly.

"Molls, Dylan isn't here yet," Emily said as she stirred the pot.

"No Mama! Look! Here pease!"

Emily walked over towards the TV and couldn't believe her eyes. There was Dylan, in living color, goofing around with Big Bird on Molly's Sesame Street DVD.

"Wow! This must have been why you knew Dylan and got along so well!"

"Dien bring Big Bird, Mama?" Molly asked sweetly.

"I don't think she can bring him tonight sweetie, but we'll ask her all about him when she gets here okay?"

Molly nodded and Emily sat with her, transfixed by Dylan on the screen. It was strange; she was the same goofy Dylan but a lot more confident and slick in front of the camera. At the moment she was showing Big Bird how to juggle. Mother and daughter sat laughing at their new friend's antics.

"Dien funny!"

"She sure is!" *She is also one tall gorgeous woman!*

Emily's lusty thoughts were interrupted by a knock at the door.

Molly rushed to the door before her mom could get there. "Slow down, sweetie! Let Mama check who it is first."

This wasn't the best part of town or the best building so she always put the chain on and checked before opening the door. She peeped through the small gap and saw the dark hair and piercing blue eyes that made her stomach flip.

Emily opened the door with a smile. "Hi. Come on in."

"Dien! Dien!" Molly jumped up and down pulling on the tall woman's legs.

"Hey, little Smurf!"

"Sweetie let Dylan get in okay?"

Dylan walked over to the kitchen table and put down her bags, delighted at her warm welcome.

Morgan you need to do everything possible to keep these two girls in your life. Imagine coming home to that welcome everyday!

"Alright Smurf, up you come!" She said scooping the girl up in the air.

Molly giggled as she was tickled mercilessly then, as Molly gave her a hug, she turned to Emily and asked, "How was your day?"

"Okay. Work was quiet but I was glad I had tonight to look forward to." The two adults shared a warm smile.

"Yeah, me too," she said, putting Molly down and reaching into her bags.

"How was your training?"

"Oh you know, tough. My training buddies put me through it. I didn't know what I should bring so I bought two different kinds of ice cream and toppings, and movie popcorn. You can't watch a movie without popcorn. I thought my little Smurf friend would like that, and I brought some white wine. Is that okay?"

"Yeah that's great, were having meatloaf. I hope you like it. You said that you never get home cooked meals."

"Oh, that would be amazing; I can't tell you when I had that last." The big woman was

beaming. Emily found her to be so open and genuine, not how she imagined a TV star.

"Sweetie, why don't you go and finish watching your DVD and Dylan will come and sit with you in a minute, okay?"

"Otay Mama." The little girl trotted off.

The two women looked at each other for a moment then Dylan bent over and kissed Emily on the cheek. "Hi. I didn't get a chance to say that."

"Yeah, I know. Molly kind of takes over when you're around."

"Don't worry. I think she's adorable."

"Oh, I worked out the Big Bird thing and why Molly thought she knew you. She was watching her Sesame Street DVD and up you pop, teaching Big Bird how to juggle."

Dylan laughed, suddenly remembering her day spent on Sesame Street.

"Of course! How could I forget? I did that last year sometime."

"Well I'll warn you, she thinks you're best buddies with Big Bird and thought you'd be able to bring him," Emily said smiling.

Dylan laughed and said, "Well I'll try my best to get out of that one." "It was strange seeing you on TV."

"Strange good? Or strange bad?" Dylan asked, unsure what answer she would get.

"Strange good. You're still you but you're somehow more confident on TV."

"Yeah I know. I'm two different people. I wait in the wings to go on and I literally feel sick, then as soon as I'm announced, it's as if another part of me kicks in and takes over, but I'm always terrified that person won't come. This person, the person you know, is me. The real me. Is that okay with you?" she said suddenly unsure of herself.

"Of course it's okay, you goof! It's this Dylan I really like, went out with yesterday and invited to dinner. Now why don't you go and sit with Molly while I finish dinner."

"Sure. Give me a shout if you need anything."

Emily watched Dylan walk over to her excited little girl and thought, *I could fall for you so easily, Dylan.*

Who I'm I kidding? I'm already falling, and that is so dangerous.

Dinner was a great success. The two adults and Molly sat at the kitchen table talking about their day and a million other subjects. Dylan was constantly surprised at how easy conversation with the small blonde was.

Emily had spent her time laughing at Dylan's attempts to entertain Molly. She was so good with her, telling jokes and making funny faces. At the moment the pair were piling toppings on their bowls of ice cream.

"Molly, not too much candy on there."

"Oh come on, Emmie! You can't have ice cream without sauce, sprinkles and M&M's. It's the law."

"Yeah Mama. Da law!" Molly said seriously.

Dylan gave Emily a toothy grin. "See. I told you."

Emily shook her head. "I see I'm outvoted. Well, I'll tell you what. You can put her to bed then, because she'll be as high as a kite with all that sugar."

"Sure. No problem. You'll go to sleep, won't you little Smurf?" Dylan ruffled Molly's hair.

"After story?"

"Of course, everyone needs a story before bed."

Emily's heart warmed at the growing bond between the big woman and her daughter.

"You're really good with her you know. Have you been around kids before?"

"Never. I guess it just comes naturally with you guys," Dylan said shyly then lifted her eyes to meet Emily's.

The two women seemed happy to simply gaze into each other's eyes.

Emily broke her gaze and shook her head. "We better get you cleaned up Molls, and then we'll watch your DVD."

"I'll get the dishes, Emmie, while you get Molly sorted." The tall woman stood, starting to gather the dishes.

"Thanks."

The two women worked easily together, getting all the chores finished, and took their seats on the couch for the movie. Molly insisted on sitting on Dylan's lap so that left the two adults sitting close, side by side.

The three laughed their way through the film, Molly munching away on the popcorn.

"Molls, I think that's enough sweetie. It'll be bedtime right after the video."

"Otay Mama." Molly yawned and lay back sleepily against the big woman's chest.

"It's been an exciting night for her. Thank you for spending time with us."

Dylan had been itching to touch Emily since the film started and took this opportunity. She reached and held the blonde's hand and said, "It's been my pleasure. I don't know when I've had so much fun."

"Come on! You must go to showbiz parties, premieres and things like that. I don't think dinner and a kid movie is fun compared to that."

"I go to as little as possible. I hate all that false fawning and showbiz crap. Celebrities pretending you're friends when they don't even know you. I have to go to some things for PR and stuff, Lynn only signs me up for as little as she can get away with. I hate being in the spotlight when I'm not on my show, I've told you what I'm like. I trip over my words and don't know what to say. I'd rather be doing something fun with Molly and you any day of the week."

Emily smiled. "You're really sweet, you know that?" Emily noticed her new friend blush.

"Sweet? Me? Never."

Dylan squeezed Emily's hand, enjoying the warm connection between them.

Sometime later Emily looked down to see her daughter sleeping in Dylan's arms.

"I better get this little Smurf to bed."

"I'll carry her in for you, if you want?"

"That would be great. She's so heavy now."

Dylan stood up with the girl in her arms and made her way to her room. She laid her down on the bed for Emily.

"I guess I'll need to read that story another night?" she said hopefully, suggesting further

nights together.

Emily smiled happily, knowing exactly what Dylan was asking. "Yes, we'd like that very much."

Dylan beamed. "Great. Um ... I'll wait in there for you then."

"Thanks, I won't be long."

Dylan refilled their glasses with wine and sat back checking her email and twitter.

She smiled to herself then typed out, *Loving Mr. Popper's Penguins. Movie night and popcorn with new friends. Nothing better!*

"Hi. She's all tucked in," said Emily, taking up her place on the couch.

"Sorry, I was just checking my email and twitter." Dylan tried to put her phone away quickly.

"Is that an iPhone?"

"Yeah, want to look at it?"

"Yes, I've never seen one up close." Dylan handed it over and began to show her a few different apps.

"I'm kind of a geek when it comes to stuff like this. It's the one thing I splurge on," said Dylan.

"Show me Twitter. I always think it sounds strange wanting to let people know what you're having for dinner or where you're going."

"Well, I find it a good way to stay in touch with my fans and to highlight some causes that mean a lot to me but also, my career wouldn't be anywhere without electronic media like this.

When I was doing my shows in the Village, people started putting videos of my stunts up on YouTube and I got a good following going. I started to do my own videos and used Facebook and Twitter to let people know about my stunts. An executive from the network saw the videos and came to my show one night to offer me work, so I couldn't

have done it without all my followers. Look, I tweeted this while you were putting Molls to bed."

Emily read it and gazed lovingly at Dylan. "That is so sweet. I'm glad you enjoyed it. So how many followers do you have?"

Dylan looked a little embarrassed and mumbled, "Um ... about two and half million."

Emily choked on her wine and struggled for breath.

"Hey, it's not that bad is it?"

"No. Sorry. I just had no idea you were that famous."

"Oh that's nothing, Ellen has over 7 million! I'm a long way behind that."

"Well, Ellen is the queen of chat," Emily said with a smirk.

"She is that. So do you have a cell phone?"

"No, they're too expensive to keep up."

"They're good for safety though, like for when you're leaving the diner at night."

"I have a million things I need to get for Molls, that's just not a priority for me." Emily hoped the subject would be closed.

Dylan sensed that money was a touchy subject with the young woman, so she decided to drop it.

"Thanks for help with Molly. It was so much easier with two."

Dylan turned in her seat, putting her arm along the back of the couch to get closer to Emily, and took her hand again.

"Have you always been on your own with her?"

Emily looked unsure. *How much should I tell?* But as she examined Dylan's open face, she knew she could trust her.

"I've always been on my own but it wasn't supposed to be that way." "You don't have to tell me if you don't want to." Dylan stroked Emily's hand with her thumb.

"I do. If we're going to go forward, you need to know because what happened makes it really hard for me to trust. That is if you want to keep seeing each other."

Dylan lifted her free hand and stroked the side of Emily's face. "Of course I do. Haven't I shown you that? I've never met anyone like you before, I felt connected the second I lifted my head in that diner and saw your beautiful green eyes."

Emily felt her cheeks go red, not used to receiving compliments.

"Thank you. I'll try my best to explain. Um ... I was in my last year of college studying English Literature. I'd been with Toni for just over a year and we'd been living together for about six months. She was a little older than me and worked as a restaurant manager. I thought I was so in love but I realize now that I was afraid of being alone; I didn't have anyone else. My mom and dad kicked me out when I told them I was gay."

Dylan took Emily's hand. "I'm sorry."

Emily took a breath as the pain of the past came flooding back.

"Mom is a devout Catholic, she just couldn't accept it. So when I met Toni I thought I had someone to care for and rely on. She worked long hours and late nights, but they got later and later. Sometimes she wouldn't come home until the next day. She would say there was some problem at the restaurant and that she'd slept in her office. I believed this at first, but it happened more and more and she became so distant. Her dad had a cabin up in the Catskills; She'd go hunting with him a few times a year but all of a sudden she was spending nearly every weekend up there, saying she was helping him with renovations. I knew deep down this wasn't true; I knew she was cheating. One day I was doing the laundry and found her cell phone in her jeans. I know I shouldn't have, but I was going crazy not knowing."

Dylan's heart was breaking as she watched the tears fall down Emily's face as she recounted her story. She also felt something else, something new, an anger that was boiling up in her stomach making her want to hunt down this Toni and kick her ass.

"Take your time, Emmie." Dylan stroked Emily's cheek.

"I ... I found messages and pictures from all sorts of women on it. My chest felt like it was going to explode and I felt panicked. The one person I had in the world had broken my heart. I confronted her when she came in, she broke down and admitted to cheating with more than one woman. Who knows how many there were. She blamed her long hours and my studying, said by the time she got home I would be fast asleep and that I had no time for her. I told her to leave and she did, but came back two days later begging me to take her back. Toni was a manipulative person and knew that my biggest wish was to settle down and have kids.

She told me if I would take her back she would support me while I left college and had a baby with her. She said I could go back and finish my degree when the baby was older. I

was a fool I know, but my heart had been broken in pieces and I felt like nothing would be better than to have something to call my own, and a baby wouldn't hurt or leave me, so I agreed.

I should have known what was coming when she had no interest in picking the donor or going for doctor's appointments. Toni had blonde hair like me, and I don't know why but I wanted a dark haired donor. I think deep down I knew Toni wouldn't be with me long term and I didn't want my baby to remind me of her.

I chose the donor and got inseminated all by myself. I got pregnant the first time, I was lucky. When I told Toni, she said she was happy but I didn't think so. Even though she was on her best behavior, coming home on time every night and not going out, I could tell she was getting frustrated, angry and resentful."

"Did she hurt you?" Dylan growled.

Emily looked down feeling ashamed. "She had a bad temper. I walked on eggshells around her, never knowing when she would blow up. The first time she ever hit me, she promised she would get help, talk to someone about her anger problems but she never did.

We argued more and more, especially when I started to show. I think she felt trapped. One night she came home from work late and drunk, we had a huge argument. She grabbed me by the arms and threw me on our bed. I was terrified. Toni had hit me before and she'd been really rough and forceful with sex but not since I got pregnant. I was so scared she was going to hurt my baby, I tried to get away but she was too strong." Emily took a deep breath. She was determined to make Dylan understand.

"Before she managed to ... you know, she passed out on top of me. She was all apologies the next morning, but when she saw the bruises on my arms and breasts she got scared. I don't think she ever thought things could get that bad. She just ran out of the apartment. I don't know if she came back, I packed a bag and got out of there as quick as I could. I managed to get this place, and we've been here ever since."

Dylan jumped up, needing to move around as her anger was becoming too much to bear.

"Emmie, if I ever meet that no good bitch, I'll kick her from one end of New York to the other." She clenched and unclenched her fists.

"Dylan. Come and sit back down. I was as much to blame."

The TV star sat and took Emily's hand between her two larger ones.

"Don't say that Emmie. Nothing can excuse hurting you, your body or your heart. I can't imagine ever doing that to you or leaving you with little Smurf in there."

"Dylan, I was angry and heartbroken. Angry with the financial situation she left me in, things were meant to be more comfortable for Molly and they haven't been because I'm on my own, but looking back I can see we weren't meant to be.

She felt trapped, her guilt because of the cheating and the violence made her give me promises she just couldn't keep. She wasn't ready for the commitment, and I was deluded and naive to think that a baby could fix things. I was selfish to grab at the opportunity to have the one thing I always wanted. A family. It ended up that it was just Molly and me in the family, but even though it's been hard bringing her up alone, it's been worth every second. She's my life."

"She's a great girl. I think you're way too understanding though. She was bigger and stronger than you, and to use that against you is unforgivable."

"I didn't say I forgave her, I said I understand why it happened. She had a lot of problems, and I count myself lucky that I can never really understand how someone can leave their pregnant partner or raise their hands in violence against the woman they claim to love. And of course it was a different time, there was no same sex marriage in New York then, so I had no protection financially.

We did have a commitment ceremony; a friend who was a minister officiated for us. Toni was drunk the whole day, treated it like a party.

Since then, people have asked me out but I never said yes until I met you. Like you said, I felt connected somehow. But I need you to understand after what I've told you, that it's taken a lot to accept your friendship and allow you into my life and Molly's. If I'm going to continue to get to know you, I think you have to understand why I'm so big on trust, loyalty and fidelity. I've never told anyone this before. I never had many friends, they were mostly Toni's friends and they melted away after we split up."

Dylan lifted Emily's hand to her lips and kissed it tenderly.

"Emmie, I'm so sorry you had to go through that. Thank you for giving me your trust and telling me everything. I really want to see where this could take us, if you'll let me."

I know you're not ready but I will treasure you forever, thought Dylan.

"I'd like that." Emily smiled and her stomach flipped as she watched Dylan edge closer, her lips parting slightly. As she looked into Emily's eyes, she sensed no rejection and closed the distance between them, their lips finally coming together softly. Feeling no resistance Dylan deepened the kiss, bringing her hands up to tenderly cup Emily's face and slipping her tongue into Emily's welcoming mouth. When their tongues met, Emily moaned into Dylan's mouth. Not wanting to push the blonde too far, Dylan pulled back and rested her head against Emily's.

"Wow! That was ..."

"Amazing!" replied Emily, breathlessly.

"Yeah. Amazing. I've never had a kiss like that before. I want to do that a lot with you."

"Me too."

Reluctantly, Dylan pulled back knowing that she had to let Emily know what she was in for.

"Emmie, there's one thing I need to talk to you about before we get any deeper into this. I know it's pretty early in our relationship but because of who I am, I need to talk about it."

Emily looked puzzled. "Okay, you can say anything to me, you know that. Why don't I make us some coffee and we can talk some more."

Emily returned to the couch with two cups of coffee. "Okay. Go ahead."

"Well, the press kind of follow what I do. I seem to be a fascination because I've never had a long-term relationship and I'm not famous for being a player or anything, so they're always trying to get some dirt on me. The only dates I go on now are just companions Lynn sets me up with for events. The network totally accept me being out and everything, but I don't give the magazines and newspapers anything to talk about going to events by myself, so I went with actresses or models who wanted a bit of publicity on my arm. You might hear stories about me, sometimes my date would feed a journalist some story about how there was more going on between us than there actually was to boost their profile but there never was. I just felt so awkward around women, until you."

Emily blushed. "So I guess you don't trust very easy either."

"I guess not, but I'm worried about you. People will find out about us eventually and I just wanted to warn you. Newspaper people will try and get stories from you, they'll offer you money. I just want you to know what you're getting into. I'll protect you and Molly as much as I can, even if you don't want to take the relationship any further. I give you my promise that I will never leave you high and dry, no matter what happens between us, but I hope we'll always remain friends."

Dylan readied herself for rejection.

Emily felt a little stunned. "I had no idea. You have to live like this with no one to share it with?"

"You're willing to keep seeing me?" The big woman sounded surprised.

"It sounds like you've been lonely, Dylan. Just like me. I hope Molly and I can have fun with you and get to know you much better."

Dylan wrapped the petite woman in a big hug. "Thank you for giving me a chance. I like you so much, Emmie. What we have so far is unheard of for me and I can't wait for more time with you, too."

Emily relaxed in Dylan's muscular arms. *She feels so good; it feels safe in her arms,* thought Emily.

"Are you working Saturday night?" Dylan asked hopefully.

"No, just during the day."

"Great, would you and Molls like to come and watch the show on Saturday night? I know it's a little late for Molly but if it gets too much, you could take her back to my dressing room to sleep on the couch."

Emily beamed. "Yes, we'd love to. I'll need to watch you on TV Friday night; I'll feel like I'm still seeing you then."

"Well how about this, after the Saturday show why don't you two come back to my place to stay? In the spare room of course, I have plenty of room for you both. That way we can go out on our Sunday off together."

"Molly would love that, she's never had a sleepover before. I would love it, too."

"Great! No one's stayed with me, either. I'll send a studio car for you on Saturday so pack a bag for yourself and the Smurf." Emily nodded and smiled while Dylan noticed the time.

"Woah! It's one in the morning. I better head home, I've got rehearsals tomorrow."

Emily got up and got her jacket, and remembering the wine asked, "You didn't drive, did you?"

"Oh no, I'm going to grab a cab. I'll give you a call tomorrow, when are you working?"

"Another late shift. Five till one."

"Okay, I'll call in the afternoon alright?"

"Can't wait."

They shared a few more heated kisses before Dylan headed down to grab a cab with a spring in her step.

Emily stood behind the door, her skin hot and her lips tingling from Dylan's kisses.

"Wow! What a difference a few days can make. I think my life is about to get a little more interesting!"

The next morning Dylan pulled her Jeep into the studio parking lot at 8 am. She was dressed casually in her favorite combat cargo shorts and grey hooded sweatshirt. Dylan was naturally warm blooded and even in cool September hated to wear too many clothes, especially in the hot studio.

She met Lynn as they entered the building and they made their way to Dylan's office.

"Morning Lynn, how was your weekend?"

"Just fine, how was last night?"

"Amazing! And yes I did talk to her about the press and she didn't run a mile, thankfully."

Dylan put her laptop bag down on the desk and took a seat.

"And you really trust this girl, Dylan?"

Dylan sighed. "Yes, I really do. She's the only woman I've been able to be myself with. She's beautiful, kind and the most loving woman with her daughter."

Lynn waved her hands in surrender. "Okay! Okay! I won't say another word, but you know it's not only my job to worry, I care about you."

"I know and I appreciate it. So what's the time table?"

"You meet with your writers at nine to finalize the scripts. Katie Phillips comes in at 11, then after an hours instruction with the archery instructor, you break for lunch. The rest of the afternoon you have for rehearsals."

"That's fine. Could you get my protein shake and a cream cheese bagel?"

"Sure thing. You want coffee?"

"Yeah. Um ... before I forget I need you to organize a few things for me. Emily and her daughter are coming to watch the show go out on Saturday. I want a car to pick them up and I need full backstage passes. I would appreciate it if you would look after them and make sure they have everything they need. They can come and go as they please and have full access to my dressing room. Emily might need to put Molly down to sleep on the couch."

"Sure, I'll take care of them personally. Anything else?"

"Oh, can you get me a stuffed Big Bird? Molly thinks I know him because I was in that Sesame Street DVD."

Lynn laughed. "Okay, what about some pillows and blankets in case she needs to sleep?"

"Yeah good idea, and can you make sure there's food and drinks in my dressing room. Some kid food and candy. You know."

"Sure. If you think of anything else, let me know. I'll just go get your breakfast."

"Thanks Lynn. You're a treasure."

"Oh I know, Dylan Morgan!"

"Mr. Jarvis, I will get the information I want. It just depends on who from. A thousand dollars is a lot of money and I know times are hard, the diner's not pulling in much is it?"

Jimmy sat in his office on the phone. He had managed to get a number for Tom Jarvis, the owner of the diner where Emily worked.

"Mr. Daniels, it's not that easy. She's been a good worker. I just have a small staff and they've been loyal to me."

"Jarvis, do you think she'll really care? She's bagged herself a rich TV star. How long do you think she would stay anyway? And when the story breaks think of all the extra business. People will be lining up to get a glimpse of Dylan Morgan's lover. Be smart. Full name and social security number."

Jimmy heard Tom Jarvis let out a breath at the other end of the line. "Okay."

"That wasn't so hard was it?" Jimmy smiled. *Gotcha!*

Dylan and Lynn were walking back from the writer's room, en route to her office to meet the actress Katie Phillips.

They walked in and Dylan went straight over to introduce herself.

"Hey, pleased to meet you. It's great to have you with us."

Katie Phillips stood up to her full height of 5-foot-8 and took Dylan's hand softly.

Dylan had long since dispensed with her hooded sweater and was now dressed only in her sleeveless black t-shirt. She felt devoured as the blonde actress ran her eyes hungrily up and down her tall solid body.

"I'm delighted to meet you at last. I've admired your work for a long time," she smoldered.

Dylan nervously pulled her hand away from Katie.

"That's very kind. Would you like to take a seat so we can go over the ideas we've come up with? Lynn, could you send in the lunch trays for us?"

"Sure. Would you like coffee, Miss Phillips?"

"Yes. Nonfat latte," she said dismissively.

God! A thank you might be nice. She looks like she wants to eat you whole, Dylan! thought Lynn, as she watched Katie sidle up closer to Dylan at the table.

"Um ... Lynn, could you take this note to the director?" When she said that, Lynn knew what she wanted.

She took a look at the small hastily written note, which read:

Can you organize something urgent for an hour's time? I want out so I can call Emily. This woman is scary!

Lynn smiled and looked at Dylan. "No problem. I'll let him know."

"So we thought we'd go for a Robin Hood sketch since our task is archery this week. We'll run through it this afternoon but it's basically you in the role of Maid Marion and I'll be Robin Hood's sister, who actually does all the fighting and stuff but her brother robin gets all the credit. I'll play it in a big dress, because me in a dress always gets big laughs. I'm like a guy in drag.

Robin's played by Sammy, one of our actors. He'll play him all effeminate and stuff. It'll be fun."

"Sounds great." Katie moved closer and stroked Dylan's arm.

"So tell me, does Robin's sister get the girl?"

Dylan jumped up, pretending she needed to refill her coffee cup.

"Um ... no. There'll be a little suggestive banter but it'll only go so far. The network is pretty good about me being out and stuff but I don't think they're ready for a full blown kiss with me and TV's new up and coming actress, and I'm sure your agent wouldn't like it."

"Oh, I don't know. I think it would enhance my reputation; you are TV's most eligible star."

I'm sure your rep is all you're thinking about here, thought Dylan.

"Who knows? Now can I take you through the chat we'll have about your new show?" said Dylan, taking a seat on the opposite side of the table.

"Do I make you nervous, Dylan?"

"Uh ... no. I'm just anxious to get through this work. This show takes a lot of prep." Dylan kept her eyes on the script in her hand.

"I'm sure, and don't worry I'm very willing," Katie said in a sultry voice.

"I'm sure you are," Dylan said under her breath.

"I haven't seen you out in any of the bars and clubs in the Village."

"They aren't really my scene. Honestly Katie, I'm not as exciting as I appear."

Katie stood and slinked over to where Dylan was sitting. She reached up and squeezed a big muscled shoulder.

"You could be as dull as dishwater Dylan, but this body of yours could keep me entertained for hours."

The big woman was sweating now. *How can I get out of this without being insulting?* she thought frantically.

There was a knock at the door and in walked Lynn to see that Katie had backed Dylan up against a chair and was stroking Dylan's arm.

Thank you God!

"Yes! What can I do for you, Lynn?" Dylan shot over to Lynn putting some distance between herself and her amorous guest.

"The director asked if he could have a word and if you're finished with Miss Phillips, wardrobe would like to see her."

"Sure! Lynn will take you to wardrobe, Katie. I'll meet you at one in the rehearsal room. Okay?"

"Alright. Look forward to it." *Damn! I will get you on your own, gorgeous!*

Once her office door was closed, she fell into her leather chair breathing a sigh of relief.

Lynn, you are my savior!

Emily was cleaning up the kitchen while Molly ate her lunch at the table.

"Eat up, sweetie. We need to drop you at Mrs. Hill's in an hour."

The phone rang and Emily answered, "Hello?"

"Hey Emmie, how are you and the little Smurf?"

Emily's faced beamed when she realized who it was.

"Hi Dylan! We're good. Molly's just having her lunch. How's your day going?"

"Oh okay. Uh ..." The big woman left a silence before finishing.

"I wish I was having lunch with you two. I ... miss you guys."

"We miss you too, Dylan. I was telling Molly about coming to the show on Saturday and she's really excited."

"That's great, I can't wait. Listen I was thinking, would you mind if I picked you up from work tonight and dropped you home? I really worry about you getting home at one in the morning."

"I can't ask you to do that, Dylan. You work a long day and you're really busy. You don't need to be picking me up after midnight, and I have been doing this for a long time."

"I understand that, but you didn't have a friend to care then, now you do. If I don't pick you up, I'll just be pacing the floor, phoning until you get in. Let me care, Emmie."

Emily thought for a second. *What am I going to do when you lose interest Dylan? I'm getting in so deep here.*

"Alright. If it'll make you feel better."

"Thanks. Now I can get through the day knowing I can see you tonight, even if it's just for a bit." Emily could almost feel Dylan's smile through the phone.

"I'm looking forward to it too. So what are you doing this afternoon?"

"Um ... rehearsals with Katie Phillips. We need to go over a couple of sketches and get an archery lesson."

"Katie Phillips?" Emily left the name hanging in the air.

"Katie Phillips, the blonde bombshell from that comedy show?"

Dylan could feel the tension in Emily's voice. "... yeah."

Dylan spends every day with glamorous and beautiful people. How can I compete?

"She's very pretty isn't she?"

Dylan sensed Emily's insecurity across the phone.

Uh oh! Is there a right answer to this?

"I suppose but I prefer my blondes short in stature and natural. I doubt Miss Phillips has much that is natural about her body."

"Ha! Ha! Very smooth, Morgan! And I thought you told me you get tongue tied around women?"

"Around other women, yeah. Around you, never. I've never met anyone I'm more comfortable with."

"I'm glad. Well you better get back and make some good television. I'll see you tonight."

"See you later, Emmie. Stay safe okay?"

"I will. Bye." Emily hung up the phone and said, "Molly, I think I'm falling for your big buddy." Emily sighed.

The little girl looked puzzled. "Mama?"

"Come on Molls, let's get you ready for your day," she said tickling her daughter.

Luckily for Dylan, once they got down to business, Katie behaved herself and focused on the work, so the afternoon went by quite uneventfully. They both got an understanding of the archery challenge and a feel for the sketch.

Dylan was now at home, killing time before picking up Emily. She was restless and spent her time jumping from one thing to another in her game room.

Dylan's game room was her pride and joy. The room was large and decorated very neutrally like the rest of the condo. One wall featured her large 65-inch TV and home theater system. Below that sat her PlayStation 3, Xbox and Wii game systems. The rest of the wall had cases and cases full of games and accessories. Facing the TV along the back wall was a big brown leather couch, and down at the far end of the room was a full pool table.

Music in the room and throughout the house was provided through Bluetooth speakers situated on the walls, allowing Dylan to play music straight from her iPhone or iPad.

I should get some kid games. I bet Smurf would love the Wii and the Xbox.

Dylan tossed her controller on the couch and slid her iPhone to life for what seemed like the hundredth time that night.

God Dylan! Chill out. It's freaking amazing how my life has changed in a week. What

was I doing this time last week? This except I wasn't looking at the time every two seconds, waiting to pick up my ... what is Emmie? Is it too early to say girlfriend? Wow! I've never had a girlfriend before. I would love that to be Emmie.

She looked at the clock one last time. "Midnight. Hmm ... fuck it! I'm going. I'll just sit and wait for her."

Dylan grabbed her jacket and locked up, taking the elevator down to the parking lot.

"Jimmy? She's on the move. You want me to follow?"

"Yeah, she's got to be up to something at this time of night. I've nearly got the info I need on her new bit of fluff. If we could get some pictures, we can go to press but I'm gonna keep digging, there's gotta be some story behind the woman and the daughter. An estranged husband or someone we can pay off. Follow her," Jimmy told his photographer.

Dylan parked the jeep and made her way through the door of the diner. She saw two men were left in the diner, each nursing cups of coffee. Emily hadn't seen the big woman yet. She had her back to Dylan, scrubbing the hot plate behind the counter.

Dylan sat on a stool and in her huskiest, sexiest voice said.

"Hey Baby, you looking for a ride?"

Emily turned quickly. "Dyl! You're such a goof!"

Dyl? Hmm. That's new. I think I like it, Dylan thought.

Dylan decided to keep up her cool act. Hoping the play would bring them closer.

"So baby, you don't want a ride?"

Emily smiled enjoying the game. *Oh! Honey! Don't try and compete with me at flirting.*

I'll win.

In a coquettish voice she said. "Hmm, maybe. How far are you willing to go?" Dylan's mouth hung open and her heart began to thud.

"Argh! I give in. I'd do anything when you bat those green eyes at me."

"Well, Dyl honey, don't mess with the master of flirting."

"You didn't tell me you were so proficient?"

Emily smirked. "Well, I haven't had much use for it for a long time; you should have seen me in college."

"A little heartbreaker I'm sure." Dylan smiled.

"I don't know about that. Thanks for coming, it's really brightened up my shift."

"It's my pleasure. Any excuse to spend time with you. Where's little Smurf? Does your sitter keep her?"

"She brings her home at 7, puts her to bed and waits till I get in. I don't know what I'd do without her. It's hard to find people to trust. Give me a minute. I'll just try and hustle these guys out the door and we can lock up and get going."

"Great."

Dylan watched Emily as she went to the back of the diner to try and hurry up the stragglers.

I'm so glad I decided to do this. Who would have thought hanging out in a diner at one in the morning could make me so happy?

Dylan's thoughts were interrupted by raised voices. She turned around to see Emily trying to pull her hand back from one of the guys in the back. The other guy had gone and Emily was left with this slightly drunk guy pawing her.

"Just let me go and get out. We're closed!" Emily was struggling to get her hand back.

"You'll get me more coffee and close when I say it, girl!"

Just then the man let out a squeal as Dylan's big hand circled his wrist and squeezed.

"Let go of me you bitch! That hurts!"

"You let go of the lady and I'll let go of you, okay shit head?" Dylan said coldly.

The man released his hold and as Emily rubbed her wrist, Dylan pulled the man to his feet and pushed him against the wall. She held him there face first, his arm pushed up behind his back.

"Apologize to the lady!"

"Urgh! Urgh! You promised to let me go!"

Dylan pushed his arm a little further.

"I can break your arm with one more push. Now apologize to the lady and tell her you'll never come back to this diner again!"

"Urgh! I'm sorry lady and I'll never come here again!"

"Good boy! Now get the fuck out of here!"

Dylan hustled him to the door and threw him out. She panted heavily, the anger rolling off of her.

No one touches Emmie! No one!

Dylan felt a tentative touch at her shoulder. "Dylan ... umph."

She was suddenly engulfed in Dylan's big strong arms. "Are you okay baby?"

Baby. Toni never called me anything like that.

"I'm fine, Dyl. He just scared me a little. It doesn't hurt now."

The big woman pulled away from the hug, cupping the blonde's face in her hands and kissed her softly and gently on the lips. Pulling back, Dylan said, "You sure?"

"Yes I'm fine, I'm so glad you were here."

"I'm sorry if I seemed really aggressive, something just snapped when I saw him touch you." Knowing Emily's history of domestic violence from Toni, she didn't want the young woman to be scared of her.

"Don't worry. You were wonderful. I've never felt protected like that before."

"I will protect you, for as long as you let me." Dylan stroked her cheek.

"Why don't we get this place cleaned up and get you home to the Smurf?"

"That would be great. I'll just be a minute."

They locked up quickly, jumped in Dylan's Jeep and quickly made their way home.

She parked right outside Emily's building.

"I'll walk you up, okay? No arguments," said Dylan.

"Thank you. I love this car."

"You do? I didn't think you'd be interested in cars."

"I'm not. It just makes me feel safe. Big, comfortable and it has you in it."

Dylan flashed a smile but inside her heart melted. She knew that this little woman had the power to bring her to her knees. Dylan leaned forward and kissed Emily thoroughly, leaving her breathless.

"Let's get you inside."

Dylan jumped out and came around to open Emily's door and help her down from the big car.

When they got into the apartment and let Mrs. Hill go, Emily asked, "Would you like some coffee?"

"Yeah, maybe one cup. I have to get up early but I could stay for one."

"Great, I'll be back in a sec."

Dylan took a seat on the couch and Emily was back in no time with the cups.

"Emmie?"

"I was thinking. Does that happen a lot? You know, your late nights? Do guys get aggressive like that often?"

"They say things but mostly they're all talk. That was the first time anyone's ever grabbed me. A couple have touched my butt, slapped it sometimes but never grabbed."

Dylan took hold of her hand. "I don't like it. Are you late the rest of the week?"

"Just till Thursday, then I'm back to days."

"I'll come and get you every night and please don't argue because I'll just come anyway."

"I'm not going to argue. It's nice to have someone who cares."

"I do care, Emmie. I hope you know that, and I'm caring more with each passing second."

"Me too, Dyl. You are amazing. Gorgeous, funny, strong, brave, protective. Everything I've ever wanted in a ... a ..." Emily didn't know what to say.

It's too soon. Isn't it?

"Everything you've ever wanted in a girlfriend or partner?" Dylan finished for her.

"Yes."

"I'm glad I fit the bill, ma'am!" Dylan pretended to tip her hat to Emily.

"You make me laugh, you goof."

Dylan sighed, knowing she had to leave but not wanting to. "Well I better get going. I'll see you tomorrow night? I'll phone you in the afternoon again, okay?"

"Okay. Thanks for tonight."

"No problem."

They shared a few more heated kisses at the door and Dylan left, bouncing all the way down to her car.

"Yeah. Jimmy? I got the picture you wanted. They were all over each other in the car. Dylan Morgan definitely has a story now."

The next two nights went quietly, with Dylan picking Emily up from the diner. They spent the time getting to know each other and they were becoming more and more attached as the days went by. The big woman spent her days differently now. Last week, all Dylan Morgan had to take up her life was work. This week, she worked equally hard, but spent her days looking forward to the evenings. Today was Friday and show day, so she wouldn't see the young woman who she was beginning to care for deeply.

Katie Phillips had continued to flirt shamelessly with Dylan. For her part, Dylan politely kept her distance and tried not to be left alone with her.

Yesterday, they spent the day practicing archery at a sports center. Katie had played the helpless female to a tee, Dylan remembered.

"I just can't get this! I'm not strong enough to pull it back," Katie moaned.

The archery instructor stepped in saying, "Let me help you."

"Don't touch me!" she hissed quietly so as not to be overheard.

The man stood back unsure how to handle the difficult actress.

"Dylan! Can you help me?" she asked pathetically.

As with most sports, Dylan picked it up pretty quickly and had just finished a shot that landed in the bullseye for the fifth time in a row.

Dylan turned, looked at Katie, then looked back at Lynn who simply shrugged. The big woman just rolled her eyes, knowing exactly what was going on.

Dylan had no option but to stand behind Katie, pushing her body into her back, to help the blonde actress with her stance.

"Now just pull back, and let go ... ow! Um ... try it yourself this time." As Dylan prepared to let go of the string, Katie pushed her hips into Dylan and ground her backside into her most sensitive area.

Dylan hurried back to stand with Lynn.

"I think Miss Phillips wants to play Portia to your Ellen," Lynn laughed.

"Yeah, well she'll be waiting a while. I'm no Ellen and I'm spoken for, I hope."

"Is it getting that serious, Dylan?"

"Don't worry Lynn, I know what you're thinking. It's too soon, but I've been waiting to feel like this my whole life and now that I've found it I'm going to grab on as hard as I can."

"As long as you're sure."

"I am. Will you watch out for her and Molly tomorrow? I don't want Miss Thing over there saying anything inappropriate."

"I will. Now get over there and practice some more!"

That had been yesterday. Today the studio was so busy and apart from some rehearsals, Dylan had managed to keep out of her way.

Dylan was about to eat in her office before getting dressed and going in to makeup.

Lynn had just delivered Dylan's favorite overstuffed sandwich and she was about to call

Emily.

It rang twice before she heard Emily's voice. "Hello?"

"Hey Emmie."

"Hi Dyl. How's the show going? You all ready?"

"Yeah, we're good to go. I just thought I would while I got some dinner."

"What are you having or should I ask?"

"Um ... roast beef and pastrami sandwich with a salad, coleslaw and fries."

"You really should eat better, Dylan. You use up so much energy, you need some veggies and healthy stuff too."

"I know. I miss you, Emmie. I miss you both."

"We miss you too. Oh wait a minute. Your biggest fan wants a word."

Dylan smiled at the thought of the cute little girl.

"Dien? Dat you?"

"Hey little Smurf. How you doing?"

"Otay. We coming ta see you?"

"Not tonight Molls. You're coming tomorrow to visit with me and we're going to have so much fun. Tonight you can watch me be silly on the TV, so that's the next best thing."

"Mif you Dien."

"I know Smurf. I miss you too, but I want you watch the TV very carefully tonight. I'm going to blow a kiss to you and your Mom."

"You will?"

"Yeah. You watch really close, okay?"

"Otay Dien. I wuv you."

"I love you too, Molls. *Woah! I really meant that. I love that little Smurf.*" You look after your Mama. Good night."

"Nigh nigh!" Dylan heard the phone been being passed over.

"I'm back. She can't wait to see you. She didn't like the fact that I was seeing you at night."

"Well, we're going to have a great weekend together. You watch out for me too, Emmie. I'll blow you a kiss okay?"

"I will. I do miss you but at least I can still see you."

"Yeah. I'll be thinking of you all night. I ... I better go. Listen. I ... I lo ... I'll see you later."

It's too soon to say anymore. You don't want to fuck this up, Dylan!

"Night Dyl."

"Mama! Dien time yet?" Emily looked over at her daughter from the kitchen and smiled. The little girl had been asking if it was time for Dylan's show every five minutes for the past hour.

"Just a few more minutes, Molls. Let's put the TV on now."

Molly jumped up and pressed the button on the old fashioned TV. Emily joined her daughter on the couch, bringing her some milk and a cookie.

"Here you go Molls. I thought you could have your milk and cookies while we watch."

"Yeah! Tanks Mama."

The two were cuddled when the titles of the show started to run, showing video of Dylan taking part in various stunts. The announcer said:

"Tonight on The Dylan Morgan show, actress Katie Phillips joins us for a chat and to take part in Dylan's Dare, and a lucky viewer will win \$100,000 in Dylan's special challenge! Please welcome your host Dylan Morgan!"

The audience cheered and whooped as the camera panned around the huge arena sized studio. The lights pointed towards the back of the stage and a huge black backdrop lifted to reveal Dylan standing side on, arms crossed, looking right down the camera; she flashed a toothy grin and winked, as she did every show. She was the personification of cool. The crowd went wild again as she took a short run and threw herself into a forward

flip and ended up perfectly back on her feet.

"Dien! Dien, Mama!"

"Oh my God, that's our Dylan?" Emily was shocked at the outgoing confident woman on the screen who was nothing like the shy sensitive goof she knew.

"Hi Dien! You see me?"

Emily laughed. "I don't think she can see through the TV, sweetie."

Emily watched Dylan telling the audience who and what would be on the show this week.

Wow! Dyl, you are gorgeous! Emily's stomach clenched at the sight of her new friend dressed in dark designer blue jeans, a white shirt with the sleeves rolled up, a loosely tied black neck tie, and black vest.

Oh Dylan, I'd love to know if you've got a six pack under there!

Dylan launched into her intro.

"Thank you! Wow, what a welcome!" Dylan bowed then blew a kiss to the audience and camera.

"So did you guys have a good week?" The audience cheered.

"Excellent! I had an amazing time. I went to the zoo. I'd never been to Central Park Zoo before, it's fantastic." She then went on to tell a joke about mistaking a chimp for a Republican congressman, which got a huge laugh.

"Mama! Dien bow us a kiss!" The little jumped up and down on her mother's lap. "Yes she did, sweetie. She's saying hello to us and telling the nice people about our day out."

Emily's heart melted a little bit more each time she saw Dylan, especially seeing her be so open about their day out.

"So I think it's time for a guest, don't you?"

The audience cheered.

"Please welcome Katie Phillips!" The spotlight followed the actress out as the center stage turned to reveal two sofas.

Dylan walked down to meet her guest. As they hugged and kissed, Katie held onto the dark haired woman's hips, a little too tight and a little too long.

"Who that lady, Mama?"

"Just someone from another show, Molls." *Someone who can't keep her hands to herself!*

Dylan and Katie started to chat, Dylan giving her the chance to plug her show. She then turned to the challenge.

"So Katie, you agreed to do Dylan's Dare and this week it's archery. How have you enjoyed learning a new skill?"

"It's been wonderful Dylan, and you've been such a great help to me."

Katie batted her eyelashes and leaned over to touch Dylan's knee.

Emily felt the anger boil up in her stomach. *She's all over Dylan! I bet you're not even a natural blonde! Emily, you have no right to be jealous, she isn't even your girlfriend. Oh, I want you so much, Dyl.*

The young woman watched as Dylan shifted uncomfortably in her seat and said, "Well let's meet the contestant who's going to take on Dylan's Dare with Katie."

The show cut to video of the contestant telling a little bit about herself, when they returned Dylan said, "Let's welcome our contestant, Mandy Jacobs!"

A short, slightly plump woman in her 40s came out to rapturous applause. She was greeted by Dylan and Katie and sat down.

"Welcome Mandy. It's great to have you here. Have you enjoyed the week?"

"Yeah, I loved it! It was a lot of fun," Mandy replied nervously.

"Well let's take a look at some of our training." The show cut to footage of the three training during the week and, unbeknownst to Dylan, the editor had used the piece with Dylan standing tucked right in behind Katie showing her what to do.

That tramp! thought Emily. *Maybe she likes her. If she could be that different on TV, maybe she's a different person away from us,* worried the young woman.

"Dien back on. Hi Dien!" Molly said to the TV.

"So we've done all the training and it's all down to tomorrow night. Just to go over the rules, we compete in a best of five rounds. The two who come out on top will go head to head in the final round. If one of those two is you, Mandy, you win \$250,000. If it's Katie, she wins that for the charity of her choice. In the final round, it will be one shot to win; the closest to the target wins double their original prize, \$500,000!" The crowd whooped and cheered.

"The only catch is you'll be blindfolded!" Katie and Mandy laughed along with the audience.

"Come back after the break when there will be a performance by Rihanna, Katie and I will take a trip back to Sherwood Forest and one audience member will challenge me to do something very stupid! Be right back!"

Emily and Molly giggled their way through the rest of the show. Laughing at the big woman wearing a big dress, fighting the villains in Sherwood forest, and playing pranks on a couple of audience members. Finally, they sat opened-mouthed as they watched Dylan take part in the last part of the show, Dylan's Special Challenge. A call-in viewer was randomly picked and, if Dylan could complete a live challenge, they would get \$10,000 and all the latest home appliances.

Dylan always got her staff to keep her totally in the dark about the challenge so that the audience could share her surprise.

Tonight's challenge was a bungee jump from a crane set up in the TV studio parking lot.

When the height was announced as 165 feet, Emily gasped. They watched dumfounded when, after the break, the show returned to find Dylan at the top of the crane waiting to go.

"Dien okay, Mama?" Molly looked a little worried at what she was witnessing.

"She'll be fine, sweetie, she has all those safety things holding her." She tried to give her daughter the confidence she did not feel.

After holding onto the railing nervously for a few minutes, Dylan closed her eyes, took a few deep breaths and jumped. The camera on her helmet tracked her descent, and in a few seconds she was suspended from the bungee, rebounding up and down.

Emily let out the breath she was holding and the two clapped and cheered their new friend.

"What a job you do, honey!"

Emily had put her daughter to bed. It had taken her a good while, as the girl was so excited.

She was sitting up in bed reading when the phone rang.

"Hello?"

"Hi Emmie, it's me. I hope it's not too late but I wanted to know what you and Molls thought of the show."

"It was fantastic, Dyl! But we were so worried when you had to do that jump. I felt sick seeing you in that sort of danger."

"It wasn't my favorite thing to do, I'm not so good with heights, but it's my job."

"It's such a great show, so many different kinds of stuff going on."

"Well thanks, I appreciate that. The guys that work on the show are great, they're a well oiled machine. I like to keep my staff pretty much unchanged. It's my production company that makes the show, so I have that freedom. I've worked with them since the beginning, so everyone knows exactly what to do."

"You own it?"

"Yeah, when the network offered me a contract, I wanted to make sure I kept control of the show and my ideas. It's worked really well. I've sold the format all over the world, so I get to benefit from the profits of that instead of the network. The show's been good to me."

"You're not just a handsome face are you?" Emily flirted.

Dylan cleared her throat, clearly blushing at the other end.

"Uh ... I don't know about that. Did the Smurf like it?"

"She loved it. She thought she could talk to you through the TV. She kept waving at you and saying hi."

"She is such a cutie pie. I miss you, Emmie, I can't wait to see you and Molls."

"I can't wait to see you, I've got used to seeing you every night and getting a kiss."

"Yeah, I know what you mean. Your kisses are amazing. If I close my eyes I can still feel the softness of your lips, the taste."

Oh god, Dylan, take me now!

"Ugh ... Dyl, you're making this really hard. I've got to go to sleep after this phone call."

Dylan laughed and said, "I'm sorry baby, it's hard for me too. Well, get to sleep and I'll see you tomorrow. Did Lynn call you with the details?"

"She did, thanks. Sleep well, Dyl. Night."

"Night Emmie, see you tomorrow."

Once Dylan put the phone down, she took her drink from the coffee table and looked around the large empty condo.

Sleep well? That's a joke. If only she knew I stayed awake until I couldn't stop myself from falling asleep, my TV and my computers my only companions.

Dylan was nervous. It was Saturday and she had been at the studio all day preparing for tonight's show. She wanted all the rehearsals and technical issues out of the way so she could dedicate all of her time to Emily and Molly when they arrived.

Dylan was sitting in her dressing room and looked at her watch for the hundredth time. She checked the table that was set up with sweets and snacks, and the drinks in the fridge.

I hope all this is okay. God I feel like a nervous teenager. Get a grip, Dylan!

Lynn popped her head around the door. "Thought you might like to know that the car has left for your guests."

"Thanks Lynn, you're the best."

"Oh and Miss Phillips is on the hunt for a tall dark TV star."

"I don't want her saying anything in front of Emily."

"I'll do my best to keep her away until showtime. She's on a wild goose chase at the moment, I told her I was sure you were in hair and makeup."

"Thanks, I'll just grab my shower and get dressed. Bring them here as soon as they arrive."

"Sure thing."

"Molly! Stop jumping up and down so much, I'm trying to get your shoes on."

"Sowy Mama. I'm cited! Going to see Dien on the TV!"

"Sweetie if we don't get you ready, we'll be late. The car will be here any minute."

Molly had been as high as a kite all day. Her new buddy Dylan was her favorite person and she'd never had as much fun since they'd met her.

"Okay you sit there for a minute while Mama finishes getting ready. I'll just be in the bathroom."

"Kay." Molly switched on her fijiit toy. *Great to see ya! What do you wanna do today?* the toy chirped.

Dylan had insisted that they dress casually, but Emily was nervous. What would she look like up against glamorous women like Katie Phillips? Emily looked at herself in the mirror.

You can only be yourself, Emily. Dylan likes you for you. Don't even try to compete, thought the young blonde as she added some light makeup. She had chosen to wear some tight blue jeans, a white blouse with a fitted tan leather jacket and brown boots. She added simple gold earrings and necklace, and her favorite perfume.

"Well Dyl, I hope I don't disappoint you."

She heard a knock at the door.

"That must be the car. Get your jacket on Molls!" she shouted as she went to answer the door.

"Miss Taylor?"

"Yes, that's me," Emily Answered the smart looking man.

"I'm from Morgan Productions. I have a car for you and your daughter."

"Thank you, I'll just be second getting my daughter."

"Sure. Uh ... Ms. Morgan said you would have bags. Can I get them for you?"

"Yes, thanks. They're just by the couch." Emily pointed to the two overnight bags she

had packed for them.

This is different. I never thought I'd be doing this a few weeks ago!

"Come on, sweetie, let's go see Dylan!"

"Yeah! Let's get Dien, Mama!" Molly grabbed her toy and ran to the door.

Dylan had showered and changed into her first outfit of blue jeans, light grey sweater with white tee shirt underneath, and suit jacket. She would change into her challenge gear in the later part of the show.

She had just popped outside of her dressing room to see if there was any sign of Emily and Molly when Katie spotted her.

"Hi Dylan, have you been avoiding me?" Katie stepped up a little too close for Dylan's liking.

"Listen, would you like to get a drink after the show? Maybe come back to my place?"

"Uh ... I have plans already, Katie."

"They can't be that great, Dylan, you're not seeing anyone, I asked around." Katie ran her hand teasingly up and down Dylan's arm.

"I know I'm not out, but I can assure you I'm really attracted to you, Dylan. I would do anything you asked."

Dylan was just about to pull away from Katie's clutches when she heard someone clear their throat.

She turned around to see Lynn standing with Emily, who had Molly up in her arms.

Dylan's stomach dropped. '**Uh oh!**'

Previously:

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Episode 3

Emily felt a hot surge of jealousy course through her veins.

I knew that tramp was all over Dylan! Oh my God. She isn't interested in her is she? Did we interrupt something? Oh Dylan please, I've put so much faith in you!

Dylan saw a look of anger on Emily's face as she stared at Katie's hand running up and down her arm.

Oh shit!

Emmie! Molls! Your here at last! I've been waiting for you."

Dylan walked quickly over and took Molly from the blonde's arms.

"Hey Smurf! How are you?"

"Miffed you Dien," Molly said as she cuddled into Dylan's chest.

"Aww! I missed you too, Molls." Dylan then took Emily's hand and pulled her towards the dressing room door.

Katie looked on with disgust.

Who is this nobody?!

"Aren't you going to introduce me, Dylan? Is this your cleaning lady?" Katie laughed cruelly.

You bitch! thought the big woman.

Dylan put her free arm around Emily's shoulder.

"As I was trying to tell you, Katie, I have plans tonight. This is my girlfriend Emily and her daughter Molly. If you'll excuse us, Katie, I'll see you on set."

Dylan then steered Emily into her dressing room, keeping Molly up in her arms. When the door was finally closed she said worriedly, "I'm so sorry about her, Emmie. I was just standing in the hallway waiting for you guys and she came up and was all over me just as you arrived. I hope you don't think anything of it, I was just so excited waiting for you and she just ..."

"It's okay Dyl, I believe you. I trust you. She had no idea why but she instinctively trusted her.

Dylan let out a sigh of relief. "Great! I've been so looking forward to this! I hope you didn't mind me saying you were my girlfriend, I know it's probably too soon for you but I wanted to get a message across to Katie, and well ... it's what I want."

Emily smiled shyly. "I liked it."

Dylan leaned over and gave Emily a soft kiss on the lips.

"Me kiss Dien!" the little girl said.

Dylan lifted the girl up in the air and blew a raspberry on the girl's tummy making her howl with laughter.

"No Dien! Ha ha! Pease!"

The big woman brought her back down and kissed her on the nose.

"Was that kiss good enough?" she smiled.

Molly was gasping for breath from laughing. "Dien you funny!"

Emily, who had been laughing along with them said, "I think you two are going to be a bad influence on each other."

"Oh! Listen Molls, Big Bird was at the studio today and I told him how much you liked watching him. He couldn't stay but he asked me to give you this."

Dylan walked over to the table with the snacks and drinks, and picked up a toy Big Bird with Sesame Street balloons tied around his wrist.

"Wow! Dien! Big Bird was ere?" Dylan untied the balloons so Molly could pick up the toy.

"Dylan you're going to spoil her," Emily said seriously.

"Hey, I've never had anyone to spoil before. Okay?" Dylan cupped and stroked Emily's face with her hand.

The young blonde smiled. *You melt my heart when you look at me like that.*

"Okay. Thank you."

"And these are for you." Dylan gestured to the large bouquet of flowers sitting on the table.

Emily walked over and inhaled their beautiful scent."

Dyl, they're wonderful. Thank you. You know, no one ever gave me flowers before you."

"You deserve the best Emmie. I ... I just wanted tonight to be perfect. Come and sit."

Dylan took her hand and guided her over to the couch where Molly was playing with Big Bird.

The big woman looked shyly at Emily and said, "You look beautiful, Emmie."

"Hardly! I can't compete with the women you see every day."

Dylan lifted the blonde's hand and kissed it tenderly.

"There's no competition, Emmie. You're the only one who has ever made me feel like this. To me, you're perfect. You have curves in all the right places and eyes that make me want to get lost in them."

"When you look at me like that I want to believe you, to trust you."

"I promise you can." Dylan moved towards Emily and gave her the sweetest of kisses.

"Hmmm," Emily moaned. "Maybe we can discuss this more later."

"Count on it. Listen, I know I won't be with you all the time tonight but Lynn will stay with you and make sure you have everything you need. Ask for anything you want and think of my dressing room as your own. I know it'll be a long night for the Smurf, so I've got some blankets here if you want to let her sleep on the couch. There's food and snacks on the table there, and all kinds of drinks in the fridge. Just make sure you keep your pass around your neck, security is tight around here."

"Thank you, I can't wait to see what goes on. The show was amazing on TV last night."

Dylan's chest puffed out a little.

"You liked it?"

"Yeah, it was so fun and you're so good with the audience. The stunt at the end, woah! I had my heart in my mouth. You're so strong and athletic. I ... um ... oh ... nothing."

Emily looked away blushing.

"Come on Emmie, tell me. You can tell me anything. I would never laugh at you."

"Well ... I love how big and strong you are, I just wondered if you had a six pack under there. Oh god, I'm so embarrassed!"

Dylan smirked and gave her a smoky look. "I hope you'll want to find out, baby."

Caught up in the depths of each other's eyes, their lips got closer and closer until a little face came between them.

"Me have some juice please, Dien?"

They two women laughed. "I guess we'll have to get back to this later. Come on Smurf! Let's go choose some juice!"

Dylan lifted the little girl up and took her to get a drink.

"So, you ready for a look around? I've got about an hour before I have to go and do my stuff."

"Great, I can't wait to see," Emily said excitedly.

They had toured around wardrobe, hair and makeup. The makeup girls made a fuss over Molly, styling her hair, drawing a little butterfly on her cheek and putting on some sparkly stickers.

"There you go, honey. You're all set for TV!" one of the young makeup girls said.

"Look at me, Mama!"

"You look pretty, sweetie. Say thank you to Sandy."

"Tank ou, Sandy."

"No problem honey, you come back anytime you want. Dylan never lets us put much makeup on her so we love to get the chance!"

Emily and the makeup girls laughed.

"Hey! I hate the stuff. I'm just not a makeup kinda girl," the big woman pouted.

"No, I don't think you are, Dyl, and I like you that way," Emily said.

Dylan smiled smugly. "See, somebody appreciates me, Sandy."

"Haven't you got something high and dangerous to be jumping off?" she said sarcastically.

Emily and Molly laughed, enjoying the easy banter the TV star enjoyed with her staff. Dylan certainly didn't act like a star.

"See what I have to put up with? See you later, girls."

They then made their way to the studio floor and walked out onto the vast black stage.

"This place is huge!" Emily said. Molly seeing a big open space, set off at a run.

"Don't trip over any of the wires, Molls!" her mother shouted.

"She'll be fine. Mike!" Dylan shouted over to a guy fiddling with one of the cameras.

"Yeah?"

"Can you watch out for Molly here while I show her Mom the rest of the set?"

"Sure, no problem."

"Molly! Come here a second." The little girl ran over to Dylan.

"This is Mike, he's going to watch you while I show Mama around the rest of the set. You can run around if you like."

"Yeah!"

"Be good Molly," said her mother.

They walked further onto the stage area. "I never imagined a studio would be this big," Emily said gazing round the large space.

"Yeah we had to purpose-build this, we started off in a normal studio but there just wasn't enough room for the stunts we were doing. When the show turned out to be a hit, the network agreed to fund this complex. We're standing in a large aircraft hanger, basically. It's sectioned off into offices, rehearsal rooms and facilities for the staff."

"It's really something, Dyl."

Dylan looked down, uncomfortable when receiving praise.

"I'm proud of all that we've achieved. I have a great team working with me. Listen, I need to get ready for the show now. Lets grab the Smurf and head back."

They made their way back to Dylan's dressing room.

Hey Smurf, I'll put the TV on for you okay?" Dylan switched on the Disney Channel and Molly settled on the floor to watch.

"Tanks Dien."

"No problem, Molls" Turning to Emily she said, "Come sit with me a minute."

Once they were seated on the couch, Dylan said, "I have to go but I just wanted some time with you first. Lynn will bring you to watch from backstage when we go live. I ... uh, I can't tell you what it means to me to have you here, have you both here. I've never been happier than since I met you two. I know you think I'm successful and have achieved a lot but I've been alone for so long and especially since Joey died, it's been hard. I know I've been maybe, moving too quickly for you but I've never felt what I'm feeling ever in my life and I want to grab onto it and never let go. You mean the world to me. I guess I just want you know if you let me keep seeing you, it's not some passing fling for me. It's serious."

Emily cupped the side of Dylan's face and looked into her uncertain big blue eyes.

You've been lonely for far too long, honey. You may be big and tough but inside you're so vulnerable.

"It's serious for me too. I think you need someone to look after you, honey. I'd like to be that person."

"I'd like that, too," Dylan whispered as their lips came together in a deep kiss; a kiss that spoke of the future and a deep love that they couldn't find the words for yet.

"Mama! Mwah! Mwah!" The little girl laughed at them.

Dylan turned and smiled. "Hey kid, we'll need to work on your timing."

"You better go. Don't want to keep the American public waiting."

"I guess. I'll miss you, I can't wait to spend time with you later."

"Me too. Now scoot."

"Okay, I'm going," Dylan said giving her one final kiss.

"Oh and Dylan?"

"Yeah?"

"Make sure you kick that Katie Phillips butt in the dare!"

"I will. Just for you, Emmie."

Jimmy put down his cell with a huge grin on his face.

Well Morgan. I'm getting closer and closer. You're going to make me a very rich man.

He picked up the phone again and called his partner.

"Sam? Yeah it's me. I just got a tip from Dylan Morgan's studio that the girl and her daughter are there tonight watching the filming.

She's introducing her as her girlfriend. I want you outside the studio; see if you can get a shot of the three of them together.

Yeah, I'm still following up the kid's father. There must be a story in that but even without that, this story and the pictures are going to make us a fortune. The press have been looking for this for years, America's most eligible woman tamed at last by a poor single mother who works as a waitress. It's dynamite. A rags to riches story, the public will lap it up.

Get the picture and email it to me. I'll put it some calls to the usual suspects and sell to the highest bidder; it should run on Monday.

Excellent. Talk to you later."

Emily struggled to keep hold of a wriggling Molly who was worked up to a frenzy watching the show from the side. The show had been so exciting for them both and it had built to the final challenge. Katie Phillips had been knocked out in the first round, much to Emily's amusement, so it was now just Dylan against the contestant in the final challenge. One shot, blindfolded, closest to the target wins. The challenger went first and just barely hit the target. The audience was now chanting, "*Dylan! Dylan!*"

Molly was swept up in the fervor watching her playmate and Emily had to struggle to keep her from running onto the stage.

"Dien! Dien! Me go stand wiv Dien, Mama?"

"No honey. Dylan is busy. Remember we talked about this, Dylan has to concentrate and win so the hospital gets some money?"

This week's charity money was going towards a children's unit at the local hospital.

Dylan took her shot and the crowd went wild as she hit the bullseye.

Emily and Molly cheered and clapped as the big woman took off her blindfold and commiserated with the contestant.

"Bad luck, but remember you still take home the money you won in the first round and you did beat our celebrity contestant. Did you enjoy yourself?"

"Very much, Dylan, I've had a great day."

"Great. Well tune in next week to see me tackle some free running and singer Matt Evans takes on Dylan's Dare when we compete against each other in a five car stunt jump. Remember to catch Katie Phillips every Monday night in her hit show, Head of the House. See you next week and remember ..." Dylan stared down the camera and winked, "Don't try this at home! Goodnight."

Katie Phillips had joined everyone on stage and they all waved at the camera.

"We're off air, Dylan," called one of the crew.

Lynn stepped forward with a towel and bottle of water for her.

"Thanks, can you tell Emily I'll just be a few minutes talking to the audience and then I'll be with her?"

"Sure." Lynn walked over to Emily and said, "she'll just be a couple of minutes, Emily. She just says a few words of thanks to the audience before leaving the stage."

"Okay."

Emily watched as Dylan talked to the contestant and had a final word with Katie.

Boy! She doesn't look happy.

She saw Katie walking toward her with a sinister look on her face.

"You and your little brat better enjoy the high life while you can. Do you think someone as rich and famous as Dylan Morgan will settle down with a waitress, and a single mother at that?"

How does she know all this? One of Dylan's staff must have talked.

Katie's words hit her in the gut and Molly looked up nervously at her mother.

"I'll thank you to keep your nose out of my life and your opinions to yourself. You can call me anything you want but don't you dare say anything like that about my daughter again!"

Katie laughed cruelly. "You're just a phase, sweetheart. Dylan goes through women like candy. As soon as she gets fed up with playing your knight in shining armor, she'll be on to the next one." Katie walked away smiling.

Even though she thought she knew Dylan, there was a part of her deep inside that worried that what Katie said was true.

She watched the big woman make the audience laugh. She was so different onstage.

If she can act that differently there, could she be acting with me?

"Dien!" Emily was shaken from her thoughts when her daughter spotted her playmate bounding over to them.

"Hey! How are my two favorite girls?" She gave them both a kiss.

Dylan's warm, genuine smile seemed to banish the young blonde's fears all at once.

"We're great. The show was excellent."

"You hear me shout for you, Dien?"

The big woman smiled.

I'm falling more and more in love with you two.

"I heard you, Smurf. That's what made me win. Let's get back to my dressing room, so I can get changed and take you two home ... uh to my place."

Shit! I hope she didn't notice that slip. Stop pushing, Dylan!

She held out her arms and said, "Here let me take Molls for you."

Dylan held the little girl in one arm and took Emily's hand with the other.

As they walked Emily said, "Did I hear you say you were doing a stunt jump next week?"

"Yeah! It'll be so cool. Molls will love to watch that, I bet."

"Isn't it a bit dangerous?" Emily worried. They walked into the dressing room and Dylan sat Molly on the couch.

"I'll be fine." The big woman took Emily in her arms, looked her straight in the eye and said, "I'm good with cars and remember, I'm Dylan Morgan! No dare too big!"

Emily laughed. "Ah! So you do have an ego?"

"Well, I am good at a lot of things," Dylan teased the blonde.

"Oh?" Emily stood on her tiptoes and whispered in her ear, "I can't wait to find out."

Dylan shivered from head to foot.

"Uh, I think on that note, I'll grab my shower."

Damm Emmie, you are something else!

"Hurry!"

Dylan turned at the door of the shower room and winked. "Oh, I will!"

Dylan pulled her Jeep into the underground parking garage.

"Here we are."

"How do we get to your apartment?"

"There's an elevator over in the corner."

Emily turned around to look at Molly in the car seat.

"Aw, she's sound asleep. It's been a long night for her."

"Thanks for letting her stay up this once, I really enjoyed having you both there. Let's get her to bed and we can have a drink."

Dylan unlocked the door with one hand while carrying a sleeping Molly in her other arm."

Here we go. Home sweet home."

Emily walked into the large living room and looked at the rich furnishings and the art on the walls.

Wow! How are Molly and I ever going to fit into her life? This is too much.

Dylan saw the look that crossed the blonde's face and she felt panic in the pit of her stomach.

"It's just a house, I'm still me okay?" Dylan pleaded.

Emily saw the anxiety on the big woman's face. *You really do want this to work don't you?*

"It's fine. Lead the way, goofy," Emily smiled.

"Okay, follow me and we can put the Smurf to bed."

Dylan laid the little girl down on the guest bed. "Well, I'll let you get her into her PJ's and settled, and I'll get us some drinks. Would you like some wine?"

"Sure, that would be nice."

"Any preference?"

"Um ... white, please."

"Sure. Just come through to living room when you're ready," Dylan said nervously.

Dylan grabbed some wine from the fridge and the snack platter Lynn had ordered for her.

"What else do I need? Wine, snacks, I know there's something."

Dylan's heart thudded in her chest. "Stay calm, Dylan. Glasses! That's it."

She grabbed two glasses, put them on the tray and took it through to the living room.

Cool. Stay cool, Dylan.

She dimmed the lights and set a love playlist she had made up on her iPhone to begin playing.

Perfect.

Dylan was uncorking the wine when Emily appeared, looking a bit unsure of herself.

"Come and sit down, Emmie," Dylan said, handing her a large glass of wine.

"We've got cheese, olives and crackers as well. So dig in."

They sat close, Dylan's arm running along the back of the couch.

"Thanks, these are great," said Emily, grabbing a stuffed olive.

"I got Lynn to order me some food, I'm not used to having guests."

"What do you eat then?"

"Um ... cereal, protein shakes, and mostly take out."

"You really do need some home cooked meals, goofy."

Dylan smiled brightly.

"This is a lovely place, Dyl."

"It's okay. I'll give you the tour before we turn in. It's got everything I need I guess, but it's not really a home. It's kinda lonely coming back here after the show. I'm so glad you two are here."

Emily's heart ached for the big woman. *You've been alone too long.*

"It's our pleasure. So where would be home to you?"

"Um ... it's kind of silly." Dylan put her head down shyly.

Emily took her hand. "Tell me. Please?"

"Well, I've always had this dream that if ever I settled down, I would buy a place near the beach; a big piece of land where I could have my privacy. An ocean view, somewhere I could just walk out onto the beach, and have a small boat, maybe. I could have a workshop out back where I could work on stuff, woodwork and home improvement projects. It would be kind of silly to buy something like that just for me to rattle around in, but a great place for a family."

Their eyes met in understanding but neither one wanted to say what they felt.

"You handy with tools, then?" Emily said with a smirk.

"Well I think so." Dylan winked. "No seriously. My grandpa ran a building contractor business and my dad worked as a contractor with him until he opened up the dojo. I loved helping during school holidays and I learned a lot."

"It sounds like a wonderful dream." Emily smiled lovingly at her new girlfriend.

Dylan cleared her throat and said, "So I wanted to ask, has Molls seen Night at the Museum?"

"Yes, she loves that movie. Why?"

"I thought we could take her to the Natural History Museum tomorrow and hunt out all the characters. Thought that would be fun for her and us."

Emily sighed in contentment. "Dylan Morgan you are something else."

The dark haired woman quirked an eyebrow, "Why?"

"Not many people would want to date a woman and have the kid come along everywhere with them, you are so good with her."

Emily thought for a moment and said, "She's quickly falling in love with you."

Dylan's heart thudded, instinctively knowing what Emily was trying to say.

"Why would I mind, she's a great kid and I knew from the start she was a special part of the package. You two come as a pair. Mama Smurf and Baby Smurf! I love her, too."

Emily playfully smacked Dylan's bicep, pretending to be annoyed. "Hey! I'm not that small!"

"You are kinda short, but I like you that way."

"Your just too tall, goofy!" They both laughed.

"But if we're going to continue this we do need some time to go out by ourselves. It's difficult though, finding a sitter to trust," Emily said sadly.

"Maybe Lynn could help us out? She has grown-up children and I'd trust her with my life. I want to continue with this, I feel so much for you in such a short time and I'm trying not to be too full-on and rush you but I need you to know that I'm serious and I was showing you that by calling you my girlfriend tonight."

"I feel it too. We haven't known each other long and I'm really trying to be careful for Molly's sake, but it's so hard because I'm falling for you. I'd love to be your girlfriend, Dylan."

Dylan lifted Emily's hand and kissed it tenderly.

"I'm going to work so hard for your love, Emmie. You're never going to want to leave me."

"You're so sweet, you big goof!"

Dylan lifted her arm and invited Emily to cuddle, which she gleefully accepted.

"Mmm. This is the best way I've ever spent an evening after the show."

"You're good at cuddling."

I've never felt so content. thought Emily as she was cuddled in Dylan's strong arms.

They snuggled like that while listening to the music for a while, then Emily said, "I love this song."

"Yeah, Adele's songs are beautiful. Would you dance with me?"

"What here? In the living room?"

"Sure! Come on." Dylan pulled the blonde up on her feet and started the song again.

Emily went willingly into her arms, resting her head on Dylan's chest.

When the rain

Is blowing in your face

And the whole world

Is on your case

I could offer you

A warm embrace

To make you feel my love

Dylan stroked her hand up and down Emily's back as they swayed together, becoming intoxicated by her unique smell.

When the evening shadows

And the stars appear

And there is no one there

To dry your tears

I could hold you

For a million years

To make you feel my love

Emily began giving gentle kisses to the big woman's collarbone. She felt Dylan respond by pulling away, taking her face in her big hands, and placing the gentlest of kisses on the young woman's lips. The blonde quickly deepened the kiss, teasing Dylan with her tongue. Dylan moaned making her own explorations with her tongue.

I know you

Haven't made

Your mind up yet

But I would never

Do you wrong

I've known it

From the moment

That we met

No doubt in my mind

Where you belong

I'd go hungry

I'd go black and blue

I'd go crawling

Down the avenue

No, there's nothing

That I wouldn't do

To make you feel my love

As the kiss turned more passionate, Dylan's hands grasped the blonde's butt and squeezed, causing Emily to moan in the older woman's mouth.

Emily's hands rested on Dylan's hips, but all she could think about was touching the washboard stomach she had dreamed of. Her hands lifted up the sides of Dylan's sleeveless t-shirt, but she was scared to go any further. Then she felt Dylan's big hand grasp her own and place it under her shirt, encouraging Emily. Dylan moaned and her muscles contracted as Emily's fingers stroked across her hard stomach.

The storms are raging

On the rolling sea

And on the highway of regret

Though winds of change

Are throwing wild and free

You ain't seen nothing

Like me yet

I could make you happy

Make your dreams come true

Nothing that I wouldn't do

Go to the ends

Of the Earth for you

To make you feel my love

Dylan pulled back from the kiss, needing to breathe.

"God, I want you so much, baby girl. If you don't want to go any further we need to calm down a bit."

"I want you too, Dyl. I want to make love so much, but I think we should wait a little longer."

Emily stroked her hand down Dylan's cheek. "I want it to be right. You understand?"

Dylan kissed her on the nose. "You're right, baby. I want this to last for a long time and I want it to be the right time for both of us."

"Thank you."

Taking Emily's hand Dylan said, "Come on Emmie, I'll show you around before bed."

Emily awoke to an empty bed. Last night she decided to share the large king size bed with her daughter in case she woke up and didn't know where she was.

She heard squeals and laughter coming from somewhere. *Dylan must have her. Hmm! Dyl.* Emily felt her stomach clench as she remember touching her new girlfriend last night.

Dylan you came so close to getting lucky. Mmm. I love her body. I think when we do go to bed, I might faint! She's so strong and well built. That stomach! Argh! Enough. Get up; you're going to drive yourself crazy!

Emily got up and followed the noise. She found herself at the door of the game room where she saw her daughter, still in her pyjamas, sword fighting on the Wii against Dylan, who was still in her boxers and t- shirt.

Emily laughed as her daughter shouted, "I get ou, Dien! I knock ou off!" As Dylan's character fell dramatically into the water, so did the big woman, falling just as dramatically onto the floor.

"Ugh! The Smurf got me! I'm dead!"

Molly heard her Mother laughing. "Mama! Me knock Dien off! I love pwaying Wii!"

Emily kissed her daughter on the head. "I bet you do, I think Dylan likes it too."

Dylan got up and looking slightly embarrassed said, "Uh, I always wake up early and I saw Molls was awake so I thought we could play."

Emily walked over and gave her a kiss. "You are such a goof! Thanks for taking care of her. She's never played video games before."

"Yeah she really loves it; she discovered the games on my iPhone as well."

"Oh be careful! I'd hate for her to break it, it's so expensive."

"It's fine, don't worry, I get them for free."

"You do?"

"Yeah I do a lot advertising with Apple." Dylan said, as if it was the most natural thing in the world.

"Okay ... Listen, how about I make us all breakfast. You said Lynn bought you some food?"

"Yeah she did but you don't have to, I mean I could take us out for breakfast."

"I like to cook, you always pay for everything and this is one thing I can do. I like looking after you both and in any case your kitchen is to die for!"

"Well, please, knock yourself out."

"Sweetie, you make sure Dylan behaves while Mommy makes breakfast."

"I will, Mama. You be good, Dien!" Molly said seriously.

Dylan grabbed the little girl and tickled her mercilessly. "I can be good, Smurf! Here comes the tickle monster!"

Emily smiled and left both giggling and laughing.

About 20 minutes later, Dylan decided she was missing the blonde too much.

"Hey Smurf, I'll be back in a few minutes. You can play some games on my phone, but remember only the games in the kid folder I made for you."

"Okay Dien. I will."

"Good girl."

Dylan headed off to the kitchen. She found Emily at the stove making pancakes. She walked up behind the blonde and wrapped her arms around her waist.

Emily turned in her arms. "I thought you were playing games?"

"I missed you too much and I didn't get a proper good morning kiss." The big woman pouted.

"We'll have to rectify that then." Emily pulled Dylan down, her hands wrapped around her neck, kissing Dylan thoroughly.

"Mmm. That's what I call a kiss, baby. Do you know how good it feels to have you both here? You've made this lonely big place feel warm and happy."

"I'm glad, we're happy to be here. Now go and get your little playmate and I'll serve breakfast."

"Okay." Dylan's face seemed to beam with happiness. She leaned over and kissed Emily's nose, then went to get Molly.

When they returned, Emily had piled the kitchen table with delicious smelling food.

"Wow, this is great." Dylan looked and saw a huge pile of pancakes, plates of bacon, eggs and lots of toast.

"Dig in, Dyl. Would you like some of everything, Molls?"

"Yes please, Mama."

Dylan looked on at the quiet domesticity around her kitchen table and it made her heart swell with happiness.

This is what I've been looking for. Family . I want this. Don't fuck it up, Morgan!

Emily looked up from her own plate and saw Dylan just looking at them strangely. Not

unhappily but something she couldn't put her finger on.

"Are you okay? What are you thinking, Dyl?"

Dylan was broken from her contemplation. "I'm fine. Just thinking how happy I am, Emmie." She smiled warmly at the blonde.

"I'm glad. Eat up or it'll get cold."

Dylan wolfed down the food on her plate and Emily was sure she didn't stop for breath for a full five minutes.

"Oh! Emmie, this is just delicious. Your pancakes are something else."

"Mama is good at cooking," Molly said proudly.

"She sure is, Smurf. Emmie, can I tell her about today?"

Emily smiled and nodded.

"Guess where we're going today, Smurf?"

"Where?! Where Dien?"

"Well. You know the movie you like? Night at the Museum?"

"Yeah? Dum dum! Rexie!"

"Well were gonna take you there today, to visit Dum dum and Rexie and Dextor. Would you like that?"

Molly jumped as quick as a flash from her seat and into Dylan's arms.

"Yeah Dien! Thank ou! Love ou."

"Love you too, Smurf."

As Dylan cuddled the little girl she looked up to Emily who mouthed, "Thank you."

"Come and finish your breakfast, sweetie, or we'll never get there."

"Yes Mama."

"I was looking on the net this morning and they've got a cool restaurant suited for kids called the Starlight Cafe, we could get some lunch there. What do you think?"

"Sounds great. Let's eat up and get ready."

"You girls ready?" Dylan shouted into the bedroom.

"Just about. Give us five minutes, Dyl."

"Come on sweetie, we need to hurry." Emily had struggled to get the excited little girl ready.

"Which bottoms, Molls? Jeans with sparkles or purple pants?"

"Sparkly jeans." As Emily got her ready Molly said, "Mama?"

"What sweetie?"

"Love Dien. She's funny."

"She is. I'm glad you like her. I hope we'll spend lots of time with her."

"Ou love her, Mama?"

What do I tell her? She's so innocent. I don't want her to get her hopes up and then it doesn't work out between us. I can't lie to her.

"Well that's complicated grown-up stuff sweetie, but can you keep a secret?" The little girl nodded.

"I think I do love her, Molls, but I'm just not ready to tell her yet. If things work out I'll tell her soon, okay?"

"Otay." Molly smiled.

"Right, shoes on and let's go."

Mother and daughter came into the living room to find Dylan, as usual, playing with her phone.

"Do you ever put that thing down, Dyl?" Emily smirked.

"Emmie, this thing organizes my entire life. I love it!" she said giving her phone a big kiss.

"You're such a goof!"

"That's what they tell me. So are Mama Smurf and Baby Smurf ready?"

"We are. I like the hat." Emily smiled. Dylan had her collar length dark hair hidden underneath a black oversized G-Star beanie hat.

"Thanks, this is my incognito look. I don't want to be recognized and bother you two. I can't really get away with the sunglasses in winter though."

Emily walked over and looked Dylan up and down. She was dressed in designer slouchy jeans and hooded sweatshirt.

"That's one of the things I really like about you, honey. You dress really nice and take care of your appearance."

Dylan moved her lips to within inches of Emily's. "I've gotta look good for my girl, haven't I?" Then their lips met in a gentle kiss.

"Mama! Dien! No kwisses! Dum dum and saurs!"

Emily smiled at Dylan's look of frustration. "Come on then, TV star. Let's move it."

"Alright Smurf, just for that here comes the tickle monster!" The big woman chased the happy girl around the room for a few minutes before saying, "Okay, Smurf, I give in. Jump up and let's go. We got suars to see!"

The three made their way down to Dylan's car and set off for the day.

They had a great day at the museum. Dylan carried Molly everywhere on her shoulders and Emily wished her little girl could have had a second parent like the TV star from the time she was born. Even with the hat on, Dylan was still recognized wherever they went but everyone was respectful of Emily and Molly's privacy when asking for pictures.

They had said a reluctant farewell that evening, promising to phone each other the next day. Emily was working the day shift and Dylan had training with the guys.

Dylan sat down at the kitchen table about to drink her protein shake and check the papers before heading out to the gym.

She switched the TV on the wall to the morning news show.

She noticed right away that her Twitter messages had gone mad overnight for some reason. Just as she opened the app to check, she heard from the TV ...

"And joining us is our showbiz correspondent Sarah Jones. Well Sarah, there's only one story on everyone lips this morning."

"You're right, Brad. It seems that one of America's most eligible women is off the market. The story broke this morning in the newspapers and on the internet that famous lesbian TV star Dylan Morgan has been snapped up."

Dylan dropped her protein shake on the floor. "Shit!"

"Dylan has always been very open about being gay and has attended many events with actresses and singers, but none have captured Ms. Morgan's eye. But this morning we've read reports and seen pictures of Dylan spending family days out at the zoo and the Natural History Museum with her new girlfriend, Emily Taylor, and her young daughter. They were also been spotted on the set of The Dylan Morgan Show, where we understand from insiders that Emily was introduced to the staff as Dylan's partner."

The TV screen showed Dylan carrying a sleeping Molly from the studio and holding Emily's hand.

"But more than that Brad, it's a bit of a Cinderella story. Miss Taylor works as a waitress for a local restaurant called 'Jimmy's Diner.' According to the newspapers, they met after Dylan stopped by the diner for a late night snack and fell in love. Miss Taylor is a single mother who has struggled for years on a low income to bring up her daughter on her own. Sources close to Miss Morgan tell me they are worried Emily Taylor is fortune hunter and have warned the TV star about the young waitress. Brad, I prefer to think that true love has struck the couple, and who knows? Maybe we'll have the next big gay wedding right here in New York."

"Who knows, Sarah. We wish them well. Now let's go over to the weather."

"Shit! Fuck! What's Emmie gonna say!" Dylan grabbed her phone to call her when an incoming call came from Lynn.

"Did you just see that, Lynn?" Dylan shouted.

"See it? It's all over the papers; the phones at the studio are going crazy. I got a call telling me that the press are laying in wait outside the diner, waiting for her to appear. It seems to have caught everyone's imagination. The rags to riches story. The ordinary woman who snagged a worldwide TV star."

"Shit. I'll call her right now. Who the fuck are these sources close to me warning about me about her intentions?" Dylan ranted.

"Calm down, Dylan. It may take time but we'll sort it out. I have no idea who the sources could be but I can't imagine it being any of your studio staff. I had a call from the network; they want a sit down with you in the next few days. They've set up focus groups to find out the public reaction to you being in gay relationship."

"What the hell for? I never hid the fact that I'm gay, they've always been fine with it."

"You were always a single gay woman before, and it suited them for publicity's sake that your were seen out and about at premieres and parties with actresses and models. This is a relationship, a serious relationship, with a poor single mother."

"What?"

"That's not what I think Dylan, you know me. That's what they'll be thinking. Don't worry about that just now. Your popularity is sky high and worldwide at the moment, and your contract is watertight. Just meet with them calmly and see what they have to say."

Dylan took a deep calming breath.

"Okay. You're right, as usual. I'll call Emmie now and get back to you. Speak to you soon."

Dylan ended the call and dialed Emily's apartment.

"No answer, shit!"

She quickly redialed her PA. "Lynn? I can't get an answer. I'm going to drive over there. Can you phone Mark and Patrick for me and tell them I won't be training today?"

"No problem. Anything else?"

"Yeah I want you to organize a delivery for me ..."

Meanwhile, Emily had just dropped Molly off with Mrs. Hill who lived one floor up in her apartment block. Emily was running late this morning, after their full day yesterday she found it hard to get Molly up and ready. Emily hadn't had much time to chat but she was sure Mrs. Hill was acting a little funny this morning. Smiling a lot and telling her they would need to have a gossip when she picked up the little girl.

The blonde rushed down to the front of the building, hoping she wouldn't be late for work. When she opened the door, she was greeted by a barrage of cameras, flashes and voices shouting questions.

What the hell is going on?

She tried to cover her eyes from the flashes and push her way through.

"Miss Taylor, is it true your broke up Dylan Morgan and Katie Phillips' relationship?" one shouted. Another said, "Emily, when will you be moving in with Dylan?"

"What does Molly's father think about his daughter being brought up in a lesbian relationship?"

The questions were like machine gun fire as Emily tried to push her way through the crowd. When she made it out to the sidewalk, she felt her hand being grabbed.

"Let go!" she shouted and struggled as the press pack followed.

"Emmie, it's me, jump in the car now!"

"Dylan? Thank God you're here."

The TV star had parked on the side of the street and they both raced to get into the large jeep.

Once they were safely in, Dylan said, "Buckle up. I'll get us out of here."

As Dylan drove, Emily was silent with shock.

She looks terrified. Shit! I need to sort this out.

Dylan drove right across town and pulled into the parking lot under her condo.

"What are you doing, Dylan? I need to get to work."

Dylan turned around in her seat and took her hand. "Listen Emmie, the diner is packed with press waiting for you. There's no way you could go in today."

Emily looked angry and panicky as she replied, "If I don't go to work, I don't get paid and Molly and I don't eat!" Emily put her head in her hands.

"Please calm down. I got Lynn to call your boss, he's quite happy for you to take a week's paid vacation to get things sorted out. As I said, the diner's packed with press guys and customers hoping to get a glimpse of you. So he's happily making money."

"What are we going to do, Dylan? This is my life here?"

"Let me go back and pick up Molly, and you can stay here until things die down a bit. It won't last forever, we're just a novelty. To put it in perspective, it's only ten reporters at your house and work. I've had to put up with a lot worse."

"Maybe you have, but this is all new to me and this feels like a huge deal. Molly and I have gone from having no one but each other, to having you and a city full of reporters. I can't just uproot my daughter's life because the press won't leave me alone. I don't know how I can live my life like this, go to work like this." Emily's tears fell down her cheeks.

How am I going to live without you?

Dylan stared straight ahead, suddenly feeling sick as she said, "If it's what you want, I'll ask Lynn to issue a statement saying we are no longer together. The press should lose interest in a few weeks."

Emily looked at her in shock. "Is that what you want, Dylan? I thought ..."

"No! It's not what I want," Dylan said a bit too forcefully. "I want you. You and Molly. I thought you said you couldn't live with this?"

"I was just scared, Dylan, I don't want to lose you. I've never felt like this before about anyone, but we haven't known each other that long and I guess I'm afraid I could end up

facing this alone. It's a lot to gamble."

Dylan stroked her cheek. "I want you, both of you, for as long as you want me. You should see from my track record that I don't go into things lightly. It's true that we haven't known each other long but my heart knows you. My heart knows I love you, it has from the moment I met you but I was afraid of scaring you. I love you Emily Taylor, and I love your little girl. Please let us make this work?"

She loves me? Do I make that leap? It's now or never, Emily.

"I love you, Dylan Morgan. I want to make this work."

Dylan pressed her lips against Emily's, sheer relief coursing through her body.

"Thank you, baby girl. I won't ever make you regret it. I promise."

"I think you're a safe bet, Goofy," Emily said pulling the big woman into a hug.

"Will you come and stay with me then?"

"No."

"No? But I thought ..."

"I need to be able to handle this to be in your life, Dyl. I just got scared this morning. I mean, what's the worst that can happen? They ask me questions and take my picture? I think I'm made of sterner stuff than that."

Dylan smiled. "You are amazing. Just remember to keep the Smurf's face covered okay? Will you consider living with me when you're ready?"

"Of course I will, honey. We just need a little more time. I'm very independent and people might think I'm after your money."

"I don't care what people think."

"I know. We'll get there. Just a little more time."

Dylan kissed her on the lips.

"Okay. That's all I ask. I love you guys."

"So I'll take today off and go back in tomorrow."

Dylan took Emily's hand. "I'll agree on one condition."

"What's that?"

Dylan turned and grabbed a package from the backseat.

"This is the condition. Open it."

Emily pulled a box from the bag and found an iPhone."

"Dylan no ..."

"No, I won't hear any argument. It's on my account so you don't have to worry about bills, and you can get any games the Smurf wants to play. It's for your safety. This morning I couldn't get hold of you, and I need to know you can call me if you're being hassled or don't feel safe. Okay?"

Emily guessed she was going to have to give in on this.

"Alright!" she sighed.

"Good, now that you have the day off, why don't we go upstairs, order in lunch, I'll show how to use that thing and we can snuggle?"

"Excellent. I told you, you're not just a handsome face.

"Dylan flashed her best grin. "I'll take you to pick up Molls later."

"How did they even know, Dyl?" asked Emily as they ate their lunch.

Dylan had ordered lunch from the kitchen in the apartment building.

"Most of the other reporters and paparazzi don't bother unless I'm out at an event because, basically, nothing was going on in my life, but when my brother Joey was having his problems, he was all over the press. Parties, guys, alcohol and, in the end, drugs. When he died, a reporter named Jimmy Daniels wrote a really cruel piece about him. He bribed one of the crime scene guys to get pictures of ..."

Dylan gulped and ran a hand through her dark hair.

"Take your time, honey. I'm listening."

"Uh ... pictures of how he was found. Dead. He published them."

"That low down bastard!" Emily fumed.

"Yeah, I know. When I saw it, I went straight to the newspaper office to kill him. If I had found him, I think I really would have. He wasn't there, but a very heated conversation with the editor later, he was fired. I threatened to throw every lawyer under the sun at them unless Jimmy took the fall. He's freelance now, sells his gutter stories and pictures to the highest bidder. Every since I got him fired he's followed me around, waiting for me to make one wrong move. It has to have been him."

"I'm so sorry you had to go through that, Dyl. We won't let him win, what's he got on us anyway? We're just a new happy, loving couple. I'll get used to the attention and I won't let it stop my life." Emily said defiantly.

"Thank you baby. You're amazing."

"Sam, I need you to keep digging on the kid's father."

"But we got the story, Jimmy? We broke it and made a ton of cash, why not just leave it?"

"It's not enough. I need Dylan Morgan hurt, embarrassed, all of the above. I know there's a story there, so keep digging. My contact came up with nothing."

"Okay! Okay, I will. I'll get back to you."

Click

The next morning arrived and Emily was preparing to face the press and the public at work.

Dylan insisted on taking her to work and Emily reluctantly agreed, as she realized there would be nowhere to hide from the cameras on public transportation, and Dylan assured her the press interest would calm down.

Her new partner arrived early and played with Molly while Emily got ready. "Okay, it's now or never. Let's drop Molly off and get going," said Emily nervously. Dylan stood and gently caressed the side of her girlfriend's face.

"Okay. Now remember what I said, just keep walking straight ahead and don't reply to any questions no matter how much they annoy you. I'll keep them back. Remember, if this is too much for you, going to work with this entire circus, we'll work something out okay?"

"I'll be fine honey, this is my life, and they're not going to stop me. Let's go."

They dropped Molly off and made their way to the front door. Dylan looked at Emily and said, "You ready?"

The young woman took a deep breath. *Come on Emily. She's worth it. You can do this.*

"As I'll ever be!"

Dylan opened the door and they were immediately bombarded with a barrage of flashes and questions.

Emily felt herself be bodily maneuvered by Dylan and virtually thrown into the car.

"We made it! You okay, Emmie?" asked Dylan.

Emily tried to catch her breath. "Well you certainly got me through that crowd!"

"Sorry if I was a bit rough, baby. I just wanted to get you through quickly."

"It's fine, it's fine. Let's get going before I'm late."

As they drove over Emily asked, "What time is your meeting with the network?"

"10 o'clock."

"Will you be okay? Could they fire you or anything?" Emily worried.

"Well, they could simply not offer me a new contract when it comes up, but I own the production company and the rights to the show, so they couldn't actually fire me."

Dylan rested her hand on Emily's leg. "Don't worry, everything will be fine. If worst comes to worst, I'll survive. I've made enough money through my salary, rights to the show in other countries and advertisements that I don't need to ever work again."

Whoa! thought Emily. "Really?"

"Yeah but don't worry. It won't come to that."

"Will you call me when you get out of the meeting so I won't worry?"

"Of course. Look, were nearly there. Are you sure you want to go in by yourself?"

"Yes, I'll be fine. You'll just cause more attention."

"Maybe." Dylan pulled over at the sidewalk.

"Quick! Give me a kiss before the photographers notice?" asked Dylan.

Emily leaned over and kissed the big woman's lips.

"Mmm. I'll never get enough of that."

"I hope not, TV star! I better go. I'll miss you."

"You too, Mama Smurf. Be careful, any problems, you just call me. I'll be here in a flash. I love you."

Emily smiled. "I love you too, honey. Well, here I go. Wish me luck!"

Dylan watched as Emily jumped out of the Jeep and made her way through the cameras.

"To put up with that, you're definitely a keeper, baby."

Emily made her way into the diner in one piece and Maggie helped her through to the back room.

"Well Miss Taylor, you've been busy! This place has never seen so many customers."

Emily cringed. "I'm sorry about all this, Maggie. It wasn't planned you know. We just met and connected and ..."

"Don't you worry, young lady. This place could do with a little livening up, and you've certainly done that. Tom is over the moon."

"Oh ... okay."

"Listen, it'll be fine but you should probably stay in the kitchen for a bit, just until things die down or you'll just get bothered all the time. We'll manage and look at it this way, you've probably saved our jobs. The diner couldn't have gone on much longer without an upturn in business. So you just enjoy yourself, okay? Are you happy?"

Emily beamed. "I've never been happier, Maggie, she's wonderful, kind and Molly loves her."

"Good. You deserve it. Now let me go and see to that rabble out there. I'll say one thing for reporters, they're great tippers!"

The two women laughed.

Lynn met Dylan at the door to the studios. "Morning. How was everything today?"

"Still crazy. So, do you think I still have a TV show?" Dylan asked, only half serious.

"Of course you do. You're the biggest draw this network has, if they didn't have the advertising your show generates they'd be up shit creek!"

Dylan laughed; it was so unusual to hear the older woman swear.

"I guess so."

"Oh, Mike said there's no need to head over to the network office, a video conference will be fine."

"Hmm. Okay." *Strange. I thought they wanted to bust my balls?*

They made their way to Dylan's office. "How's Emily coping with it?" Lynn asked.

Dylan sat at her desk and said, "She was kinda freaked out at the start. It's a big spotlight to throw yourself and your child into, you know. I tried to get her to take time away from work and stay with me so I could protect her a bit, but she's so independent, she insists it's too soon."

"Well that's a good thing, Dylan; at least you know she's not with you for the fame and money."

"I already knew that!" the big woman said a little too sharply.

Dylan, you're like a daughter to me, and because of that it's my job to point these things out, no matter how much you don't want to hear it."

Dylan looked up at her and smirked. "You're right. Do I have your approval then?"

"You do. She seems like a good young girl and that daughter of hers is a poppet."

"She is. I can't believe how much I love them both so much, so quickly. It was meant to be, I guess."

"Your heart was just waiting on the right one. She'll be good for you, Dylan. You've been alone too long. You need looking after, maybe now I won't have to chase you to eat meals and get some sleep!"

"Okay! Okay! I know I've got a good thing going and I'll make sure I don't mess it up. Let's head out and see the big bosses."

Dylan answered the conference on her MacBook. "Morgan! How you doing, buddy?"

Mike Taylor, the network's head of entertainment, appeared on the screen.

Well. This is different!

"I'm fine, Mike. How are you?"

"Just fine, just fine. Listen, I just wanted a quick word after this week's events."

"Let me just stop you before you go any further, Mike. Emily is my partner and is not negotiable. I will not stand for any pressure on my relationship from the network."

"Whoa! Calm down there, Morgan! It's nothing like that. Your private life is your business. The network would just like me to talk it over with you. We ran some polls with the viewers and your numbers are even higher than they were before. The audience loves the rags to riches story of the poor single mother swept off her feet by the knight in shining armor TV star. They're lapping it up!"

"Okay? So what are you asking me to do?" Dylan knew there was something coming.

"Nothing! Why would you think that?" the TV exec blustered.

"Because you always have an angle, Mike."

"There's no angle. We just wanted you to know we're fine with this relationship and you should feel free to mention your girlfriend during the show if you want."

There it is.

"You want me to use my relationship for publicity?"

"No! How could you think that? We're just saying feel free to talk about her if you're so inclined. The public loves it!! We just didn't want you worried that you had to hide it."

"I wasn't worried, Mike. It's my life and I know how important this show is to the network."

Mike cleared his throat nervously. "Yeah we know that, Morgan, but it reflects well on the network, in this day and age ... well you know."

"Know what?" Dylan knew exactly what Mike meant. The network now had their very own lesbian poster couple.

"Oh hell Morgan! You know what I mean. Your kind of couple makes us look modern, in touch with things."

"I do know what you mean. You've got your own lesbian couple just like all the other shows. I don't know, but I think I should be insulted."

"Morgan, give me a break okay?"

"Okay. If it seems natural and right I will, but Emily is a very private person so I have to respect her wishes."

"Alright. We can live with that. I'll let you get back to business then. Bye Morgan."

"See ya, Mike."

Well that was different!

As it turned out, Dylan only made a mild reference to Emily in the Friday show. Starting her show with the line, *"Well. I don't know about you guys but I've had a quite week! I've recently developed a craving for diner food."*

The audience whooped and laughed at being let in on the joke.

The next few weeks went by quickly. The publicity didn't die down completely, as Dylan had tried to reassure her girlfriend it would, but the number of photographers did lessen and Emily was becoming much better at handling them, getting on a first name basis with some and learning the lesson that if you gave them a shot they'd be more inclined to respect your privacy.

Dylan and Emily's relationship went from strength to strength, each spending as much time as possible with the other. They had yet to become intimate, Emily wanting to wait for the right time, but shared some very heated kisses and touches that were becoming increasingly difficult not to take any further. To Dylan's delight Emily and Molly spent every weekend with her. She had never been happier than when coming home from the studio to her two favorite girls. It felt like family.

Emily's work was becoming increasingly difficult. Tom had agreed to give her only day shifts, as Dylan insisted it wouldn't be safe to be alone at the diner at night now that she was so well known. Tom had eagerly agreed to any changes, as the customers Dylan and Emily's notoriety was bringing in was saving the business.

Dylan felt it couldn't go on forever though. Emily had been relegated to working the kitchen after a few unsavory incidents with Dylan's more enthusiastic fans. A couple in particular had been quite unpleasant. They felt jealous at the young woman stealing Dylan away, as one put it.

They still hadn't had a date night on their own, both being reluctant to leave Molly for the night, but they decided to take the opportunity of going to a film premiere that Dylan had been invited to on the coming Tuesday. Lynn was having her grandchildren to stay and suggested that Molly could stay over with them. Emily felt comfortable leaving her with Lynn, after getting to know the woman over the past month and a half.

The Saturday morning before the premiere, Dylan and Molly were sitting on the couch playing with Dylan's iPad, while waiting for Emily as she got ready to go shopping.

After initial reluctance, Emily agreed to allow Dylan to buy her an outfit for the premiere. The young blonde realized she would never be able to afford something suitable and she didn't want to risk embarrassing Dylan.

"Dien?" Molly looked up at her favorite playmate.

"What is it Smurf?"

"Me go to premer?"

The big woman laughed gently at how the little girl struggled with the word.

"I'm sorry Molls, this is a big person film. But I tell you what, the very next kid film that comes out, I'll get us tickets and take you out for a new outfit just like your Mama. How's that?"

Molly jumped on Dylan's lap and threw her little arms around the big woman's neck.

"Thank ou Dien! I love ou."

Just then Emily came out from the bedroom smiling. "Hey, what are all the loving cuddles about?"

"Me and the Smurf just fixing up a date for the next kid film premiere."

"Yeah, a date Mama." "Great, will you let me come too?"

"Sure Mama. You come, too." Molly said seriously.

Dylan stood and grabbed Emily around the waist and growled into her neck. "I love you in these jeans, baby!"

"I aim to please, honey. We ready to go?"

"Yeah. I figured we take cabs so we didn't have to worry about parking. If you get the Smurfs coat on, I'll call down and ask Morris to grab us a one."

Emily pulled Dylan back by the arm. "Honey, are you sure you're going to be warm enough in this? I know were only just into October but it's starting to get cold."

Dylan had on a blue ski vest worn over a sweatshirt, with her usual beanie hat and designer jeans.

The TV star felt a warm glow inside at the concern her girlfriend was showing.

"Yes Mother! Hey, I'm naturally warm bloodied. Come on, baby girl."

The three had an amusing cab ride. The Indian driver instantly recognized the tall woman and proceeded to list dares he thought she should do.

Emily smiled as she watched her girlfriend banter easily back and forth with the man, making him feel he was listened to and appreciated.

"I'll be sure to mention that to the producers, buddy. Thanks for the ride," Dylan said, shutting the taxi door.

"Boy! He could talk." She held onto Molly tightly as they walked away from the curb.

"You weren't doing too badly yourself, honey. I don't understand how you can be so shy and then as soon as it has to do with work, you're like super confident."

Dylan shrugged. "I don't know. Just happens I guess. So where do we start?"

"I've never shopped on Fifth Avenue, Dyl," Emily said.

"Well I've never bought a dress here before, but there always seems to be nice ones in Gucci and Prada, oh and there's Saks."

"Dyl ..."

The big woman saw the uncomfortable look on her girlfriend's face and wanted to put a stop to it right away.

"Look, we've discussed this. You're going to a premiere, as my girlfriend, and for that you need the right outfit. I have no one else in this world to spend my money on, just let me treat you and Molls the way I want. Okay?"

Emily looked at the woman holding on to her little girl. She knew instinctively that her kindness was not about showing off or trying to control her, but simply to care for both Molly and herself, and enjoy making them happy.

"Okay. Lead on then."

Dylan beamed and gave her a quick kiss on the lips. Just as she did a flash went off across the street.

"They're never far away are they?" said Emily, pulling away from the kiss.

"I'm afraid not but they won't get into the stores. Come on, Smurf!" Dylan lifted the little girl up onto her shoulders.

"Yeah Dien! I like it up here."

"I know, now you be a good girl while we find Mama a dress and I'll take you into F.A.O Schwartz for a toy."

Molly hugged her arms round Dylan's neck a little too tightly.

"Thank ou Dien."

Turning to Emily, Dylan said. "I'll keep her up here so I know where she is, it gets very busy around here. Now let's start at Saks."

They were casually looking through dresses when one of the sales assistants noticed Dylan. They were then whisked off to a personal shopper's area. Dylan and Molly got to munch on cookies, coffee and juice while dress after dress was brought to Emily. The young woman put on a beautiful black dress and walked out to the couch area.

"What do you think?"

Dylan's heart seemed to pound faster each time Emily walked out in a new dress.

You were just born to wear these things.

"I think it's beautiful but I think all the dresses you've tried are beautiful. What do you think, Smurf?"

"Rweally Pretty!"

You are great for a girl's ego, Dylan Morgan, thought Emily.

"Your daughter has good taste, Ms. Morgan," Lisa, the personal shopper added.

Dylan looked at Emily, a little embarrassed. "Uh ... no, Molly is Miss Taylor's daughter."

"Oh, I'm so sorry. She just looks so much like you."

Emily beamed at Dylan. She was delighted others could see what she had seen from the very start.

"Can I ask what you will be wearing, Ms. Morgan?" asked Lisa.

"Ah. Black three piece suit, white shirt."

"Well may I suggest something other than black? It would be nice to have a contrast. I could put a few more selections together?"

"I tell you what, we wanted to have a look around some other places but why don't we take some of the dresses you liked, 'cause your gonna need them for other things we'll go to."

Emily was hesitant but it did make sense. She wanted to look good on Dylan's arm.

Does she realize these things are a couple of thousand dollars each? thought Emily.

"Okay. Thank you. Um ... I think I'll take the black and the green ones."

"May I suggest some lingerie selections for your choices?" Lisa asked.

Now that's what I'm talking about! thought Dylan. They had yet to become fully intimate and the big woman hoped it was coming soon because just kissing and being close to Emily was driving her crazy. At the same time she knew she had to show patience, Emily was by nature very careful, especially after being burned by her ex, Toni.

What an idiot! Having Emmie, a pregnant Emmie at that, and letting her go. I will never give her any reason to leave me. I'm not that stupid. Nu uh! No way!

Dylan's thoughts were interrupted by Emily saying, "Dyl, is that okay?"

"Oh sure, why don't the Smurf and I go look around the children's department while you get sorted. Just call me when you're ready and I'll meet you at the check out."

"Okay. Molly, you be good for Dylan."

"Yeah Mama."

Emily's heart melted as she watched the two happily trot off together.

"Are you sure this is okay? I thought it would be the best place for Molls."

They were sitting in TGI Fridays, just about to order. Dylan had met Emily back at the checkout carrying a couple of bags of things for Molly. A few pairs of designer jeans, tops and some cute little Gucci snow boots. She didn't mention how much they cost. They then made their way to the Gucci store where Emily found the perfect dress, an off-white strapless gown that gathered at the side. Emily had such fun choosing and she had been treated so well, but she had no doubt that probably wouldn't have been the case if she had gone in herself. So now they found themselves in TGI's for lunch.

"Of course it's okay for us honey, but is it for you? I mean you're always taking us to places to suit Molls, maybe you would have liked something better."

"Nah, I'm a burger and fries type of girl like Molly here. Besides there'll be plenty of time for us to go to fancy restaurants."

"Yes, I think we need that. I hope Molls gets on well with Lynn and her grandchildren, if she does maybe we could do that again and have some alone time."

"Yeah, Lynn's great with kids. I'm sure she'll have a great time."

After they placed their order, Emily asked, "What are you doing? You know, I think it's attached to your hand."

Dylan looked up from her phone with a cheesy grin. "I'm on Twitter telling everyone what a wonderful day I'm having."

"Oh, what did you say?"

"I said, *Having a wonderful day, shopping with my two girls.*"

Emily reached over and took Dylan's big hand. "You are just the sweetest person I have ever met. I don't know why you weren't snapped up years ago."

"No one was you." Dylan lifted her hand and kissed it tenderly.

"Is it that simple?"

"Yes, it is to me. No one ever made me feel like you do. As soon as I started talking to you, I knew you were right for me. You don't mind me talking about you on this do you?"

"No, I think it's nice that you want to be open about us."

"Good. Cause I want to shout it from the rooftops!"

They enjoyed a good meal with lots of laughs. Emily was so glad Molly had her; the little girl had never had as much fun in her young life until she met Dylan. The big woman acted like a big kid and Molly loved it.

All through the meal, people kept coming up asking for autographs and pictures. Sometimes Emily forgot just how famous Dylan was, but she was always polite and respectful as long as they didn't take pictures that included Molly and herself. Molly at first thought it was fun but then started to get a little jealous of seeing strangers taking her playmate's attention.

"Dien?" Molly looked up from her ice cream sundae.

"Yeah Smurf?"

"Why those people always want to get a picture?"

Dylan looked a little forlornly at Emily. How do you explain fame to a little girl? "Well, uh..."

Emily jumped in. "You know that Dylan works on the TV, sweetie?"

Molly nodded. "Well everybody watches Dylan's show and they really like it. So when they see her they're really excited, but you're lucky, you get to spend lots of time on your own with Dylan so it's not too bad to let some people talk to her for a few minutes is it?"

Molly thought hard and when she realized she must be special to have so much of Dylan's time, she smiled smugly.

"It's otay, Mama."

"Good girl." Emily patted her daughter's cheek.

"Hey Molls, guess what I'm doing on the show this week?"

"What?! What?!"

"It's an eating challenge. I have to eat yucky stuff like insects and rat's tails and eyeballs."

"Cool!!" she said excitedly.

Emily looked rather pale. "You're kidding me. You'd really do that?"

"Yeah, it's my job."

"Well forget kissing me with those lips after."

"Aww Emmie! No kisses for your honey?" Dylan said in a baby voice.

"No! Not one."

Dylan lifted her hand and gently stroked down Emily's arm, making her shiver, and then looked at her straight in the eyes.

"Baby girl, you won't be able to resist me."

Emily lost herself in Dylan's gaze. Only to be interrupted by the server coming to clear their plates.

"Can I get you anything else?"

"No, thank you, just the bill," Dylan replied.

They made their way back home, Dylan looking a lot like a packhorse under all their bags.

Molly ran off to the bedroom to play with a toy Dylan had got her and Emily took the opportunity of getting the dark haired woman alone.

She pulled Dylan towards her and kissed her passionately. When they parted she said, "I need to thank you for a wonderful day. I've never had the chance to try on beautiful clothes like that, much less buy them. It was magical. And the clothes you bought Molly were so cute. You spoil us too much."

"Emmie. I've worked hard, really hard, to achieve the career that I have but for as much as I enjoy it, I would come back here to loneliness and silence. With you two in my life, everything is now joyful, a trip to

the museum, a trip to the shops. I love to spend my money on you both, I now realize why being successful matters because I want to build a life with you two. A family. All that I've achieved was for a reason, so I could have the means to look after what I hope will be my family. I know you want to take things slow, but I know I want us to be together properly, with you both living here with me. And I promise you will never want for anything again."

Emily closed her eyes, taking in this emotional statement. "I want that too, we'll get there. It's just hard for me, I've been so independent for so long. Just give me some time."

Leaning in for a kiss, Dylan said, "I'd wait forever, baby girl. I love you."

Tuesday arrived. Emily had gotten two days vacation from the diner so she could enjoy getting ready and not worry about work the next day. Her boss was only too happy to help these days because of the increased business due to her newfound celebrity.

Dylan had picked them up Monday evening to stay over .

While Emily was relaxing in Dylan's big whirlpool tub, her partner was entertaining Molly in the game room. She could hear the squeals and laughter from there, even though Dylan had set some relaxing music to play through the bathroom speakers.

Lynn was coming over in the next hour to pick up Molly. The little girl didn't seem phased by going to stay with Lynn and her grandkids, which surprised Emily as the girl hadn't mixed much with other children, but the prospect of getting to play with other kids had Molly very overexcited.

In the other room, a game on the Xbox had descended into a tickle fight on the floor.

"Dien! Ha! Ha! I beat you again!" Molly giggled uncontrollably.

"You beat me, you little monkey! No one beats Dylan at a dare!"

Emily cleared her throat.

Dylan looked up to see Emily standing in the doorway, arms crossed, only in a robe with her hair tied up in a towel.

Oh my god she looks adorable. What I wouldn't give to slowly open that ... Agh! Don't go there! You'll drive yourself crazy.

"Well, what are you two up to?"

Molly jumped up and pulled her mother by the hand over to the TV .

"Mama! I beat Dien's Dare!"

"Oh? What was the dare?"

"We were playing this soccer game on the Xbox and I told her it was Dylan's Dare and the little Smurf whipped my butt!"

Dylan turned to Emily and winked. "Show your mama how to do it, Molls."

The little girl stood in front of the large screen TV and kicked an invisible ball. On the screen, the soccer ball flew past the goalkeeper into the net.

"Yeah! I score Mama!" Molly squealed.

"Well done, sweetie! Can Mama try?"

Molly nodded. "Just kick it hard, Mama."

Emily looked down at the floor in front of her. "Where's the ball though?"

"On the screen, baby. Look." Dylan lined her up with the ball on the screen.

"Now kick." She did and the ball went sailing well over the bar.

"Don't be sad, Mama. You'll do better." Molly patted her Mom, trying to make her feel better.

"Yeah Mama Smurf. You just need practice," said Dylan smiling.

Emily playfully slapped her on the arm. "Hey goofy! You behave. Technology is amazing these days isn't it? Molly has never played a game consoles like you have and she has just picked it up in no time."

"Kids are like that, it comes natural."

The intercom buzzed. "That'll be Lynn. I'll buzz her up."

"Okay. I'll grab Molly's overnight bag."

Dylan opened the door. "Hey Lynn! Come in. Emily's just getting Molly together."

"No problem. Charlie's got the kids at home. We thought we'd go to a movie, then dinner and tomorrow maybe the aquarium."

"That sounds great. Listen, use the company credit card for everything. Don't want you out of pocket for all that."

Dylan had accounts set up for a few trusted members of the production company for expenses and such. Lynn managed the account for Dylan and used it for sending gifts to guests, getting things for Dylan and any other expenses.

"Dylan, there's no need, we were taking Jamie and Suzy out anyway."

"Please, just use it and enjoy, you work so hard, you deserve it."

"Well if you say so. Everything is set up for tonight. Your car will pick you up around 5:30. I'm glad I don't have to find you a date anymore!" the older woman joked. Dylan smiled warmly and said, "Me too. I'll just go and check on the girls."

Dylan found Emily zipping up Molly's winter coat.

"Now remember sweetie, Mama put some money in your purse in your backpack if you want to buy anything."

"It's okay Emmie; Lynn is going to use the company credit card for everything. She thought they'd do a movie tonight then the aquarium tomorrow."

"Yeah! See the fishes, Mama!" said Molly excitedly.

"Oh. Are you sure?" Emily sounded a little worried.

"Yeah don't worry about anything. I'm sure it's tax deductible somewhere along the way."

"How could a visit to the aquarium be tax deductible for the Dylan Morgan Show?" Emily smirked.

The dark haired woman folded her arms across her chest and raised an eyebrow.

"Research for a dare. "Dylan hand feeds raw meat to sharks?"

"Yes. Whatever you say, honey. Okay. You got everything, Molls?"

Suddenly Emily's heart began to pound. It had always just been Molly and herself. Their lives were changing so fast and it was hard to let her daughter go off on her own.

"Yeah Mama."

"Okay, give me a hug. You do what Lynn tells you, okay?"

Dylan could see Emily had tears welling up in her eyes.

"Uh, why don't I take Molly out, Emmie?"

"Yes. Thanks, I ... think that would be best."

"Have fun at the premiere, Mama."

"I will, sweetie."

Molly walked off hand in hand with Dylan, and when they were out of sight, the tears began to fall. Within minutes, Dylan was back. "Well Molly went off as happy as a little piglet in mud ... oh sweetheart. What's wrong?" She went straight over and took the young woman in her arms.

Emily cuddled into her chest. "I've never spent a night apart from her, its hard letting go. I know it's silly."

"It's not silly. Since she was born it's been you and Molly against the world. It's gonna take time before you realize there are people to help you now, and me to love you."

You're right. I'm so lucky to have found you."

"Before you get dressed, I know something that will cheer you up." Dylan took her hand and guided Emily to her own bedroom and got a black velvet rectangular box from a drawer.

"Something to go with your outfit." Dylan looked down at her shoes shyly.

"Dylan, what have you done?"

"Just open it."

Emily opened the box to find a platinum necklace with a solitaire diamond. In the center was a pair of matching earrings. The young woman looked at the gift in silence.

Dylan took the silence as displeasure. *Shit! I knew it was too much.*

"Look. I'm sorry ..."

"No." Emily looked up at Dylan with tears in her eyes.

"I'm just overwhelmed. No one has ever cared for me the way you do. In such a short space of time, you have made me feel so loved. Thank you." Emily moved over to her girlfriend and kissed her tenderly. "I'll treasure these forever."

Dylan breathed a sigh of relief and pulled Emily close. "I was afraid you'd think it was too much."

"It's wonderful and I love you." Emily put her hand underneath Dylan's t-shirt and stroked her hard abs. "I think tonight is going to be magical." She pulled back and walked away with a sway to her hips. At the door she stopped and turned to see Dylan say, "Argh! Your gonna kill me baby, I just know you are!"

Emily winked and said, "I'm going to get ready. I suggest you do too, TV star."

I'm doomed! I know I am!

Dylan sat in the living room waiting for her girlfriend while nursing a scotch. This had always been her tradition for events she attended in the past. The prospect of spending the evening in the company of some actress or TV personality that Lynn chose never filled her with joy, making small talk was torturous. Tonight though, would be different. Dylan was excited about showing her girlfriend the bright lights and glamour of a showbiz event.

From the hallway, Emily watched Dylan lost in her thoughts. *She looks so good. I hope I'm not a disappointment*, Emily thought. Her tall partner was wearing a three piece black suit with a crisp white shirt. Her thick dark hair hung simply just below her collar.

Emily took a deep breath and walked into the room. "Dylan?"

The big woman jumped up and turned. Her mouth hung open and she struggled to find the words to express how her girlfriend looked.

Emily took Dylan's silence as a negative. "If you don't like ..."

Dylan quickly walked over to her and said, "No. You look absolutely stunning. You take my breath away." Dylan peppered Emily's neck with tiny kisses, her libido kicking into overdrive. "Oh you smell so good!"

"Do you really like it?"

Dylan took a step back and looked her up and down. The off-white dress clung to her curves in all the right places.

"Baby girl, I will have the most beautiful woman on my arm tonight and be the envy of everyone one there."

Emily trailed her hand teasingly down the front of Dylan's chest, ending as she gave the big woman's belt a tug. "You look so handsome, honey; I could just eat you all up!"

"Ugh!" Dylan moaned. "Don't say things like that when we have to leave in ten minutes!"

Emily giggled at the clearly exasperated woman. "Poor baby! Maybe I can do something about that later."

Dylan growled as she kissed her way down her girlfriends arm. Emily loved the effect she could have on this big powerful woman.

"Honey could you get me a drink? I could use some Dutch courage before facing that red carpet!"

"Sure. What would you like? Whiskey, vodka, wine, champagne?" Dylan asked, walking to the kitchen.

"You have all that?" Emily followed her to the kitchen.

"Yeah. I like making cocktails and stuff. I'm not good at cooking but I am good with drinks."

"Um ... how about vodka, soda and lime?"

"Okay, give me a sec." Dylan got the drink together with a flourish.

Emily took a sip. "Hmm. Nice. I'd love to try some of your cocktails another time."

"Sure thing."

The door buzzer rang. "That'll be the car." Emily looked nervous as she gulped down the last of her drink.

Dylan took Emily's hands in hers. "Listen, you'll be fine. I'll look after you, just stick close and remember to enjoy yourself. I know I go on about not liking the showbiz lifestyle but going with you will be fun. Think of it as our coming out party."

"Okay. I'll try. I just feel like I have a school of fish swimming around in my stomach. Let's go, TV star!"

The long black limousine pulled up outside the Ziegfeld Theatre. Emily gripped Dylan's hand tightly as she heard the muted noise of the crowd and cries of the photographers.

While they were still in the quiet bubble of the car, Dylan took the opportunity to prepare her girlfriend for what was to come.

"When the door opens, noise and sound are gonna hit you. Just hold onto me and I'll guide you in. We have to stop for the photographers. Just smile and remember that I love you more than anything." Dylan leaned over and kissed her softly on the lips.

"I won't let you down, honey."

"You never could. Ready to face the masses?"

Emily took a deep breath. "As I'll ever be!"

Dylan knocked on the partition in front of them and within seconds the door was opened.

A wall of noise and flashes hit Emily. *Oh my god!* The young blonde's heart pounded in her chest. She felt herself pulled from the car and suddenly they were there, in the thick of it. Shouts and calls seemed to come from everywhere.

"Dylan! Over here! Emily!" Dylan stood with her arm protectively around Emily's waist.

What was it Dylan said to remember? Oh yeah smile. I can do that. Oh God! Julia Roberts is like ten feet away from me, Emily thought in a panic.

Sensing her girlfriend's tension, Dylan whispered. "Breath baby, breath. You're doing great."

"Dylan! Dylan! Kiss her! Come on!" The photographers shouted.

"Why do they want you to kiss me?"

"Money, baby. We're in the news everyday of the week, practically. A picture of us at our first event together will be worth big bucks. They're not getting it, though. Come on I need to go over and sign a few autographs."

They walked over to where the fans were waiting behind barricades.

The yells and screaming were unbelievable. Arms with pens were thrust under Dylan's nose, while security guards kept them from grabbing the star too much.

"Dylan I love you!" Lots of voices screamed. "Marry me, Dylan!" Came others.

Men had pictures taken with her in an arm wrestling pose.

One girl grabbed Dylan around the neck and managed to kiss her on the cheek before the security guard pulled her off. In between all this, TV stations stuck microphones out to her, firing off question after question, some aimed at Emily but Dylan took charge and fielded them for her.

Until this moment, Emily had never fully grasped how famous Dylan was. Women seemed to love her and guys thought she was cool. She suddenly felt so inadequate.

Dylan looked around and saw that Emily looked a little unsure.

"Sorry guys, I'll need to go in now. Thanks for coming down."

She is so good with the public. She smiles and chats, no matter what people ask. It was hard for Emily to reconcile this person to the goofy big oaf who was lost for words most of the time.

Dylan steered them into the foyer. "You okay, baby? You did really well."

Emily looked shell-shocked. "I'm fine, I think. It was a bit off a blur. Oh, and come here." She wiped the lipstick off the big woman's cheek.

"Oh yeah. I'm sorry about that." Dylan said sheepishly.

"You're lucky I was in a state of shock or I might have clawed her eyes out."

"Grr! Easy, Mama Smurf." Secretly Dylan's heart swelled at the thought of her girlfriend being a little jealous.

They were shown to their seats and finally Emily could relax a little.

After the film they went to the afterparty. In the past, Dylan usually skipped these events, but tonight she was delighted to show off her new girlfriend.

The champagne was flowing and, as she had eaten very little, the alcohol was making Emily much more relaxed. Lots of people approached Dylan. Producers, directors, other actors, and even the star of the evening, Julia Roberts, came up to say hello. Emily had been very starstruck but was so happy that the film star was everything she hoped, friendly and open. Through it all, Dylan never let go of her and even if she was deep in conversation, she would gently stroke her thumb over Emily's knuckle as they held hands, just to show affection.

While Dylan spoke with a producer about an up and coming project, Emily spoke to his

wife. At first she had been a bit intimidated by the glamorous brunette but was delighted to find her a charming and friendly woman.

"How are you coping with your first trial by cameras?"

"It was a little overwhelming but what shocked me the most was just how famous Dylan is. Girls were screaming for her more than some of the hunky actors. Men wanted to shake her hand. It was strange, I mean all those girls couldn't have been gay."

"Well done, you've worked out why every TV company and producer, like my husband, wants to work with her. The TV audience loves her. She holds a unique talent of appealing to both sexes equally. Guys love her stunts and would like to have a beer with her and women, straight or gay, love her. She's every straight woman's girl crush. Dylan's got that butch handsome thing going on, and just seems to exude a kind of raw sexuality women just love. Maybe it's the scary stunts, or the fact that she's quiet and isn't in the papers with a string of girls, I don't know. She's a star and I'd have been fighting you for her if I were ten years younger and not happily married. You're a lucky woman."

At that moment, Dylan turned round and flashed Emily a toothy grin.

"Oh I know. She's perfect to me."

Previously:

"Well done, you've worked out why every TV company and producer, like my husband, wants to work with her. The TV audience loves her. She holds a unique talent of appealing to both sexes equally. Guys love her stunts and would like to have a beer with her and women, straight or gay, love her. She's every straight woman's girl crush. Dylan's got that butch handsome thing going on, and just seems to exude a kind of raw sexuality women just love. Maybe it's the scary stunts, or the fact that she's quiet and isn't in the papers with a string of girls, I don't know. She's a star and I'd have been fighting you for her if I were ten years younger and not happily married. You're a lucky woman."

At that moment, Dylan turned round and flashed Emily a toothy grin. "Oh I know. She's perfect to me."

Episode 4

On the way back in the limo, the couple couldn't keep their hands, or their lips, off each other.

"Oh god baby, I want you so much," Dylan told Emily between kisses, her voice deep and husky with lust.

Emily pulled back and looked seriously into her girlfriend's eyes.

"I want you, too." Emily's hand had managed to make it under Dylan's shirt where her fingers were caressing the big woman's hard stomach, making Dylan's lust rise to dangerous levels.

"Dyl, I know I've made you wait but I just wanted everything to be right."

"It's okay baby, I understand. I told you, I can wait for as long as you need."

"No, I don't want to wait any longer. I love you with all my heart and I want to make love with you."

Dylan turned and knocked on the privacy screen. "Step on it, buddy!"

Emily dissolved in laughter. "You are such a goof!"

"Yeah, but I'm your goof. Come here!"

They finally made it through the door, as Dylan had to try and unlock the door while an amorous Emily kissed her.

Now that they were home, reality set in and they both felt a little shy.

To break the tension, Dylan suggested that Emily change into something more comfortable while she got some champagne.

Dylan put her jacket over the back of a chair, opened the fridge and pulled out a bottle of Louis Roederer Cristal Rose champagne. As she opened it she thought, *This is it, Morgan. This is what you've been waiting for. The love of your life, the woman of your dreams is sitting on your bed waiting for you to make love to her. Shit! No pressure, huh? What if I do something she doesn't like?*

The few times Dylan had made love during her life had been awkward and uneventful. Always being shy around women and never feeling a connection with them made it hard to fully enjoy the experience.

But this is Emmie! It will be different. Just relax and go with it.

She lifted the tray with glasses and champagne, then had an idea and grabbed a bowl of strawberries from the fridge.

In the bedroom, Emily was just as nervous. She had slipped out of her dress and put on a black negligee. She was trying to figure out where to place herself on the bed before Dylan walked in. *I bet those actresses I saw salivating over Dylan earlier wouldn't be this nervous! Emily, that's enough. Buck up! If she wanted them in her bed she would have them. She wants you. She loves you. Just do what comes naturally.*

Dylan walked through the bedroom door and stopped dead when she saw Emily sitting there in black silk.

"Wow! You look ... Just wow!"

"Thank you. Is that champagne I see?" she asked shyly.

When Dylan didn't reply and stood like a statue holding on to the tray with a vicelike grip, Emily said, "Dylan?"

Uh? What did she say? Um ... pull it together, Morgan! Champagne! That's it.

"Yeah, it's rosé, I hope you like it, and I brought strawberries," she said putting the tray on the side table. She poured out the champagne and popped a strawberry in each glass.

"I feel quite decadent," said Emily.

"It's special. I've never shared champagne with anyone like this, or my room."

Dylan was struggling to keep her eyes away from Emily's breasts; they were ample, round and perfectly matched Emily's curvaceous body. Dylan was a breast woman and when they were making out she had always paid particular attention to them. Now only a piece of lace separated her from touching them and her mouth watered at the thought.

Emily smiled noting where her girlfriend's eyes were glued. "Your bedroom is nice."

"Uh thanks. I just had a decorator do the whole place. As long as it has a big bed and a TV on the wall, I'm happy."

"Maybe a little sparse," Emily added, trying not to sound nervous.

"Well maybe you could give me some pointers." Dylan lifted the strawberry from her glass and put it to Emily's lips. When the blonde went to bite it, Dylan pulled it out of her reach and popped it in her own mouth. She then picked up another, dipped it in champagne and held it out, teasing Emily with it.

The blonde's heart began to thud in her chest as she realized the game had started. She locked eyes with Dylan's steely blue ones.

"You're not going to give me what I want?"

"You need to ask yourself what it's going to take to get what you want."

Ah! That's how it's going to be, is it? Well two can play at that game! thought Emily.

Dylan watched as her girlfriend seductively began to raise the negligee up her body, finally releasing the breasts that had been taunting Dylan. She then lay on the big bed and patted the side to beckon Dylan over. The pounding that had been in her chest was now migrating south.

Oh shit! She called my bluff! Well, you did ask what it would take. Dylan, still dressed, kicked off her shoes and lay down beside Emily, leaning above the blonde. She took the champagne covered strawberry and painted Emily's lips with the liquid. The young woman moaned and her tongue snaked out, licking the cool drink from her lips.

Dylan trailed the fruit from Emily's neck down to her chest and began circling Emily's hard nipples with the dripping fruit.

Dylan's mouth watered at the sight of the liquid dripping down her girlfriend's breasts. It took everything in her not to pounce on them herself. Instead, Dylan dipped the fruit in more champagne and continued her journey down Emily's stomach until the liquid pooled in her belly button. As the blonde's moans increased, Dylan couldn't hold back any longer and traced her tongue around Emily's navel, finally indulging in the liquid. "Ugh! Dylan, please come up here. I need you."

The big woman did as she was asked and held the strawberry over Emily's lips. "Bite," Dylan ordered.

Emily did, savoring the taste of the plump fruit. She was then offered the champagne.

"Drink." Dylan let a little spill over, then put the glass down and attacked the glistening lips.

Dylan's hands were everywhere, stroking, touching and squeezing. The moans were increasing from both women.

"Honey, take these off. I need to feel you."

The big woman jumped up and started to strip off her clothes, never once taking her eyes off the blonde.

Emily watched every movement as Dylan slowly unbuttoned her crisp white shirt and pulled it off. To Emily, Dylan's body was perfect. Where Dylan loved the soft curves and ample breasts of a feminine woman, Emily adored Dylan's hard and muscular body with broad shoulders, small breasts and long powerful legs.

The look in her dark haired partner's eyes was hungry and feral, and made Emily's sex clench in anticipation. The thought of being taken by this big woman was almost too much to bear.

Opening her belt buckle slowly, Dylan said, "I want you so much, but I want you to know how much this means to me. I love you more than anything in the world, Emily Taylor."

Emily lifted her hand and beckoned the now naked Dylan towards her.

"I know. I have never loved anyone like I love you, Dylan. Make love to me."

The big woman obliged by taking her place on top of Emily. When their skin came together, they both moaned and quickly found each other's mouths. Dylan had waited so long to be granted the privilege of touching Emily, so she was determined to show the young woman how much she was desired and adored. Emily moaned as Dylan kissed and bit and nipped down her throat. From the noises Emily was making and the grip pulling her head down harder, Dylan realized her girlfriend liked her lovemaking a little rougher. So she bit down harder, leaving the marks that would claim the blonde as her own.

The kisses drifted lower until Dylan's lips were finally where they wanted to be, locked around Emily's nipple.

"Oh Dyl! Ugh! Harder."

Dylan bit down harder. "Yes! Like that. Oh God!"

Moving to the neglected breast, Dylan swirled her tongue and sucked as much of her

girlfriend's breast as she could, moaning and feeling the constant throb deep in her own sex.

"Honey please, come up here. I need to look at you."

Dylan made her way up. "Anything, but let me love you." Emily nodded and as their mouths and tongues came together again, the young woman felt Dylan's long fingers part her folds and stroke along the length of her.

"Oh baby! You're so wet." Dylan looked deep into her girlfriend's eyes. "I need to be inside of you. Please let me," she begged.

"I need you deep inside me. Take me, I'm yours."

Dylan whimpered as Emily opened her legs wider in invitation. As Dylan slid two fingers inside her girlfriend, they both moaned. "Oh God, baby. You feel so good."

Emily felt Dylan begin a gentle thrust. It felt good, not only to have Dylan inside her, but to feel the reassuring weight of being pinned down by her girlfriend.

"Dyl, at the same time. I want us to come together." Dylan nodded and Emily felt her partner's slick heat as she repositioned herself.

Dylan began to thrust against her girlfriend and Emily marvelled at the look of utter lust in Dylan's eyes. "Oh shit! I won't be able to hold on that long, baby."

"Me ... neither, just love me. I need you ... oh god Dyl, fuck me Dyl!!"

The big woman growled and began to thrust faster, letting her thumb graze Emily's hard nub. The young woman gripped Dylan's back tightly, sinking deeper into Dylan's skin.

Feeling the beginnings of Emily's orgasm around her fingers only served to bring Dylan closer to the brink.

"Shit. I'm gonna come, baby," Dylan cried.

"Yes! Come with me now, honey!" Emily felt the scream rise in her throat and her body shook with the force of her orgasm.

Dylan thrust wildly against her and came with a shout, "Agh! Fuck!" She collapsed against Emily trembling. The emotion they both felt left them drained. Dylan lay there, still trembling and softly repeating, "Shit! I love you. I love you. I need you so much."

Emily wrapped her arms around the big woman's neck and pulled her as tight as she could. "Sh! It's okay, honey. I'm here, and I love you. I've got you."

It didn't surprise Emily that Dylan responded with such feeling. To the public, she was a big tough TV star, but where emotions were concerned she was vulnerable and needed reassurance; the reassurance that only Emily could give her.

Dylan looked into her eyes, still trembling. "I'm sorry baby. I've never felt anything like that in my life. It was like I wasn't just inside your body, but your soul. I've never had this sort of connection before."

Emily cupped Dylan's face in her hands. "Don't ever be sorry for showing me what's in here." She rested her hand over Dylan's heart.

"I feel privileged that you can be yourself with me."

Dylan kissed her deeply, pouring as much love into it as she could before pulling away and saying, "I love you, Emmie. You and Molly are my life. I'm going to do everything I can to make sure you never leave me."

"I won't, honey. Ever." She pulled Dylan to her chest and gently stroked her back until her partner's breathing evened out and they both fell into a peaceful slumber.

Dylan had been awake for a while, content with gazing at Emily as she slept cuddled up to her side, and gently stroking her blonde hair.

She'd never woken up happier in her life. This young woman had turned her life upside down in such a short space of time. Emily had given her love, a taste of family life. And she wanted more. She needed to find a way to make her girlfriend realize that this going slow business was no good.

I want my two girls with me all the time. I need to find a way to make it happen, Dylan thought.

Emily's eyes fluttered open. "Hmm! Morning, TV star."

"Morning, baby girl," said Dylan, kissing her gently on the forehead.

Emily stretched and rolled on top of her partner. "How long have you been awake?"

"Half hour or so."

"You should have woken me," Emily yawned.

"Nah. I just wanted to lie here and look at you." Dylan stroked her girlfriend's face.

"You're not going for a run?"

"You think after last night I would leave you in this warm bed? I might be goofy, Mama Smurf, but I'm not stupid!"

Emily laughed and kissed her partner's lips teasingly.

"Emmie, last night was ... was the best night of my life and I've never been happier."

"Mine too. I didn't ever think I could be this close to someone again. Be loved the way you love me, and the way you are with Molly ... well she just adores you."

Dylan grinned and rolled Emily onto her back. "I want this all the time, I want us to be a family. I know you keep saying that we need to take things slowly but I know what I want. I want you and Molly here with me. Live with me, I can look after you both. Surely you know I won't let you down. I know you've been hurt and even though we haven't known each other a long time, you know me. We share the same hopes and dreams, the same values. Trust in me, I'm not going to walk away from you," Dylan implored.

"I know and I do trust you. I want to be with you always and I want us to be a family and make a home together, but this is your first relationship and it's a lot to ask of you to go from being single with no responsibilities to, in a few short months, having a family depend on you. Give me a little more time, okay? I love you. We will have everything you want, I promise."

Dylan sighed, "I can be patient. You and Molls are worth it."

Emily, stroking Dylan's face said, "You are the sweetest, cutest TV star in the world!"

"Thank you. Now kiss me!"

"Don't you want me to make breakfast?" Emily asked as her partner attacked her neck.

"Later. First I want to taste every single part of your body until you scream! Grrr!" Dylan began to kiss her way down her girlfriend's body until her tongue reached its goal.

"Oh god, Dyl! Ugh! You are never leaving this bedroom!" Emily felt Dylan chuckle against her sex.

The couple did manage to tear themselves away from the bedroom long enough for Emily to make them breakfast, and they now sat at the kitchen table having eaten the French toast Emily made them. Dylan sat grinning, head resting on her hand, watching Emily drink her coffee.

"What?"

"Nothing. I'm just happy and I love looking at you."

"Dylan Morgan, you're a charmer. I don't know how you didn't have a string of women before me." Dylan reached across the table and took the young woman's hand.

"None of them were you. You're the difference. You're what I've been waiting for my whole life."

"I have to tell you, last night was amazing. It's never been like that for me before," Emily said sadly.

"Toni was my first. At the beginning it was nice, but just nice. Then, as time went on she became a little selfish, taking what she wanted from me. It became a chore. She said I bored her, that's why she cheated on me." Emily felt Dylan's anger rise as her grip tightened on Emily's hand.

"But she never touched me like you do, you make me feel treasured and worshipped."

"That's because you are, baby girl." Dylan lifted Emily's hand to her lips. "It is an honor *kiss* to touch *kiss* to taste you." *Kiss* .

Emily smiled. "I think we were made for each other and I'm never going to stop wanting to touch you, but I want this to never change. I want us to be open and talk. If there is anything you'd ever like to try? Fantasies? Just tell me."

"Oh, I have lots of fantasies, but there is one thing I would like to try with you. I've always wanted to, but I've never been with anyone I've felt comfortable with. If you don't like it, it's okay. I know some women don't and I won't ..."

Exasperated Emily said, "Dyl! Just tell me."

Dylan moved her chair closer and began to whisper in Emily's ear. Slowly a smile began to form on Emily's face. "I really like that and I can't wait to try it with you, in as many ways as possible."

Dylan beamed, suddenly very excited. "Really? You do? You would?"

"Yes! In fact," Emily started kissing down the big woman's neck "the very thought is making me want you all over again. Tell you what, why don't we discuss it in the shower?"

She stood and walked towards the bathroom slowly, swaying her hips teasingly.

"Come on, TV star! Do you want me to start without you?"

"Shit! You've got some internet shopping to do, Morgan. But later. Much later," she said to herself as she jumped up and chased after her girlfriend.

Dylan was sitting at the kitchen table on her MacBook while Emily was cooking dinner, waiting for Molly to return home.

"Hey baby! Come look at this." Emily put down the chopping knife and walked behind Dylan's chair, draping her arms over the big woman's shoulders and kissing her cheek before looking at the screen. The first pictures of us last night are on the net, look."

Emily smiled. "What a good looking couple we make. Will you keep that up to show Molly?"

"Sure, look." She opened a second window and afterellen.com popped up. The main headline read, 'Millions of lesbian's hearts broken as Dylan Morgan steps out with new girl.' Below was a picture of them on the red carpet.

Emily nuzzled into Dylan's neck. "Hmm. They can stay broken as well. You're taken and I've got the marks on my neck to prove it."

Dylan growled and pulled Emily onto her lap. "I'm all yours baby girl and you're mine, don't you worry about that." The big woman kissed her thoroughly, her tongue probing deeply into her mouth.

Needing air, they pulled away. "Mmm, I can't get enough of you. If we weren't expecting the Smurf back, I'd be dragging you back to bed. There are so many things I want to do to you, and with you. You inspire me."

Emily laughed. "I'm willing to give you my body for research proposes."

"Thank you. I ... uh, did a little shopping on the web while you were busy in the kitchen," Dylan said with a sly look on her face.

"Oh? Would this shopping have anything to do with what we discussed earlier?" Emily began a teasing caress on her girlfriend's stomach.

Dylan shivered as love bumps appeared on her arms. "Maybe. The packages should be delivered in a few days."

"I can't wait, honey. I better go and finish dinner before you get me any more excited. Molly should be back soon." As she stood, Dylan smacked Emily on the butt.

Emily's head whipped around and she said, "Down boy!"

"I can't help it! Your ass just sways and tempts me all the time. What do you expect?"

Emily put an extra sway in her step as she walked away.

"So what are we having?" Dylan shouted towards the kitchen.

"Mac and cheese, fresh garlic bread and caesar salad."

"Yum. All from scratch? Doesn't garlic bread come in packets?"

"Honey! You really need looking after. Fresh crusty bread, butter and garlic. I don't know how you manage the training you do when you eat so much junk!"

"Vitamins and protein shakes. Have you always enjoyed cooking?"

"Yeah. When I spent my summers and holidays with my grandma, we'd spend every day cooking, baking and making cookies. There was always a smell of baking and warmth and love in that kitchen. Something my mother didn't understand." Emily stared off into the distance.

"It's all I've ever wanted, a big loving family. My dream is a big kitchen full of family coming and going."

I'm going to give you your dreams, baby. Everything and more, determined Dylan.

The buzzer rang. "That'll be Lynn and Molly." Dylan got up to buzz them in.

Molly bounced through the door. "Dien! Mama! I miffed ou!" She jumped into Dylan's arms for a hug, as Emily made her way over.

"We missed you too, Smurf!"

"Did you have a good time?" Her mother asked as she gave her a kiss.

"Yeah! Ouzy and Damie take me to see the sharks! They scary, Mama. I got a cuddly one, look!" Molly showed her stuffed toy to them.

Turning to Lynn, Emily asked, "How was she?"

"She was great, such a polite little girl. She fell in love with Suzy and Jamie," said the older woman.

"I'm glad, she hasn't been around other kids much."

"Well, we'll need to take them with us the next time we do something," said Dylan.

"They were a joy to look after. Did you two have fun?"

Dylan beamed and Emily smiled warmly. "We had a lovely time. It was bit scary at first but I relaxed eventually."

Lynn noted the new closeness between Dylan and Emily.

"Good, I'm so glad you finally had fun at one of these things," Lynn said to Dylan.

"It smells great in here, what are you cooking?"

"Oh mac and cheese, caesar salad and garlic bread. I thought I should feed her before we leave."

"I'm glad she has someone else to make sure she eats now!"

"Hey, don't gang up on me you two!" Dylan pouted.

They all laughed. *You look the happiest I've ever seen you, Dylan. You deserve it,* thought Lynn.

"Well, I better scoot. I'll see you at work tomorrow, Dylan."

"Sure. Thanks so much for looking after Molly for us."

"She's no bother."

"Molls come and say thank you to Lynn."

Molly ran over and cuddled Lynn's legs. "Thank ou, Lynn! I had fun!"

"You're very welcome, sweetie. Bye then."

Dylan saw Lynn out and Emily scooped up her little girl. "So you had fun, Molls?" "

Yeah, but I miffed ou and Dien."

"I know, but we're going to have dinner with Dylan before we go home later, okay?"

"Why can't we stay ere, Mama? I want to be wiv Dien."

Emily turned and looked at Dylan. Her big partner stood, arms folded, waiting for Emily's answer. She obviously agreed with Molly.

"Mama has to work tomorrow, so we can't."

"But ..."

"No Molly! We have to go home," Emily said with a sharp edge to her voice.

Trying to keep the little girl happy, Dylan said. "Hey Molls. Want to see a picture of your Mama at the big film premiere last night?"

"Yeah!"

"Come on then." Dylan grabbed the little girl and turned her upside down. Molly giggled as Dylan carried her over to the kitchen table by the ankles.

"Dien! Let me up!"

"Okay. Sit on my knee." She opened the web page on the laptop. "Look how beautiful your Mama is?"

"Mama! Ou look really pwetty!"

"Thank you, sweetie. Why don't you and Dylan set the table for me?"

"Sure thing, Mama Smurf." Dylan winked at her.

Oh Dylan. I'm so in love with you, it scares me, thought Emily.

In another part of the city, someone else sat looking at the same pictures.

The headline read, 'Dylan Morgan and Emily Taylor. Can they have a happily ever after?'

The figure laughed and clicked to print out the picture.

Dylan, Emily and Molly sat enjoying their meal a little later. "Mmm, this is so good, Emmie."

"Good, Mama," Molly agreed.

"I'm glad you both like it." It warmed Emily's heart to sit around the table sharing a meal with the two people she loved most in the world.

"So, is it all days for you again this week?"

"Yes. I promised I'd stick to days, didn't I?" Emily said defensively.

They'd had many discussions about Emily's job; it was becoming more and more difficult with her new notoriety.

"I know. I'm just thinking of your safety, you can't even work out front anymore without being hassled. I'm sorry my life makes things difficult for you," Dylan said sadly.

What I'm I doing! I shouldn't be making her feel bad, thought Emily.

"I'm sorry. I know things are getting more and more difficult and you're only thinking of my safety, but I need to work until it becomes impossible."

Dylan decided to shut up and not ruin the rest of their time together, so she simply nodded.

"What are you doing tomorrow?"

"It's a lighter week so I don't really have to practice anything; just write some sketches and my monologue. Because it's Halloween, we're having a special dare. It's spooky! You sure you want to know, Molls?"

"Tell me! Tell me!" Molly clapped her hands.

"Well, Thursday night I have to do an overnight in one of the most haunted places in New York. It's a large estate on Long Island. I'm doing the challenge with Steve Jones, you know, the country singer?"

Emily nodded.

"Well the house and grounds are reputedly haunted, so we're going to have a walk around the house, talking about some of the ghost stories, then ..."

Dylan stopped and looked worriedly at Molly's little face. "I don't know if I should say ... you know, in front of the kid." "It can't be that bad. Go on."

"Well ... it's called Dark Terror. The crew is going to place two coffins underground and we'll both get placed in the coffins with the lids shut. It'll be pitch black inside and the side panels will be opened for rats to swarm in. We have to try and stay as long as possible. Our charities get money for every hour we spend underground."

"Oh my God! Is that safe? How will you breathe?"

"It'll be okay, baby. Air is piped into the coffin from outside."

"I'm glad I won't have to watch you do that. It sounds terrifying! I'll be so worried for you."

"Don't let the ghosties get ou, Dien!" Molly cuddled into her side.

"Hey guys. I'll be fine! I am Dylan Morgan, you know. It's what I do," she said with a smile.

"There's the TV star I know and love!" They giggled.

"Honestly, it'll be fine. It gives me an easy working week and Saturday night I'll just have one challenge since the dare will be pre-taped."

"Ou be like Scooby Doo!"

"Yeah. Just like Scooby Doo, Smurf." Turning to Emily she said, "That was delicious, baby."

"Thank you, honey. I better get cleaned up and get Molly home."

"I'll help. Molly, I'll put on the TV for you while Mama and I clear up, okay?"

Molly nodded and trotted off to sit on the couch.

Dylan had dropped Emily and Molly off earlier; it was getting harder and harder for the couple to leave each other, especially when Emily knew how lonely Dylan was without them.

Molly had gone down easily after an exciting few days, and Emily was reading in bed when she heard her phone beep. Although it had been difficult accepting the expensive gift, she loved being in such close contact with her partner. Dylan would send her texts and picture messages during the day and it really made her feel loved. She picked up the phone and read, *Hey baby girl. I'm just lying here thinking about you and really missing you. The two days we just spent together were magical. I love you more than anything in the world. I want to make your dreams come true, if you'll let me. Sleep well. Your goofy TV star.xx*

Emily typed out her reply.

You make me want to cry when you say things like that. I miss you too, honey. Sleep well. I love you. Goodnight. Your baby girl.xx

After sending, she turned out the light and settled down to sleep. An hour later, a noise woke her. *Sounds like the front door rattling.*

Emily's heart pounded as she grabbed her phone from the bedside table and opened her bedroom door. She could see the doorknob moving and rattling as if someone were trying to force their way in.

Without thinking, she ran into Molly's room. She locked the door behind her and lifted Molly into her arms.

"Wh ... what's wrong, Mama," Molly asked sleepily.

In a hushed voice she said, "Sh! I need you to be as quite as a mouse, okay."

The rattling got louder. "What's dat noise, Mama!" panic entered the little girl's tone.

"I think someone might be trying to get in the house. Don't worry, sweetie. Be brave for Mama." Emily was terrified. She heard the front door burst open and someone going through her things. Her hand shaking, she pressed Dylan's number in her contacts.

Dylan had drifted off looking at her iPad. She jumped when her phone rang and everything fell off the bed. "Fuck!"

When she saw Emily and Molly's picture come up on the screen, she scrambled to answer.

"Hello! Emmie?"

All was quiet on the line, then she heard Emily whisper, "Dyl, there's someone in the apartment! I've locked myself in Molly's room. They're smashing up the living room! I don't know what to do!" Dylan could hear how terrified her girlfriend was.

"Oh shit! I'm coming over, Emmie. Just hold onto Molly. Fuck!"

Dylan tripped over her jeans trying to put them on.

"Sit tight. I'm on my way. I'm going to hang up and call the police. I love you, baby."

"I love you, Dyl, please hurry!"

"Just hold Molly tight!"

Dylan grabbed her leather jacket and ran out the door, dialling 911 as she went.

Fuck! If anybody touches them I'll rip their head off! Dylan felt physically sick as she rushed down to the parking garage while phoning the police.

The police were on their way as she jumped into the jeep and sped off.

"Mama! I'm scared!" Emily held Molly tight and stroked her hair as tears ran down the little girl's face.

"Shh, be nice and quiet for Mama, okay? Dylan's on her way with the police."

The bangs and smashes from the living area got louder and louder. It sounded as if someone was taking a hammer to everything.

"Me want Dien, Mama!"

"I know, Molls. Be a brave girl." She rocked her daughter trying to calm her.

Emily had propped a chair up against the door knob to make it even harder for the intruder. There wasn't much she could use as a weapon in Molly's room but she had grabbed a stool and she knew if it came to it, she would die trying to protect her little girl.

The bangs stopped and she heard footsteps going towards her bedroom, and then the noise started up again as the intruder smashed up her room.

Please, Dylan! Please get here in time.

The noise stopped again and the footsteps got closer and closer. Emily's heart sank as the doorknob to Molly's room began to twist and she could hear the lock being broken into.

She put Molly on the bed behind her, picked up the stool and said, "Molly, whatever happens, stay behind Mama, okay?"

"I scared, Mama!" "I love you, Molly. I love you, Dylan, with all my heart."

Dylan's jeep came screeching to a halt outside of Emily's building. She could see from the other cars that the police had arrived.

She ran up the stairs two at a time, sheer panic seizing her gut. She was stopped on the landing by cops guarding the door.

"You can't come in here, Miss, it's a crime scene."

"Emily called me. I'm her girlfriend! Let me through!"

"Are you Dylan Morgan?" he asked excitedly.

"Yeah, now let me in!" She tried to push her way through the two policemen.

"Sorry, can't do that Ma'am."

Dylan ran her hand through her dark hair. "Look, contact Sergeant Patrick Kenny and Detective Mark Lawson, they'll vouch for me. Emmie! Molly!" she shouted over their shoulders.

Patrick Kenny came to the door. "What's going on, officers?"

"This woman insists on getting in. Says she's the victim's girlfriend."

"Victim? Shit! Patrick let me in. Please."

"Let her through officers." Dylan entered the living area and was shocked at how smashed up the place was. Everything was either broken or ripped.

"Oh my God. Emmie?"

"Don't worry, Dylan. Everything's fine. They're just in the bedroom talking to one of the officers."

Emily burst out of the bedroom with Molly and ran into the big woman's arms.

"Oh Dylan. Thank God."

"I'm here. It's okay now." She pulled back to check them over, their faces were stained with tears.

Molly stretched her arms out, wanting Dylan to cuddle her. "Dien, I scared. Bad man scare Mama and me. Stay wiv us, Dien." Dylan squeezed her tight in one arm while keeping Emily pulled in tight to her chest with the other.

"What happened, baby?"

"I heard the door being rattled so I locked us both in Molly's room. We heard them smash up the place and then just when they were picking Molly's bedroom lock, we heard the police sirens and whoever it was ran. I was so scared, Dyl. I thought ..." Emily dissolved into tears.

"Shh, it's okay. I'm here now and I'll look after you."

"Patrick, what are you thinking? Press?"

"I don't know. If it was the press trying to find pictures and information on Emily, the place would be ransacked, but smashed up like it is? I'm not so sure. We'll know more tomorrow when we've dusted for prints and made a thorough search. Miss Taylor, do you have somewhere you could stay ..."

"They'll stay with me. You can contact Emily there, you have my numbers, Patrick."

Emily never even lifted her head to disagree; she was just enjoying the calm reassurance of her partner's strong arms.

"Okay. I'll work personally on this Dylan. Don't worry, we'll sort it out."

"Thanks buddy. Emily, let's pack an overnight bag for you both. I'll come back tomorrow to get more things for you because you'll be staying with me for a while. Okay?"

"Okay." She said meekly.

Through her sniffles, Molly said, "Ou won't let the bad man get us?"

"No Molls. You're safe now. Your gonna come and stay with me. No one can get you there."

Dylan walked them into Emily's bedroom to pack her stuff. The room was as smashed up as the living area.

Emily walked over to her bedside table and lifted two broken photo frames. One had a picture of Dylan, Molly and herself taken on their first date at the zoo. The other one was of Emily as a young girl of about 5 years old, standing up on a stool beside her grandmother baking in her kitchen.

Emily clasped her hand to her mouth and the tears flowed again. Dylan walked over and put her arm around her.

"We'll get them reframed, baby. They'll be as good as new."

"Who would do something like this, Dylan?"

The big woman's face became like stone.

"I don't know, Emmie, but you can be sure I'll find out."

They arrived back at Dylan's and were all enjoying a hot chocolate on the sofa. Molly was stuck to her mother and Dylan like glue, refusing to let them out of her sight. Tiredness had overcome her though, and she fell asleep cuddling into Dylan while holding her mother's hand. Emily had calmed down a bit and was ready to talk.

"It's funny isn't it?" she said looking at Molly.

"What's funny?"

"Molly automatically knows you'll protect her. As soon as we knew we were in trouble, she wanted you. She just knows you'll protect us."

"She's right. When you called me tonight, I'd never felt fear the way I did at that moment. If anything happened to the two of you, I don't know how I could carry on." Dylan pulled the two in tighter.

"You truly love us. You'll make a great parent, if that's what you want." Emily wasn't sure if she was going too far.

Dylan lifted her hand and threaded her fingers through Emily's. I love you both more than life. I would die for this girl, and as soon as I can convince you to take the next step we'll be a family."

"I know. So what do we do now? About the intruder?"

"You'll be safe as long as you're here. No one gets past the front desk without buzzing up. I'll go back to your apartment tomorrow and pack more of your things, Molly's toys and stuff."

"What about work?"

"You know you can't work. You can't fight me on that until we know what we're dealing with. I'm sure your boss will keep the job open for you; if not, well things were getting difficult with work anyway. We can figure something else out. In the meantime, just look at this as an opportunity to stay home and take care of Molly the way you never got a chance to when she was born. Molly will love it."

Emily sighed in resignation.

"I suppose. I know you're right, it's just hard to let go. I've worked so hard to keep our heads above water and Molly's suffered for it, getting left with sitters all day."

"Don't fight me then, stay home, paint and draw with her, do fun stuff."

"Okay. But we'll review it when we sort all this out?" Emily said seriously.

"Scout's honor!" *Hopefully by then I'll have convinced you to never leave!* thought Dylan.

"Deal, but we'll look after you too. I know you've been lonely living here alone. We're going to make it a warm loving place for you to come home to."

Dylan kissed her hand. "Sounds heavenly." Dylan's iPhone rang.

"Hello? Lynn, calm down. We're safe. Hang on a minute." She lifted Molly and placed her in her mother's lap.

"Okay, I'm back. I was going to phone you, I'm sorry you had to hear it from the press. Yes they're fine. Emily and Molly are going to be staying with me for the time being. Only thing is, I can't come in tomorrow. I know, but I'm not leaving them until I get security sorted. I want you to get the writers to go ahead and do the sketches themselves, push back my rehearsals with Steve Jones to Friday. Yes, I know that's right after the all-night shoot but I have no choice. If Steve isn't happy, we won't put him in the sketches. Okay, next can you send over a security guard from the studio tomorrow? I want someone here until I can arrange something more permanent or until the cops tell me it was simple robbery. Just tell the press it's being treated as a burglary until we know more. Okay, thanks Lynn. Bye."

"Honey, we don't need a permanent minder. We're safe here."

"When I go to work on Thursday you'll be alone and I'll be away all night at the ghost shoot. Do you really want that? For the foreseeable future or until the cops tell us otherwise, I want someone with you when you go to the park, the supermarket, anywhere. I was so scared tonight, please just go with it."

Emily sighed. "Okay! I give in."

"I'll call Patrick tomorrow and ask if he can suggest anyone. They'll be with you just when you go out, otherwise they'll stay at the door. You'll have your privacy with Molls."

"I guess so. We've still got time to sleep before morning, why don't we go to bed."

Dylan looked unsure all of a sudden. "Um, you can take the guest bed with Molly if you like."

"Oh. I thought ... it doesn't matter. Can you lift Molls for me?"

Dylan lifted the sleeping girl and held her in her arms. "What were you going to say?"

"It's just, I thought if we were living here for the time being, you'd want me to sleep with you."

The big woman let out a sigh of relief. "I do, I just didn't want to presume. Just think of my room as our room."

"I think to save any misunderstandings in the future, you should just presume." Emily smiled.

"Okay. I don't want to sleep apart if we can help it."

"Me neither. I don't want Molls to wake up scared though; can she come in beside us, just for tonight?"

"Of course. Let's go."

Once they were all settled, Emily snuggled into bed with Dylan on one side and Molly pressed up against the other. Dylan turned her head and kissed her girlfriend. "Sweet dreams, baby girl."

I've got my two girls now. I'm going to make them so happy they'll never want to leave. With that happy thought, Dylan closed her eyes.

Dylan woke at 7 the next morning, a lot later than usual. Emily was lying across her chest and Molly was spread across her mother's back.

This is a new way to wake up! She edged her way from under her two girls, desperate to relieve the call of nature. When she returned, Emily and Molly were still happily sleeping so she grabbed her shorts and sleeveless hooded sweatshirt, and went into the gym to do some running.

The gym was a large room full of professional equipment. In one corner she had a punching bag and other boxing and martial arts equipment. There was no way she was going to go out and leave the girls alone, so she flipped on the television on the wall facing the treadmill and started a run. The morning news was covering the intruder at Emily's last night. The reporter stood outside the apartment building giving a rundown of the facts as they had them.

Emily Taylor, partner of TV's Dylan Morgan, was the victim of a break in last night. According to our sources, Ms. Morgan made a frantic 911 call to report that someone had forced their way into Miss Taylor's apartment. Details are unclear at this time, but we do know that Miss Taylor and her daughter were unharmed. Police officials tell us that they can't rule out the possibility that this is the work of a disgruntled fan, upset at the popular Ms. Morgan's new relationship.

The anger from last night returned, burning in Dylan's gut. She jumped off the treadmill and grabbed her kickboxing gear. Picturing the faceless intruder making her two girls cower in fear, she attacked the punching bag with ferocity. She poured everything into that bag, trying to rid herself of the feelings clawing at her.

Emily eyes fluttered open and she reached for the empty space where her partner had been. Seeing that Dylan was already awake, she decided to get up and make breakfast. Dressed only in her nightshirt, she settled the still sleeping Molly into the large bed with a kiss, and made her way down the hall of the luxurious penthouse. Emily thought she heard a series of thuds coming from the home gym, so she looked into the room as she passed by; what she saw made her stomach flip. Dylan was aiming blow after blow, with hands and feet, at the punching bag. She'd never seen her girlfriend practice her martial art before and she was captivated.

Dylan's powerful muscles flexed and glistened as the sweat rolled down her arms. She was both powerful and graceful at the same time, and she exuded sex. Emily's body responded as she listened to the grunts and growls coming from her partner as she fought an imaginary opponent.

God! She looks so dangerous; she could seriously hurt someone. Hmm, sexy and dangerous. I would love her to lay me down and ...

"Emmie! Emmie?"

Through her fog of lust, Emily realized Dylan was trying to get her attention.

"W...what? Sorry honey. Were you speaking to me?"

Dylan walked towards her, breathing heavily. "You okay, baby?"

"Yeah. I'm fine. Why?"

"You seemed to go somewhere else there. Where did you go?"

Emily smirked. "Uh, you don't want to know. What would you like for breakfast?"

Dylan grabbed her around the waist and pulled her close. "Uh uh! Tell me." She said seriously.

"I just thought you looked so hot! All powerful and sweaty, punching and kicking."

A cocky grin grew across Dylan's face; Emily put her hand onto Dylan's hard bicep.

"I imagined you being all hot, sweaty and aggressive like this and pushing me up against the wall and using that special surprise you ordered from the internet for us." Suddenly shy, Emily buried her head in her partner's chest.

"What, like this?" Dylan lifted her easily off the ground and Emily's legs automatically wrapped around her partner's waist. Dylan walked them over to the wall while attacking Emily's lips and squeezing her ass.

The kisses became more and more passionate as they threatened to lose control. Dylan bit Emily's neck and thrust her pelvis into her girlfriend's sex. "Hm. Oh God Dylan! I want you so much."

"Ugh! I need to fuck you, Emmie!" Dylan growled.

"Oh yes!" But then the cold logical part of her brain poured cold water on her excitement.

"Honey, what if Molly gets up looking for us? She'll be confused after last night."

Dylan stopped dead and let out a long breath. "You're right. I'm sorry I went too far. Those things you said ..."

Emily smiled, her arms still draped over Dylan's shoulders. "I shouldn't have said anything, but you looked so good. Let's promise we'll resume this position when we have some alone time."

Dylan kissed her sweetly and rubbed noses. "You can count on it. I love you."

"I love you, goofy. I did come in to ask what you wanted for breakfast."

Dylan let Emily slide down from her waist. "I usually have a protein shake and microwave oatmeal."

"Oatmeal is really good for you but it should be fresh. I'll get some oats when we go shopping, in the meantime do you want eggs with your shake?"

"Um, could I be really bad, since I didn't get a taste of you, and have those pancakes you make with the bacon mixed in?"

Emily smiled happily. "Scrambled eggs on the side?"

"Oh yeah. You really are a temptress, baby girl. I'll go grab a shower," said Dylan, giving Emily's ass a smack on the way out. "Be good!"

"Molly, sit up straight. Would you like scrambled eggs? Toast?" Emily was trying to get Molly to sit still and eat breakfast, but waking up at Dylan's after the excitement had left her hyper.

"Yes! Yes! Eggs and toast, please!" She smacked the table with her hands.

"Molly! Settle down."

"Morning, cute stuff. How are you today?" Dylan, freshly showered and changed, sat at the breakfast table.

"Dien!!" Molly jumped up to sit on her lap.

Emily brought the food to the table.

"Cute stuff? She's a holy terror this morning. I was thinking I might have to tie her to a chair."

Dylan, with a mock look of shock on her face, said. "The Smurf? Never! She's good! Aren't you?" The big woman tickled her.

Molly giggled and squirmed. "No Dien! No ickle monster! Ha! Ha!" "You're no help at all, TV star! Molly, back in your own seat," Emily said sternly.

Molly went back to her seat, after exchanging smirks with Dylan.

"Well eat up, you two," said Emily, taking her own seat.

"Thanks baby, this looks amazing!"

"You're welcome. I'll make you a healthier breakfast as soon as I can get some groceries, then I can make you fresh oatmeal. I don't want to ruin your training regime."

"Hey don't worry about it. I need all the calories I can get. So why is Molls as high as a kite?"

"I think she's just happy to have woken up here. She loves spending time with you. So do I."

They shared a smile. "But, she's generally pretty energetic. You've only had to deal with her in small bits, you'll see what she's really like now that we're here. She's so hyper; she gets into everything. I honestly don't know how I've coped on my own these three years," she said wryly.

"Sounds like me when I was a kid. I bet you were an angel."

"Well, I don't like to boast." Emily remarked. "She is a lot like you though, isn't she? Weird."

"I like it." Dylan beamed as she ate her bacon pancakes.

"Your breakfast okay?" "It's unbelievable. How do you get the eggs so fluffy?"

"Trade secret!"

Dylan's mobile began to ring. "Morgan."

"Hi Dylan, it's Patrick." "Hey Patrick. How are things going? Any clues?"

"Yeah, I'm afraid to say I don't think we're dealing with press intrusion."

Emily mouthed, "What is it?"

Dylan raised her hand to signal Emily to wait, then stood up and walked towards her office so she could talk freely without Molly hearing anything. "Tell me."

"We found a message written on the bathroom mirror."

"What? Just say it!" "Well ... it says, 'She's mine.' It was written in blood."

"Fuck!"

"Calm down, Dylan. We'll sort this out."

"Calm down? Someone was seconds away from getting the two most important people in my life and doing God knows what. I'm not feeling calm!"

"I know, buddy, but we're gonna make sure she's safe. Listen, there were no fingerprints or fibers, so they knew what they were doing. We're doing tests on the blood but it's likely to be animal, I don't think they would be that stupid. But it's at the lab."

Dylan let out a sigh. "So this message, 'She's mine.' Are they talking about Emily or me?"

"Not sure. Our tech guys are going to monitor your social media, Twitter, Facebook. We'll see if anyone sticks out for the disgruntled fan angle, but you've got a lot of fans, that's a lot of people to monitor."

"If something happens to them because of me ... I ... it would kill me," she said sadly.

"I know. Listen, we're gonna fix this. Can you ask Emily to write a list of people who she dated, or people who wanted to date her?"

"She hasn't dated for over three years, but I'll ask if anyone was interested in her."

"What about Molly's father?"

"She used an anonymous donor."

"Oh, okay. Email me the list from Emily and I'll get back to you when I know more."

"Thanks Patrick, call anytime."

Emily had been waiting at the door and when Dylan hung up the phone she came in and melded herself to Dylan's back.

"What did he say, honey?" The big woman rubbed her face. "Where's Molls?"

"I put the TV on for her, she's fine."

"Sit down." Dylan directed her to sit in the leather office chair while she sat on the corner of her desk and held Emily's hand.

"Patrick found a message written on the bathroom mirror."

"What did it say?"

"It said, 'She's mine.'"

"She's Mine? Who are they talking about? You or me?"

"Patrick doesn't know. It could be a stalker fan or someone who was interested in you. We've had a lot of publicity and everyone knows who you are now. There's something else. The message. It ... it was written in blood."

Emily gasped and clasped her hand over her mouth.

"Molly! That freak could have gotten Molly." Dylan stood and pulled Emily into her chest.

"Shh, it'll be okay, no one is going to hurt Molly or you. I promise."

Come on, Emily! Pull yourself together. You can't put all the pressure on Dylan.

"I know. What does Patrick want us to do?"

"Well, they're analyzing the blood, but there weren't any fingerprints or fibers at the scene. He wants you to make a list of anyone who has asked you out or shown any interest. We can email it to him."

"So they think it could be someone warning you away from me?"

"It's a possibility, but they're monitoring my Twitter and Facebook accounts for any unusual activity. Fuck." Dylan turned away and threw her iPhone across the desk.

"Argh!"

"What did you do that for?"

"Because it's that stupid thing that could have put you and Molly in danger! I thought I was being nice, approachable, and all the time I was putting you at risk!"

Emily wrapped her arms around the big woman's hips. You can't let one crazy person dictate your life. You've got millions of fans, and you make them feel closer to you and appreciated. Things like this happened even before Twitter and Facebook."

Dylan rested her forehead onto her girlfriends. "I guess. Listen, I know we said we'd go to the supermarket but ..."

"No. We're not letting this change our lives anymore. We've already had to move in with you but we can't stop going out, Molly needs to get outside."

"Yes, but it would be safer ..."

"No. We'll have you, and you said the security guard from the studio is coming over."

"I suppose. I don't think I can ever say no to you."

Emily smiled and winked, "I'll keep that in mind."

"I haven't got a chance, baby girl."

"You know, it could be a one off thing, an opportunist."

"Maybe." *I'm not convinced, and it's my job to keep you safe.*

"Okay, I'll go and get Molls ready, then take a shower. Will you watch her while I'm getting ready?"

"You bet."

Jimmy Daniels sauntered confidently into the offices of People Magazine. He'd finally gotten the last piece of the puzzle on Emily Taylor and it was dynamite. For other stories he may have negotiated over the phone but this was too big, and he wanted a price to match it.

The editor of People Magazine, David Fox, had willingly agreed to a meeting when he knew it concerned America's most famous couple of the moment. 'The silver fox', as he was known, jumped up to greet Jimmy as his secretary ushered him into the office.

"Jimmy! Great to see you. Anything I can get you? Coffee, soda?"

He is being way too nice. This info must be worth a lot to him, thought Jimmy.

"I'll have a coke, with ice."

"Of course! Get that Amanda, would you?" he addressed his secretary.

"Right away, Mr. Fox," replied the elegant woman.

"So Jimmy. What have you got for me?"

"How much would you pay for the identity of the father of Emily Taylor's daughter?"

David smiled broadly and laughed. "Jimmy I don't know how you do it. I've had investigators looking into that since the news about them broke. Considering that Miss Taylor doesn't even know herself, then I'd say you've done very well." David Fox found it hard to disguise his interest.

"Let's just say there is a healthcare worker at a certain clinic waiting on a percentage of what you're going to give me. So how much are you willing to pay?"

David let out a long breath. "Well, let's see, they've been on the cover of our magazine, among many others, for two months now and circulation goes through the roof when they are. I don't know what it is, you would think straight women wouldn't be that interested but Morgan fascinates people. Throw in a poor little waitress and they can't get enough. So I think I can persuade finance to cut you a sizeable check."

"I want more than sizeable, Fox. I want mega or I'll go to someone who will pay me what I want, especially when I tell you who the daddy is," Jimmy said smugly.

"Who?"

"Uh uh. Not until I get my money. \$1.5 million."

"What? I can't authorise that! Especially without the name first. The most we've ever paid for a story is half a million. Tell me who it is and we'll talk."

Jimmy reached into his pocket and pulled out a memory stick.

"This has the documents that prove who made the donation and who bought it. Emily Taylor picked this donor without knowing his identity, going only on physical description, medical history and education. When she picked him, she bought the whole donation. It's still on ice at the clinic for her use only. This story will sell you a lot of

magazines, but without the donor's identity you've got nothing. Wire the money to my account and I hand it over or ..." He stood up and made his way to the door. "I could take it to someone who's willing to meet my price."

David jumped up. "No! Wait! Let me make a few calls. Just don't leave yet."

"I'll wait out there. You've got 20 minutes, Fox, or you lose your exclusive."

David grabbed the phone and shouted, "Get me Finance!"

Dylan and Molly were watching TV, waiting as Emily got ready, when the buzzer rang.

"Be right back, Smurf." She answered the intercom. "Oh yeah. Sure, come on up."

Dylan opened the door to a large muscular guy with square shoulders, thick neck and a skinhead.

"Good morning, Dylan. The studio sent me over."

"Great. Thanks for coming, Pauley. Come in and take a seat." She indicated to the kitchen table so she could keep her eye on Molly.

"You've heard what happened?"

He nodded.

"We don't know yet if this thing is serious or a one off, but I'm taking no chances. I'll be back at work tomorrow and I'll be away overnight. I want them watched at all times.

I've asked my buddies at the police department to recommend someone more permanent. I know you have duties at the studio, but I don't know when they'll be in place."

"It's no problem. As long as you need me, I'll be here.

"Thanks Pauley. We're just going out to the grocery store, so you can drive the Jeep, okay?"

"Sure."

"I'll take you to meet them."

A lone figure sat in at a desk in a dimly lit basement. Newspaper cuttings of Dylan and Emily were spread out on the surface.

"We made the news, baby boo. We'll be together soon. When you see this, maybe it'll remind you of where you should be."

The figure sealed an envelope addressed to Morgan Productions.

"Soon."

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Episode 5

Pauley parked the car up near the grocery store.

"Dylan, I'll keep a discrete distance behind you. You'll keep a hold of Molly?" the big security guard asked.

"Yeah. I'll keep her up in my arms, and an eye on Emily."

Emily sighed as she took off her seat belt. "Honey I don't think someone's going to jump us in the grocery store."

Dylan turned to face her girlfriend. "I hope not, but I'm gonna make sure okay?"

"Okay. Molly stay with Dylan at all times."

"I will Mama. We get candy?"

"Yeah. Sure will." Dylan said.

"No. You already had candy that Dylan gave you this morning. Right after breakfast, might I add."

Dylan looked sheepishly at Emily. "On that note, let's go."

As they walked over to the store Dylan whispered to Molly. "I'll slip some candy in the cart, Smurf." Molly giggled and gave her a kiss.

"What are you two conspiring?"

"Nothing. Baby? Remember, get whatever you want in here. I don't know what kind of stuff a family needs, so get lots and don't worry about the price. I'm gonna get you a credit card for my account for everything you need for you, Molls and the house but in the meantime, we'll use mine." Emily didn't want to argue in front of Paulie, so she said. "We can talk about it later, but that's fine just now."

"Cool. Let's get some tasty treats, Smurflet!"

"Yeah! Asty yum yum! Dien!"

They've got some mutual adoration society going on there! It's going to be a losing battle trying to stop Dyl from spoiling her, Emily thought as she watched Molly point at things and her big playmate simply put them in the basket without question.

Later that evening, Emily peeped through the door as Dylan read Molly a bedtime story.

She sighed contentedly, watching the big woman hold Molly's little hand in hers while holding the book with the other.

For someone who was awkward around people and had no experience with kids, Dylan was just a natural with Molly. Emily was finally allowing herself to trust and see a long-term future with her partner, and one of the things that made Dylan perfect was what a good parent she would make to her little girl. Dylan provided a different kind of parenting than Molly had ever had. Where Emily provided love, care and nurturing, Dylan provided protection and the rough and tumble fun that she never could have. Molly was not like her mother, she liked everything that was dangerous. Jumping off things, climbing things. In fact Emily had found it difficult to keep up with her. Dylan not only could keep up with her, she positively encouraged her. Right from the start, they seemed to be on each other's wave length.

She watched the big woman close the book and kiss Molly lightly on the head; the little girl lost her fight to stay awake.

Dylan stood and saw Emily waiting, hand outstretched, beckoning her partner towards her.

No words were exchanged as Dylan allowed herself to be pulled into their bedroom.

"Sit, honey."

Dylan sat, as instructed on the end of the bed. "Emmie....."

Emily stood between her partner's legs and silenced her, putting a finger to her lips.

"I want to show you how much I love you. How much I appreciate you being in our lives and looking after us. Molly and I both love you so much and we can't imagine a life without you."

"Well...I love you both with all my heart. You two are my life and.....Oh God....."

Emily had pulled her top off and begun to unclasp her bra. Dylan's mouth hung open as she watched her girlfriend's ample breasts tumble, unrestrained from the bra.

Emily quickly took off jeans and panties, and moved back between her partner's legs.

Dylan's hands automatically came up and grasped her girlfriend's breasts, squeezing them, making Emily moan. Emily covered Dylan's big hands with her own, making her partner squeeze harder.

"You're so beautiful, baby."

The young woman pulled Dylan's T-shirt over her head, along with her sports bra. Emily kneeled in front of her and slowly undid the silver belt buckle on her jeans, then pulled her boots off.

Shit! She's gonna kill me! Dylan throbbed and felt the wetness pool in her sex as she watched Emily undress her with deliberate slowness.

"Stand please." When Dylan stood, Emily pulled down her jeans and jockey shorts. She could see her partner's wetness on her thighs and allowed herself a quick kiss to Dylan's hard stomach. She heard Dylan moan.

"Oh, I love this. It's so hard," Emily moaned.

"Fuck baby, it's not the only part of me that's hard!" Dylan felt like she was going to explode. "I know honey and I'm going to take care of you. Lie back."

Dylan did as requested and lay down on the bed; Emily straddled her stomach and brought her lips down to kiss Dylan tenderly. Their tongues gently explored, both swallowing each other's moans. Emily moved her kisses down Dylan's neck, nibbling at her collarbone. When she reached Dylan's small breasts, Emily bit the erect nipples she found there, licking and swirling her tongue, making the big woman purr with pleasure.

"Baby, please! I need you."

"Patience. I want you to feel every ounce of love in my heart for you, with every kiss." Emily spent some time on her partner's stomach, licking the hard six pack that so fascinated her.

Dylan squirmed. "Emmie, I can't take anymore!"

Emily snickered against her stomach and then, deciding to give her partner what she wanted, moved down to open up her partner's sex. The clit she found there stood erect and hard. Emily took one long lick along Dylan's sex."

"Ah fuck! Suck me baby!"

Emily, doing as asked, sucked in the hard nub. From the noises her partner was making, she knew Dylan wouldn't last long. She felt hands hold down her head, trying to make the contact harder.

"Ah! That's it baby, Ah fuck! Gonna come! Gonna come!" Dylan growled as her whole body tensed, pleasure coursing throughout her body right from her head to the tips of her toes. Just as quickly, her body relaxed, becoming languid. Emily looked up to see the big woman breathing hard, her arm flung across her face.

I think you've got one more in you honey! Emily thought, as her tongue coaxed Dylan's clit back to life. "Argh! God no! Shit!" within seconds she had tensed and come again.

As Emily crawled up the long body she was grabbed and kissed senseless by her partner.

"Oh baby girl. You are amazing. I love you. I love you."

"Touch me Dyl, I want you inside me," She pleaded.

Dylan lifted her girlfriend to sit on her stomach. Emily raised her hips to allow Dylan's

fingers to slip inside. Emily was so wet, they slipped in easily. The young woman moaned at the feeling of fullness. She lifted and lowered, repeatedly impaling herself on Dylan's long fingers.

"That's it, baby feel me inside you; feel me fucking you."

"Oh yes Dyl, Harder honey! Please don't stop fucking me!"

Dylan put her hand on Emily's hip, helping pull her girlfriend down harder on her fingers.

Emily's movements came faster and faster until she flung her head back and cried out her partner's name, then collapsed down onto her Dylan's chest.

"I love you baby girl." Dylan said soothingly as she stroked Emily's blonde hair.

"That was so good, honey."

"Yeah. I don't know what I did to deserve that."

Emily looked into her deep blue eyes. "You deserve it for being you. You deserve it for loving us. You take care and love Molly like she was your own."

"I do love her and I want her to be mine. I never thought I would be able to have a family, but you and Molly can give me that. Listen I know after we've sorted out this intruder business, you said you still might want to move back home."

Emily went to speak but was stopped by Dylan saying. "It's okay, I'm not pressuring you. You know what I want but whatever you decide, you'll still be staying here weekends and stuff, so why don't you go ahead and get Molly's room decorated. It's so bland right now. She needs bright colours, toy boxes, stuffed animals, I don't know, but it needs to be nice for her. It'll give you something to do while you're not working. Work with a decorator. Have fun. What do you think?"

Emily snuggled into Dylan's neck. "I think that would be lovely. Thank you honey, I'll enjoy that. I've never had the chance to decorate before."

Dylan held Emily tight in her arms.

"That's settled then."

They gently drifted off to sleep.

Dylan woke with an ache low down in her belly. She supposed her body, having been denied for so long, just couldn't get enough of Emily's luscious body. She looked at the clock.

Six am? Plenty of time. I think I could forgo my run, just this once. She smiled.

Having Emily naked in her bed was just too much of a temptation. She leaned up on one arm, looking down at her girlfriend sleeping.

How did I get so lucky? Now that I've got you, I'm never gonna let you go.

Dylan slowly lowered the comforter, exposing Emily's breasts to the air. She watched with fascination as Emily's nipples hardened before her eyes.

Dylan leaned over and took a nipple in her mouth. She bit, teased and rolled it around her mouth. As she did, her own ache became worse. Dylan moved over to the other side, not wanting to leave the other nipple out. She heard Emily make little mewling noises and her hips unconsciously began to rock.

Encouraged, Dylan moved on top of the young woman and moved her kisses to Emily's neck.

"Uh, Dylan. Feels good," Emily said, almost in a whisper but kept her eyes closed.

Dylan could feel her Emily's wetness against her thigh. Overcome with the need to thrust into her girlfriend, she reached down and opened herself up. Moving Emily's legs wider brought their centres together.

"Oh yeah!" Dylan started with a slow thrust, enjoying the sensation of her clit moving against Emily's.

The young blonde, obviously wanting to just enjoy the sensations, kept her eyes closed but put her hands on Dylan's hard muscled ass, pulling their centres closer together as the thrusts got faster and faster.

"Dylan! Yes take me!"

They were both getting closer to the edge. "Ah! Emmie. I can't hold on, baby." Dylan groaned.

"Me neither. Don't stop! Come. Come with me!"

Dylan's hips drove faster and faster into Emily. "Fuck!" She crushed her lips to Emily's, letting the kiss swallow their moans before Dylan collapsed on top of her girlfriend.

Feeling Dylan shake, Emily threw her arms around her, cooing and soothing her while stroking the big woman's back.

"Sh. It's okay, honey. I've got you. I love you."

After a minute or so, Dylan lifted her head and looked in Emily's eyes.

"I'm sorry baby. When I am with you like this, just you and me making love...it...it overwhelms me. This, with you...I never imagined it could ever be like this."

"I know. I feel it. You are everything I ever dreamed of. And I love to feel you on top of me, your weight pinning me down. What a lovely way to wake up!"

Dylan gave her a crooked smile. "I'll pin you down anytime, baby girl."

"You sweet talker, you. What time do you have to leave for work?"

"About 9:30. We've got plenty of time for breakfast together."

"Well you better get ready; Molly will come bounding in soon."

"Join me in the shower?"

"Only if you promise to behave, TV star!"

"Cross my heart, Mama Smurf."

"Why does that not sound sincere?"

Dylan kissed her nose and got up, pulling Emily with her. "Oh ye of little faith!"

As it turned out, Emily was the one who begged for release in the shower, after finding Dylan's washing and touching far too hot to handle.

Dylan sat at the breakfast table with Molly, reading the newspaper on her iPad with a rather smug look on her face. Emily looked over from the stove where she was cooking

breakfast. "Feeling rather smug about something, TV star?"

"Who me? I'm just happily enjoying breakfast time with my girls," she said feigning innocence.

"Yes, I can see that you're a morning person. Molly do you want some oatmeal before your eggs, the same as Dylan?"

"Yes please. Ou play wiv us today Dien?"

"Sorry, Smurf. I have to go to work but you and your Mama are gonna have fun. Mama's gonna decorate your room here, so it feels like your own. So you need to buy stuff and come up with ideas of what you would like to paint on your walls."

Molly beamed. "That be my room? We stay here foever Mama? Wiv Dien?"

Dylan looked at Emily waiting for her answer.

The young woman put the bowls of oatmeal in front of them. "Well, just until we know that our apartment is safe, sweetie." She looked up and saw a look of sadness go across Dylan's face.

"But that might take some time, so we'll see what happens."

Dylan looked a little brighter. "So? What theme do you want for your room Smurflet? Disney princess?"

"Yuck! No way!" Molly said screwing up her face.

The two women laughed and Emily said. "See, She's just like you. Another little tomboy in the making."

Emily watched as Dylan's face beamed at that comment. "So you guys ready for eggs and toast?"

"Listen, I was thinking since Molls can't go out trick or treating this year, why don't the two of you come into the show Saturday night? You can dress up Molls, there will be lots of Halloween stuff going on, and I have it on good authority that there will be a few monsters and vampires dropping in."

Dylan turned to Emily. "What do you think?"

Emily sighed in happiness.

Dylan was constantly thinking of ways to make both her and Molly's lives as normal as possible."

"I think that would be a fantastic idea, honey. We'll need to get some stuff to make your costume sweetie."

"Why not just buy one at the costume shop?" Asked Dylan.

Emily gave her girlfriend a look, clearly miffed.

"Where's the fun in that? Plus, why waste the money?"

"Oh God forbid!" Dylan said theatrically. "So Smurf, what you gonna dress up as?"

Molly thought hard, then with a little smirk on her face, beckoned her mother down to her level, and whispered in her ear.

Emily laughed and kissed her daughter on the nose. "That's perfect, Molls!"

"Hey you two gonna let me in on the secret?"

"Nuh uh! It's urprise Dien!"

"It's like that, is it?"

"Yes it is, goofy! So, just be patient." Emily said.

Molly joined in. "Yeah, doofy! Ou wait!"

Emily and Dylan burst out laughing at the little girl.

The buzzer rang and Dylan got up to answer. "I'll get it."

"Hey, Pauley. Come up." A few minutes later, Dylan let the big bodyguard in, "Come in buddy."

"Would you like coffee, Pauley?" Emily shouted from the kitchen.

"No thanks, Miss Taylor. I've had a couple of cameras fitted in the lobby to observe traffic coming and going. Could I let the guys in to set up wiring, so that I can monitor them on the laptop?"

"Sure. Why don't you run them though to my office? You can use that as a base." Dylan offered,

"That's great. I'll just get the guys. Carry on with your breakfast, boss."

Dylan made her way back to the kitchen to finish her breakfast.

"So, you gonna make some appointments with designers today? Maybe do some shopping?"

"Yeah, I'll look some up on the net. Don't you take your laptop to work though?"

"Please. This is Morgan the tech head you're talking to! I have one for every occasion and every circumstance. I'll set one up here before I go."

"Thanks. We might go to the park. I don't want Molly cooped up all day. I thought I might find out if there is a preschool programme I can enrol Molly into. I couldn't get anything in Brooklyn; there were lots of families worse off, maybe here though.

"Let me get Lynn to get us a list and we can talk about it tonight. Breakfast was delicious, baby." She got up and started to pack up her laptop case.

Emily sighed. "Honey, if I let you do that you'll pick the most expensive preschool in New York."

Dylan moved closer so they could have some privacy from the workmen and Molly.

"I'm not trying to steamroll you, Emmie. It's not about money. You have to accept you're well known now, we have to take precautions, especially with our current problem and some of the best private preschools will be tightly secured. Money can buy security. I will keep you both safe, and of course, I want Molly to have the best chances in life. I love her, and as much as you protest it is going to happen, we will be a family. Whether it's today, tomorrow or six months from now."

Emily placed her head on Dylan's big chest. "Even if we're not a family officially, we're a family in here." Emily placed her hand over the big woman's heart.

"I'm not trying to be awkward by going slow; you know I love you so much. I just don't want to scare you off by tying you down to a family and all the responsibilities that go with that."

"What if I want to be tied down?" Dylan said with a smirk.

Emily playfully smacked her on the arm.

"Seriously baby, I love you both with all my heart and we are going to be an official family." She took Emily in her arms and whispered in her ear. I'm going to wear you down with love, Mama Smurf!"

"I bet you will," Emily said cuddling in tight.

"You know Emmie, I've never gone to work happier in my life. I wake up with my beautiful girlfriend in bed, make love, have a shower together, make love, then get served a home cooked breakfast with my favourite three year old. Perfect bliss."

"I want to make you happy and take care of you always."

Their lips came together in a tender kiss.

"Mwah! Mwah!" giggled Molly.

"Hey Smurf! I'll remember that when you bring home your first boyfriend or girlfriend. When you're thirty of course."

"Hmm. thirty five would be better." Emily added.

"You're right. Now I better get the laptop set up for you and get to work. I do run a television company you know?"

Emily hugged Dylan tighter. "And I thought you were just here to entertain Molly and me?"

"That's my full time job. Running a TV company and entertaining the nation is my part time job," She said with a smirk.

"Okay. Off you go, TV star! Molly and I have things to do without you getting under our feet. So go and play with your cameras." Emily shooed Dylan away.

"Just remember, whatever you do today, stick close to Pauley, okay?"

"We will. Is there anything you want me to pick up?"

"I don't think so. Do you remember the email address we set up when I gave you your iPhone?"

"Yes. I've never used it though."

"I'll get Lynn to email you the preschool stuff. I'll just go set up the Macbook."

Walking back to the breakfast table, Emily said, "Let's get you out your PJ's' and dressed Molls."

"Morning Lynn," Dylan said as she walked into her office.

"Morning. How are Emily and little Molly after the break in?"

"Fine. They're settled and happy at my place. At least I know their safe. I got Pauley over to watch them while I am at work, just until I can hire a long term security guard."

"Do you think that will be necessary?"

"I don't know, but until the police get an idea of the motive for this I want someone with them. And anyway, with Emily's new found celebrity she needs someone with her to keep the press at bay. I'm not taking any chances. Those two are my life," Dylan said quietly.

Lynn could see the fear etched on the big woman's face. "I know. We'll make sure that nothing ever happens."

Dylan cleared her throat. "I guess we're really busy since I was off??"

"Yes. You've got a lot to catch up on. The crew went out on Monday to set up the production at the Long Island location, so you don't have to worry about that. You need to read up on the research for your pieces to camera and your interview with Steve Jones."

"It'll be fine. I'll wing it. You know me Lynn, it always turns out fine."

Lynn smiled and shook her head. "Yes it does. Now your personal mails is on your desk, Dylan, I'll just get you some coffee."

"Thanks Lynn. Oh, could you get me some contact details for interior decorators and private preschools for Molly? Just email them to Emily."

"Will do." Lynn left Dylan to her work.

After Dylan sat at her desk, she called Patrick at the station. "Hey buddy, It's Dylan.

Anything new?"

As Dylan listened, she picked up her mail and started to go through it.

"Sorry Dylan, Emily's apartment is clean. Whoever it was knew what they were doing."

Dylan lifted one envelope that, unusually had the production office's address, made up of typeface cut from newspapers and pasted on. She carefully began to open the envelope.

"Turns out the message in the mirror was written in pig's blood. So we've got nothing unless something new comes up."

"Patrick, I think I've got something for you."

Dylan held in her hand a letter its message also made up of typeface from magazines and newspapers.

"A letter sent to me at the office. Shit."

"What does it say?" Dylan sighed.

'For this reason a man will leave his Father and Mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one. Therefore what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.'

Emily is mine!

"Fuck! This is about Emily, Patrick! Not me!"

"Listen to me Dylan, put it down and don't let anyone touch it. I'll be there as soon as possible and send it straight to the lab."

Dylan put her head in her hands. *Shit! This is serious. How can I protect them from someone like this? I won't let anyone take them away from me!* s he said slamming down her fist on the table.

"Detectives Kenny and Lawson to see you, Dylan." Lynn said from the office door.

"Thank you, Lynn. Could we have coffee?"

"Of course."

Dylan stood and shook her friends' hands.

"Thanks for coming so quickly. Here it is. I haven't touched it again."

Mark Lawson carefully placed the evidence in a clear bag before they looked at it.

"We'll take this and have it dusted. It looks like we need to take this seriously. I've got a list of body guards you might like to consider."

Dylan took the list and scanned it quickly. "Who's the best on this list?"

"Undoubtedly, Jackson Hunter." Patrick replied.

"Tell me about him."

"Her actually. Ex special forces. When she left the military she opened her own private security company. She's worked with a lot of business people and politicians. She's expensive and choosy about which jobs she takes, but I think she's the right fit for Emily and Molly."

"Okay, I'll contact her. What about the list Emily gave you?" Dylan asked.

"We contacted everyone, didn't find any leads. The ex, Toni Bianchi? She was an obvious suspect. History of drinking and drug problems; Emily mentioned some violence. We didn't get anything. She seems to be living quietly in Jersey. We searched her place, found nothing relating to Emily. She has a girlfriend, works in a local restaurant." Mark explained.

"She could be hiding something! Someone with a history of drugs..."

"She gave us permission to speak to her drug counsellor and psychotherapist. They are both very satisfied with her mental state and say she's been clean for two years. Apparently, after the break up with Emily, she spiralled out of control and sought help."

Dylan stood in frustration and walked over to the window, the anger boiling up in her stomach.

"So now what? I just wait for this to escalate? Wait for someone to try something? Wait

for Emily or Molly to be attacked?" She shouted.

"No, of course not. We're going keep an eye on this Toni, if she does anything suspicious, we'll be on it. She did give us another lead. Apparently some guy, a waiter who worked at the restaurant she managed, had a pretty big crush on Emily. Toni says she had to warn him off a few times. We're making inquiries. We'll track him down."

Patrick lifted the evidence bag. "We'll get this to the lab. I'll let you know if anything comes up. I'll leave Hunter's details with Lynn on the way out."

"Thanks guys. I do appreciate your help." As they left she buzzed Lynn.

"Lynn can you make me an appointment with a Jackson Hunter? . Find a space in my schedule and get her here today."

"Dylan, you have no time, you're already behind and that's before you leave for the shoot tonight."

"Lynn. Make it happen." Dylan said with a steely edge to her voice. Very rarely did Dylan make demands on her personal assistant, the way other stars did. So when the big woman did, Lynn knew to get it done.

"I'll take care of it. Give me twenty minutes."

If anyone comes near Emily or Molly, I will kill them.

Emily had been looking at preschool websites and decorators for the past hour and a half. She heard the whoops and laughter coming from the game room and thought, *I better get lunch started.*

She stood and went to speak to her daughter and Pauley, who Molly had charmed into playing the Wii.

Emily entered the room to find Pauley bent over gasping. "Thank goodness your here Miss Taylor. I think your little girl is trying to kill me!"

Emily and Molly laughed.

"Molly why don't you watch TV while I make us lunch, and give Pauley a chance to cool down."

"Otay Mama. I watch Dien and big bird?"

Emily picked Molly up. "Okay sweetie. Come on. Pauley, would you like some lunch with us? I'm making stuffed corned beef sandwiches. Molly's favorite."

"Sounds great Miss Taylor, Thank you. I'll just go and check the security cameras."

"Okay. I'll give you a shout."

Emily settled Molly in front of the TV and went to make lunch.

"Thanks, Keep the change." Jackson Hunter paid the cab driver as she arrived at Morgan Productions.

Jackson was not used to being summoned at such short notice. Since leaving the military and running a very successful security firm, she found herself in the fortunate position of being able to pick and choose her assignments. She didn't find the task of babysitting a TV stars girlfriend and child very appealing, being much more used to safeguarding political and international figures, but the PA who contacted her, said Jackson could name any terms if she would agree to an immediate meeting.

She made her way to the reception desk. The young receptionist looked Jackson up and down eagerly, she had a huge crush on Dylan but this smart, tough looking woman would do as well. She took in Jackson's tall figure. At 5foot 8 inches body, she had a slightly smaller frame than Dylan but looked as solidly built. Her dark hair was closely cropped at the back and sides. The top was slightly longer and styled precisely into a Mohawk. The impression that most excited the young woman was the way the good looking woman held herself. If she wasn't mistaken, the woman had a military bearing. She looked extremely smart in her silver suit with crisp white shirt and thin black tie. Her heart fluttered as the devilishly handsome woman took off her sunglasses and popped them in her top pocket.

Oh wow! the young woman thought.

"Jackson Hunter for Dylan Morgan." "Uh....yes of course... I'll just let them know you're here. Take a seat and someone will come and get you."

"Thank you."

"Can I get you something while you wait?" the young receptionist said seductively.

Completely unaware of the receptionist devouring her with her eyes, Jackson declined.

Jackson sat and opened the file she had made up on Morgan and her partner. Of course she had heard of her, she was one of the most famous lesbians in the world but she rarely had time to watch Saturday night entertainment shows. She gazed at a newspaper article that had a picture of Emily and Molly. *Beautiful woman. I don't blame you for moving mountains to protect them Morgan.* A sadness, which was normally locked tightly away inside, washed over her. *Never again, Hunter,* she thought, locking the sadness back up inside her.

"Jackson Hunter?"

The former soldier jumped up to attention as soon as she heard her name.

"Yes?"

"I'm Lynn Roberts, Dylan Morgan's PA. We spoke on the phone."

"Of course, Ms Roberts. Pleased to meet you."

"If you'll follow me."

"Dylan? This is Jackson Hunter."

Dylan stood, shook hands and indicated the other seat at her desk. She quickly assessed the woman. *Hmm. Strong, smart. Looks like a soldier,* thought Dylan as she observed Jackson sitting very straight and rigid in the chair.

"Thank you for coming so quickly, Ms. Hunter."

"Please call me Jackson. No problem, I had no other appointments today."

"I don't know what you've picked up from the newspapers but my partner Emily's apartment was broken into. Nothing was stolen but this message was left." Dylan handed her a picture of the first warning.

"At that point, we thought it might have been an overenthusiastic fan, annoyed at my new relationship, but today I received this." She handed over a copy of the letter to Jackson.

The original is being checked over in the lab. I understand you know Patrick Kenny and Mark Lawson?"

"Yes. We've had dealings before. Does Miss Taylor have anyone in her past who would consider her theirs?"

Jackson saw Dylan visibly stiffen, her jaw clench tight. *Possessive Morgan?* she thought.

"Yes. An ex, but the police seem satisfied there's no connection."

"But you're not sure."

"It's just a feeling." Dylan said.

"Based on?"

Dylan leaned back and looked Jackson right in the eyes. The bodyguard was clearly testing her.

"She had everything. Emily is the most wonderful, caring, nurturing woman I have ever met. She had her and she fucked up. She lost a pregnant Emily and I tell you, Emily's the type of woman you would never give up on. I would die before giving up on her and that little girl. That makes me think the ex wouldn't give up either."

"I understand. Some women, you just can't let go." Jackson said.

"But the police are going to keep monitoring her. She gave them a tip about a guy who was overly interested in Emily, they are following up on that now. What do you think? Will you help me?"

"Dylan. I don't come cheap and I do have some stipulations."

"Money doesn't matter." Dylan lifted the picture she kept of Emily and Molly on her desk and handed it to Jackson.

"Those two are my life; she is the woman who's going to be my wife. I would do anything to keep them safe and whole." Dylan said in a determined voice.

Jackson understood the fierceness that drove you to protect but also knew you could fail. *I won't fail in my duty again.*

"I'll need full control of security and cooperation from Ms. Taylor about her day-to-day activities. Protection will be useless unless I have control."

"You'll have anything you need. Do we have a deal?" Dylan offered her hand.

Jackson thought for a second and accepted.

"We have a deal."

"When can you start? I'll be away all night. I've got one of the studio security guys with them just now but..."

"I'll start right away. Just let me head down to my office and pick up my equipment. Will you be going back home before you head out tonight?"

"I can spare an hour or so before heading to the location. How about we meet at my apartment at 4pm?"

"Good enough. Don't worry. Your family will be safe." Jackson tried to reassure Dylan.

"Thank you. Oh and please don't tell Emily I got this letter today. I don't want to worry her."

Jackson nodded and left.

"Chocolate chip or snickerdoodle?" Emily asked her daughter.

Molly was standing on a stool at the kitchen table, in her little apron, while her mother got out the baking ingredients.

They had just got back from a trip to the store to buy the things they needed for Molly's Halloween costume.

Emily had also spent a nervous ten minutes waiting in the car in front of her apartment building while Pauley collected her sewing machine.

Emily had wondered if Dylan was right about staying with her.

How could I ever feel safe there again? Emily's thoughts were interrupted by Molly.

"Both Mama! Dien like chip and oodle ones."

"Oh you think so? I know a certain little girl who likes both as well!" Emily tickled Molly's tummy, making the girl giggle and laugh.

The young woman's phone lit up and began to ring.

"Hang on till I get the phone sweetie, hello?"

"Hi baby. It's me."

Emily smiled. "You shouldn't phone here. I have a really big girlfriend who wouldn't like it."

"Hey! A big girlfriend who would kick anyone else's ass for calling you baby!" Dylan said in a mock angry voice.

"I'm only kidding, honey. How are you? We miss you."

"I miss you too. What are you up to?"

"We'll, we just finished lunch. We went to get things for Halloween and now Molls and I are going to make cookies for you to take with you tonight. We thought you'd be hungry on location."

"Aww that so nice Emmie, I don't think my kitchen's ever known baking before."

It warmed Dylan's heart to think of her two favorite girls happy and safe at home and she couldn't keep the smile off her face.

She's making my apartment a warm home. This is what's been missing in my life.

"Well! It's going to know a lot more. I love baking, it helps relieve stress and tension. I just didn't have much time to do it before."

"Baby girl, I can help with your stress and tension," Dylan said in a husky voice.

"Enough of that kind of talk, TV star. You're not going to be here tonight to help me with that," Emily chastised.

"Okay, Mama Smurf. Where's Pauley?"

"He's just taking a walk around the building; do you want to speak to him?"

"It's okay. I'll call his cell. Were you planning on going out this afternoon?"

"I wanted to take Molls to the park. I don't like her being cooped up all day."

"Could you do me a favour and stay in? Just for today. I've got you a more permanent bodyguard and I want to bring her over this afternoon and introduce her to you both."

"Honey, do you really think that's necessary. Things have been quiet since the break in. I feel safe living here with you. Isn't that enough?"

Dylan had decided not to tell her about the letter today, so it was going to be difficult to convince Emily of how bad the situation was.

"Please. Just humour me. At least until the police are satisfied?"

Emily sighed. "Okay, bring her over but I'm not going to be a prisoner. Will you have time for dinner before you go back out?"

"If it's quick. I'll have about an hour and a half, but I'd love to eat with you both before I go. I better go, baby, I have a pile of work to get through before I can go home.

"Okay. I love you, TV star."

"Love you, baby girl."

"Okay Molls! Let's get baking!"

Dylan had managed to get home a bit early so she could have some time with her girls before Jackson arrived. She passed Pauley in the hall, as he was making his rounds.

"Hey Pauley. Everything quiet?"

"Yeah boss. No problems."

"Great. You can head off back to the studio now that I'm back. Jackson will be here soon."

"You picked a good one there, boss. I've heard good things about her. War hero, so I'm told."

"Excellent. Well thanks for your help, buddy. See you at work."

Dylan unlocked the door and immediately her senses were filled with wondrous smells, happy voices from the kitchen, warmth and a feeling she had never felt before when coming back from work. Home. In the space of a day, Emily and Molly had turned her lonely apartment into a family home.

She threw her laptop case on the couch and couldn't resist shouting through to the kitchen. "Honey, I'm home!"

Immediately she heard the pounding of little feet and saw Molly running out of the kitchen.

"Dien! Dien! Ou home!" Dylan scooped the little girl up in the air, gave her a kiss and then dangled her upside down by the ankles. Molly laughed and squealed.

"Dien! Ou put me down!" She laughed squiggling around. Emily came to meet her at the door.

"You'll make her sick, honey." Emily warned.

"Should I just drop this little Smurf then?" Dylan winked at her girlfriend.

"Ha! Ha! Let me down. I make ou ookies!"

"Oh well, why didn't you say!" She turned Molly around and kissed her head. Molly cuddled into her neck.

"I mif ou Dien."

"I missed you too Smurf, and you, Mama Smurf." She kissed Emily lightly on the lips.

"You two girls have a good day?"

"Yes we made choc chip cookies and snicker doodle. Didn't we Molls?"

"Yeah. When ou scared of the ghosties tonight ou member we ove ou."

Dylan's heart melted. "Could this kid get anymore adorable?"

"I'm sure she could try. Come on in to the kitchen and I'll get you a drink."

Turning to her daughter Emily said. "Why don't you go and find that picture you made for Dylan. I think it's was in the game room."

"Otay, Mama." Once she ran off, Emily wrapped her arms around Dylan's strong neck

and kissed her thoroughly, causing Dylan to moan.

When Emily pulled back and rested her head on the big woman's chest, she said, "I missed you so much today."

"God! Could this welcome home get any better?"

"Yes," Emily whispered into her ear. "If we were alone, I'd beg you to take me right here on the kitchen table."

Dylan felt herself throb immediately. "Oh god! Don't say these things to me. I want you so much." Just when she was about to kiss Emily again she heard...

"Look what I drew for you!"

"You are a tease, Miss Taylor, and I will pay you back," Dylan breathed in her ear.

"I'll look forward to it, TV star." Emily whispered.

Dylan growled and then turned her attention to Molly.

"That's so good Smurf, thank you. What smells so good?"

"Oh lasagne. I thought that would be good to make, in case this new bodyguard person needs dinner. What's her name?" Emily asked while checking the oven.

"Jackson Hunter. She's ex-military, Special Forces. Looks tough, doesn't say much."

Emily smiled. "Like you then? The butch strong silent type?"

Dylan smirked. "Maybe. So did you get a decorator and find out about the pre schools?"

"I looked at a lot but they were all too fancy, then I found a small independent decorating business that I liked the look of, so I've made an appointment."

"What about the preschools?"

"There's a couple that looked good, but they are very expensive. I'd like to look at them but I'd rather have you with me."

"Sure. Why don't you try and set something up for Monday afternoon? I have training with the guys in the morning but we could go later?"

"Okay. I'll give them a call tomorrow." Emily turned back dinner preparations.

Jackson had gathered up the surveillance equipment she would need in her small office. She worked alone and liked it that way. This new job filled her with trepidation. She was used to working with officials. Politicians, public figures. This job put her right in the center of a family, exactly where she was running from. She gazed down at the picture on her desk. Two women dressed in camouflage uniforms smiled back at her. One was herself, the other her baby sister Sarah.

Jackson Hunter came from a military family. Her father, being a Colonel in the Army, expected his children to follow him, and having only two daughters did not deter him. Colonel John Hunter expected his family to do their duty, no matter their gender. That suited Jackson. She was a natural soldier, excelling at everything she did, racing through the ranks and eventually finding herself in Special Forces. Jackson was part of an elite group of women who were the first to be allowed to join a Special Forces regiment, designed for missions in the Muslim world. They were recruited and sent in to Iraq and Afghanistan, in order to accomplish missions their male counterparts could not.

They were recruited to subdue and contain villages and homes that had a higher proportion of female civilians and children. Due to cultural constraints, it was better for the soldiers searching the residents and homes to be female.

Jackson loved this opportunity, she had always wanted to fight and be part of a unit at the very highest level.

Her baby sister, Sarah, was not like Jackson, she had never been the tough tomboy type. She had wanted to study nursing but felt pressured to join the army like her hero big sister, so she joined the medical corps.

Then Jackson's life had turned upside down.

I should have fought harder for you. You should never have been near there, Jackson thought sadly.

"Wish me luck with this assignment. I'm sure you'd know how to talk and fit in with a family, munchkin, I never did," She spoke out loud.

She closed her bag and left for the Morgan residence.

Dylan got up from the dinner table to answer the door.

"Jackson. Come on in. We were just finishing up dinner."

She dropped her bags and followed Dylan to the kitchen.

Jackson was greeted by a scene that rattled the icy chains around her heart.

A beautiful blonde stood at the stove dishing out dessert, while a dark headed little girl sat happily at the table.

"Emmie, Molls, come and meet Jackson."

Emily took off her apron and walked over to Dylan. Molly jumped up in Dylan's arms, shy at this new stranger.

Jackson looked appreciatively over Emily's feminine form. Emily's ample breasts and curvaceous figure attracted Jackson. Although this cozy domestic scene was foreign to her, Jackson Hunter knew and adored a beautiful female form.

Dylan saw a flash of attraction in the eyes of the normally buttoned-up soldier and felt tightness in her chest, something she had never felt before.

She pulled Emily closer and looked Jackson right in the eyes.

"Jackson let me introduce you to my girls." Dylan said seriously.

As they stared at each other they knew a line had been drawn. A message sent and received.

Emily, oblivious to this subtle interaction, shook the soldier's hand.

"Lovely to meet you. This is Molly." Molly was cuddled into Dylan tightly, needing reassurance, and just waved her hand.

"Nice to meet you, Miss Taylor. Miss Molly."

"Molly, Jackson is going to make sure you're safe when I'm not here."

"From the bad man?"

"Yeah. That's right," Dylan said.

Emily smiled at Molly's shyness. "She's shy, but she'll be a chatterbox in no time."

Jackson smiled. *Kind of cute. Just like her mother.*

"Emmie, I need to speak to Jackson for a minute." She put Molly down.

"Okay. Don't be long. The apple pie will be ready soon."

Dylan kissed her. "Thanks, baby."

Once in her office, she closed the door and sat on the edge of her desk. Jackson could see Dylan was tense.

"I'm leaving in half an hour or so. I hate that I have to go but I can't get around it. I'll give you Lynn's number. Any problems at all, contact her and she'll get a message to me."

"Please trust me. I'm the best. I will keep them safe." Jackson replied.

"I know." Dylan nervously ran a hand through her dark hair.

"It's hard. I'm new to this relationship stuff and it's hard not to overprotect them. Most of the time I'm stumbling around in the dark but one thing I know, Emily and Molly are my world. I've just found them, and I will not let a stalker or anyone else threaten them."

Jackson knew you couldn't always protect the ones you loved, but she determined to do everything in her power to help keep this family safe.

"I don't know a thing about relationships either, but those two through there are beautiful. If they were mine, I'd be just as defensive as you."

Dylan stood. "I appreciate it."

Both women now relaxed, understanding each other completely.

"I'll get my stuff set up. Can I do it in here?"

"Yeah go ahead. There's a spare room set up for you. Make yourself at home."

"Thank you...uh...I saw you win gold at the Olympics. You were amazing."

Dylan smiled warmly. It wasn't often people looked past her TV persona and acknowledged her former achievements.

"Thanks. I'm more into mixed martial arts now, but it was a proud moment."

"Maybe you'd like to spar one day?"

"Sure! We could do it here, I have a great gym. I'd love to test my skills against a Special Forces op."

Jackson grinned. She loved competition. "Anytime, boss."

"On that note. I'll leave you to it."

When Dylan returned to the kitchen, Emily had served homemade apple pie.

"Everything okay, honey?"

"Just fine. Mmm. This tastes amazing. You are such a good cook. I can tell living with you is going to expand my waistline."

"I doubt it with all the exercise you do. I made you some sandwiches to go with the cookies we made."

"That's sweet, baby. We do have a catering truck you know."

"I never thought of that. Well, it will probably be hot dogs, fries and everything that's bad for you." Emily remarked.

"Dien. Don't let the ghosties or the rats get you!" The little girl seemed worried.

"Are you kidding? They'll be frightened of me, Smurf. You know why?"

Molly shook her head.

Dylan put on her best cocky smile. "Cause I'm **the** Dylan Morgan and even a ghost or a rat can't beat me."

Emily and Molly laughed. "You're so full of yourself, TV star!"

"I know. That's why you love me. Remember to do what Jackson asks okay? I want you both safe," Dylan warned.

"She seems kind of stiff and uptight."

Dylan shrugged, "I guess military types are like that. As long as she does the job."

Emily nodded in agreement.

David Fox was gleeful as he dialed the phone.

"Daniels."

"Jimmy! Legal has okayed the story."

Yes! Jimmy mentally punched the air.

"Excellent. When do you run it?"

"Tomorrow. You're going to be a busy man, Daniels. Every news station from the East coast to the west coast will want an interview."

"I'm ready. Morgan has been due some bad publicity. Let's see how her little waitress bed warmer handles this."

David laughed. "You get anymore Daniels, be sure we're your first port of call."

"I will always get more." Jimmy ended the call with a self-satisfied look on his face.

He picked up his whiskey glass. "To you Morgan. I just knew there was a story in you."

Jackson had set up her equipment; checked it more times than necessary; walked around the building twice; informed Morris, the doorman of new security procedures; and was

now faced with the prospect of joining Emily and her daughter in the living room.

Emily in an effort to try and get to know the uptight woman, had asked Jackson to join her for coffee, when she was set up.

Checking the security screen for the last time, she made her way to the living room with a sigh. Living a singular existence made conversation and companionship difficult for Jackson.

In the military, conversation was for a purpose. The relaying of information. Everyone knew where they stood and what was expected of them.

The thought of being in a social situation, expected to chat, filled Jackson with horror but she had been employed to look after this woman and could hardly avoid spending time with her.

"Jackson? Come and join me. I just made a pot of coffee."

She joined Emily on the couch. Molly, rather sweetly, was watching a sesame street DVD Dylan was in.

Emily poured a cup for her and offered a plate of cookies. "I'm sorry about the kids' programme. She insisted on watching it before bed since Dylan isn't here to read her a story.

Jackson found herself smiling at the little girl and wondering what it would be like to have a family, to be needed and loved, like the way Emily and Molly needed Dylan.

"Thanks. Um...these cookies are great. Did you make them?"

"Yes, with Molly's help. I love to bake."

"Dackson. Ou like my cookies?" When cookies were mentioned, the girl had turned her attention to them.

"They're great, Molly. Thank you." Satisfied, her concentration was back on the large screen TV.

Jackson looked around the stylish living room. "You have a great place here."

"I'm just getting used to it. This sort of life is very different to what I'm used to."

"You don't live together now?" Jackson questioned.

Jackson knew from her research that the intruder had been at Emily's apartment in Brooklyn, but she had just assumed this was now a permanent situation. She had read numerous newspaper and magazine articles saying how the lucky waitress had hooked the rich TV star and moved in with her. Some reports even suggest Emily was a gold digger, who wormed her way into Dylan's life and luxurious home.

The humble woman before her didn't seem to match those reports.

"Dylan insisted we come to stay here after the break in. I agreed for the time being, but Dylan wants us to live together full time. She's making it harder and harder to leave her."

"Don't you want to live with her? I'm sorry that's none of my business."

Emily looked amused. "Don't be. It's refreshingly straightforward. I do want to build a life with her. I just wanted to give her time to make sure this is what she really wants. A readymade family is a lot of responsibility to take on. A burden, some would call it."

Jackson regarded her carefully. Emily was not only beautiful on the outside, she had a beauty that shone from within and she obviously had no comprehension of it, which made her even more attractive. *Yes. You are one lucky woman, Dylan.*

"Maybe she wants to be responsible. Some burdens are well worth the bearing," Jackson said.

Emily was surprised. "You sound as if you know what you're talking about. Do you have someone you like being responsible for?" Emily could see the guard Jackson had let down pulled straight back up and locked tightly.

With sadness in her voice she said, "Not anymore." She stood quickly. "I need to check the security cameras. Thank you for the coffee and cookies. Excuse me."

What story do you have to tell Jackson? She asked herself as Jackson walked back to the office.

It was 9 pm and Dylan was sitting in her trailer, which had been set up on the haunted house location on Long Island. She was shortly going to do a walk round, with Steve

Jones, the famous country singer and a psychic, to give the audience a history of the house and grounds before she and Steve would be put into the coffins, below ground at midnight.

Her eyes wandered over to the lunch box Emily had packed. Her heart swelled with happiness, she had never felt so cared for before.

She opened the box and on top of the overstuffed sandwich and bag of cookies, was a picture of a ghost, drawn by Molly, and a note from Emily.

Stay safe from the ghosts and don't let the rats bite! We love you, TV star! Hurry home.

Your two girls.xx

"Joey, I don't know what I did to deserve this, little brother, but I'm holding on with everything I have."

Dylan's iPhone chimed. "They're never ending." She grumbled as she opened her mailbox. "What the fuck?" The email read:

From: sanctityofgod.com

Look in the cupboard above the sink.

She rushed over and yanked the cupboard door open. Inside was a white box. As soon as she lifted it, she could smell the putrid stench of death.

Dylan slowly opened the box.

"Fuck!" She dropped the box, its foul contents spilling onto the floor. Her stomach rolled as she watched maggots feasting on a decaying rat.

She tried to get her revolting stomach under control. Dylan then noticed a piece of paper had also tumbled out with the contents. She reached down, hands shaking, and picked it up.

It read:

I have given her time to repent but she is unwilling to leave her prostitution. So I am going to throw her onto a bed and inflict severe trails on her partners in adultery, unless they repent of their evil.

(Revelation 2:21-22).

"What the hell does fucker want?" The anger boiled up inside until she screamed and threw a punch that broke the cupboard door.

Pauley, who was heading location security, came rushing in.

"You okay, boss?"

"Some fucker has been in my trailer and left a gift." Dylan indicated the mess on the floor.

"Shit! I'll start a full search of the area. They must have got hold of a pass to be able to move around freely."

"I want this person found. Call the police and get them over to check this out." "Will do." When he left, Dylan dialled Jackson's cell phone.

"Jackson Hunter."

"Jackson, it's Dylan. How are things at home?"

"Very quiet. No problems at all."

"Good. I need you to be extra careful tonight. I was left a rather nice present in my trailer."

"What?"

"A maggot- infested rat with a rather unpleasant quote from the bible; A warning of sorts to Emily and me. It was an email that tipped me off. It's as if they know my movements and if they know that, they might be able to work out when Emily is least protected."

In the background Dylan heard the laughter and squeals of Molly getting ready for bed. Her heart thudded at the thought of anyone threatening them.

"Make sure the police see it and send me the email address it was sent from. I have a contact who works with the FBI, who could try and trace it; probably faster than the police."

"Thanks. I'll forward the whole email to you now. Let me know if you get anything."

"I will, and don't worry. I'll take watch all night in front of the cameras. No one will get near."

"Thanks. Oh and Jackson? Remember, don't tell Emily. I don't want her worried."

"If you think that's best. I'll call you if I get anything."

Dylan ended the call and Lynn came all flustered. "Dylan are you okay?"

"I'm fine. I'm just angry. When I catch whoever is doing this, I'm gonna tear them limb from limb."

Pauley came back in grasping a crew pass.

"We found this discarded on the road outside the site. The guy who it belongs to was knocked out and hidden in the trees around the perimeter."

"I want security tightened, Pauley. I want the guards checking these passes on everyone as they do their rounds; even if they know them."

"Yes, boss, and the police are on their way."

"I'm sorry, Dylan, but the director wants to start the walk around now," said Lynn.

"It's okay. I'll do it, but if any calls come from Jackson Hunter I want to know right away."

"No problem."

"Right let's get to what I do best." Dylan grabbed her jacket and followed Lynn out to the house.

A pair of binoculars was trained on Dylan as she walked across the location.

You'll never figure it out Morgan. I'm just too smart for you.

Lynn watched Dylan deliver her piece to camera with pride. She showed none of the stress and tension she was feeling about the stalker situation. Ever the consummate professional, Dylan was able to go to a different space in her mind, a calm dispassionate place that allowed her to work under the most trying circumstances. Lynn supposed it was the discipline of her martial arts training that enabled her to do it.

It was now close to midnight.

They would then be taken to the house and left to record any strange noises or happenings with their own video cameras. Then at around 2 am, they would be taken from the house and placed in the coffins. The lids then would be shut and they would recorded their experiences on video camera situated within the coffin.

The house is said to be haunted by four different ghosts. One appears to be the present owner's father. He has allegedly been seen holding his great granddaughter in an upstairs window.

The other is a greyish smoke- like figure that can reportedly pass through people in the home's kitchen. As the basement was being renovated, an unexplained swastika was found built into the linoleum floor.

The ghosts of a woman and a dog have been seen walking the grounds at night. The woman is said to be waiting for her lover, who never comes, and can be heard wailing through the night.

Will we be able to brave the ghoulish goings on? Will Steve Jones have the courage see through Dylan's Dare or will he be left running scared? We'll find out over the course of the night, when we take part in 'Dark Terror!'

"Cut! That's great, Dylan. Let's move to the coffin site." The director shouted to the crew.

The set became a hive of activity as the crew moved cameras and cables to the new location. Dylan and Steve had their cell phones taken off them, given their cameras, and taken inside to begin recording.

Jackson woke up in front of the security monitors. She had stayed on watch all night after the incident in Dylan's trailer.

Jackson stretched her long body and yawned, looking over at the clock on the laptop.

"5 am? Man I need coffee!" She said rubbing the sleep from her face.

Just then, Emily popped her head round the door. "Would you like some coffee Jackson?"

"You read my mind! You're up awful early."

"I'm used to being up for work and Molly will be up shortly expecting breakfast. Is there anything you don't like?"

"You don't have to make me anything. I can ...""Don't be silly. What about cheese omelettes, bacon and toast?"

"That would be wonderful, thanks." Jackson could see how Dylan loved this woman so deeply. It would be so easy to fall into the haze of her the beauty, warmth and caring, that seemed to radiate.

Get a grip, Hunter, She mentally slapped herself and turned her attention to her laptop.

She had emailed the details of the stalker, who had left the present for Dylan, to her friend in the FBI last night. He had promised to email back the results as soon as possible.

She opened up her email client and gasped when she saw the banner headline on the rolling news.

"Shit!" Not wanting Emily to put the TV on and let Molly see, she jumped from the desk and swiftly moved through to the kitchen.

Emily looked up. "Hi, Here's your coffee. I was just going to bring it through." When she saw the strange look on Jackson's face, she knew something was wrong and panic seized her chest. "What? Has something happened? Is it Dylan?"

"No! no. Please calm down. It's not that. I just didn't want you to turn on the morning news with Molly around. I think it's best if you watch." She lifted the TV remote and switched on the TV in the kitchen.

'If you're just joining us, we're talking about the big celebrity news. People Magazine claims to have evidence that exposes the paternity of Emily Taylor's child. Emily Taylor is the young waitress who has captured the public's imagination as the everyday girl who stole the TV star Dylan Morgan's heart. We are now joined by Jimmy Daniels, who has followed Dylan Morgan's career with interest, and was the man to break this morning's story.'

Jackson watched as Emily gasped, clasping her hand to her mouth. Upset females were not her specialty but Jackson felt she had to do something.

Shit. What do I do? Jackson thought and awkwardly started rubbing her back in soothing strokes.

The news anchor continued.

"Jimmy, Thank you for joining us."

"Thank you for having me on, Matt."

"Jimmy, can you tells us the back ground to this story? It sounds a little like a soap opera."

"Yes it does. But it's just another in the long line of events that makes Dylan Morgan's life a soap opera. The country's hero, bringing back gold from the Olympics. The Internet sensation who got a TV show that went stellar all over the world. Then she meets the love of her life at a rundown diner and whisks the woman off to live in her luxurious condo. Throw in a stalker, and I think you'll agree her brother being the biological father of her girlfriend's daughter isn't really a step too far."

"Your right there, Jimmy. Tell us about Joseph Morgan and how you got hold of this information?"

"Well Matt, A couple of seasons into Dylan's hit TV show, Joey Morgan followed his sister into showbiz looking for the big time. He didn't have the same luck or talent, apparently, and soon got involved in the party scene. Before long he was addicted to coke and alcohol. From my research, Dylan tried getting him into rehab several times but it never stuck, and she refused to give him anymore money that he could use for drugs. My contact at the fertility clinic tells me that Joey came in desperate for money; That was all he was concerned with. He got paid and, a short time later, died of an overdose. Emily Taylor came along, chose her donor and the rest is history."

"It's an amazing story, no response from either Dylan or Miss Taylor but I'm sure we'll hear more over the coming days. Jimmy Daniels, thank you. We'll be right back after these messages."

"Oh God ...I ...I don't..." Tears streamed down Emily's face as she tried make sense of her thoughts which were racing around her brain.

"Emily, do you want me to get a hold of Dylan for you?" She pulled out her cell, phone ready to dial.

Joey's the donor? How is this possible? If this is true, then Dylan is ...

Suddenly calm Emily knew what she needed to do.

"No. I need to phone the clinic. I need to know if this is true. Dylan must still be working in that house or she would have phoned."

"I'll get you the number." Jackson did a search on her phone and wrote it down.

"Thanks, I'll make the call in the office. Can you listen for Molly and please, don't let her put on the TV."

"Of course, you go ahead. I'll watch her."

Once inside the office, Emily let her head fall back against the door and let out a long breath.

When she had chosen her anonymous donor, Emily had based her choice on three things - He was tall with dark hair and worked in the theatre. Although most women chose someone educated like a professor, doctor or lawyer; Emily had wanted her child to have that artistic flair that she so admired. She imagined some young hard working actor, plying his trade off Broadway, looking for his break. Joseph was no actor though. He had followed his sister looking for the fame but, if this was right, Molly would have all the best elements of Dylan. Molly would be hers because, from what Dylan had told her, Joey loved and idolised his sister. If he'd lived he was sure to have given Dylan a helping hand at starting a family.

She rallied all her courage and dialled the number.

"Hello, This is Emily Taylor."

"Yes, I have seen the news. Before we discuss how the press got this information, I want

you to confirm that the donor was Joseph Morgan."

"Yes, my security number is 91101980."

Tears started to roll down her face as she listened to the answer.

"And the rest of the batch? Is it still secure and available only to me?"

"Thank you. I'll be in touch."

She replaced the phone and looked at the picture of Molly and herself on Dylan's desk.

You wanted us to be a family, honey. Are you ready for this?

She made her way back to the kitchen. Molly, thankfully, still wasn't up.

"Is everything alright? Morris phoned up to say the front of the building is swarming with press."

"It's true. All of it. I need to get hold of Dylan. I don't want her to panic. Jimmy Daniels messed with her before and she went crazy. I know she looks big and tough but she's so sensitive and unsure of herself inside, her first reaction is anger when threatened. I need to speak to her and tell her everything will be ok."

"I'll get hold of Lynn for you."

Previously:

You wanted us to be a family, honey. Are you ready for this?

She made her way back to the kitchen. Molly, thankfully, still wasn't up.

"Is everything alright? Morris phoned up to say the front of the building is swarming with press."

"It's true. All of it. I need to get hold of Dylan. I don't want her to panic. Jimmy Daniels messed with her before and she went crazy. I know she looks big and tough but she's so sensitive and unsure of herself inside, her first reaction is anger when threatened. I need to speak to her and tell her everything will be okay."

"I'll get hold of Lynn for you."

Episode 6

Lynn hung up the phone to Emily and was more than a little shell-shocked. The crew had told her of the morning news but she couldn't believe it until Emily had called.

After being left in the haunted house at midnight, Dylan and Steve had been placed in the coffins at two am. Dylan had been underground without any communication from the outside for three hours. So had no idea what awaited her outside.

Steve Jones had bailed after half an hour, screaming that he couldn't take the claustrophobia and the rats any longer. So Dylan had won her dare again, and made some good money for charity.

"Pauley, who was standing with Lynn outside Dylan's trailer said, "How do you think she'll take it?"

When Dylan had been helped from the coffin she badly needed a shower, so Lynn ordered no one to tell Dylan of the breaking news. Lynn also still held onto her employer's phone, hoping Dylan wouldn't have the chance to hear the news until she herself could break it to her.

Lynn sighed. "I wouldn't want to be Jimmy Daniels, that's for sure."

Just then, Dylan strode out of the trailer. She was beaming and obviously delighted to have won another dare.

"Woo hoo! What a night! You should see some of the footage I got. Some great noises, I'm sure I got footsteps and ..."

She stopped when she saw the looks on Lynn and Pauley's faces. Fear gripped her.

"What's wrong? Did something happen at home?"

"No. Emily and Molly are safe. Don't worry. There was a ... news story, that broke this

morning ... it's difficult ..."

"Tell me now!" she demanded.

As Lynn related the details to Dylan, she watched the TV star's face turn to stone.

At the end, she said nothing but took off towards one of the crew vehicles. "Dylan stop! Call Emily, please! Don't do something you'll regret!" She was in the car and sped off before Lynn could finish the sentence.

Dylan had sped away from the location, with every intention of breaking every bone in Jimmy's body. She knew he kept an office in the city, but she found herself driving towards Brooklyn rather than his office. She felt pulled towards Holy Cross graveyard, where Joey was buried. It took over an hour but she felt she had to see him. On the way her rage turned to confusion. She had idea what came next.

Dylan had raced away from the location with every intention of breaking every bone in Jimmy's body. She knew he had an office in the city, but she found herself driving towards Brooklyn rather than his office. She felt pulled towards Holy Cross cemetery, where Joey was buried. It took over an hour, but she felt she had to see him. On the way, her rage turned to confusion. Dylan had no idea what came next.

What will Emily think? Will this just be too freaky for her and she'll leave? And Molly? Fuck!

She pulled into the parking lot and sat staring at the entrance to the chapel. Her mind drifted back to one of the saddest days of her life. Joey's funeral. Her father had been so distraught at his son's death that he took his grief out on Dylan, blaming her celebrity lifestyle for pulling him into the world of drinking and drugs.

Their last argument had been the night before the funeral.

You will not stop me from going to my own brother's funeral, Dad!"

The priest shifted uncomfortably in his seat. He had come over to the house to lead prayers before the next day's funeral, and had interrupted Tommy Morgan and his daughter arguing.

Since her father wouldn't return her calls, Dylan had arrived at the house to find out the arrangements only to be informed that her presence was not wanted. Her mother sat weeping, watching her only surviving child argue with her husband.

"You will not keep me from my own brother's funeral, dad!" Father and daughter stood nose-to-nose.

"You brought him to this. He was just a boy and he fell into your lifestyle!"

"And what lifestyle is that, dad?"

"Parties, alcohol, drugs! Whatever else you and those other faggots get up to!"

Dylan's anger was about ready to snap. The familiar feeling of anger twisted through her veins, making her feel a little sick, and her fists balled up ready to strike.

Father Dunne, the silver haired priest whom she had known since she was a child, jumped between them. The look of fire in the woman's eyes making him fear for Tommy.

"Dylan! Calm down. This will get you nowhere. If you strike your father you will regret it for the rest of your life."

It took all of Dylan's strength to move away and head for the door. She turned at the door and said, "I was never part of that lifestyle. Show business wasn't for him, he wanted the fame without the work; and because it didn't come, he filled the gap with drugs and alcohol. Where were you, Dad, when he was left unconscious by drug dealers? Where were you when he had to be rushed to the hospital to get his stomach pumped? You weren't there. I was. I picked him off the floor, cleaned him, paid his medical bills and got him into rehab; but it never worked. He couldn't do it and I couldn't stop him from using. Even when he had no money, and I wouldn't give him any, he found a way. You left me to fight that battle alone, Dad. Think about that when you're throwing blame around. I will be at the funeral tomorrow and I will take my place as his sister."

Tommy turned and walked away from his daughter. After Dylan left, Father Dunne caught up with her and she rolled down her window, "Dylan, he's hurting. I know you are, as well, but I think deep down he blames himself. Give him time."

Tears ran down Dylan's face. "It hurts so much Father. Everything I have, the success, the money, doesn't mean much with this pain."

"It'll never go away but it will get easier with time, and you will know happiness again."

"Why are you so sure?"

"Because I believe God does not give you pain like this without having happiness planned for you. Things will work out as they should."

He was right. It never did go away but it did get easier with each day, and meeting Emily had brought the happiness back. As Dylan walked down to the gravesite, she thought, *to donate to a sperm bank, he must have been so desperate.*

The guilt was beginning to gnaw at her guts, twisting and churning her up.

Dylan found herself standing in front of Joey's headstone. It was planted all around with flowers in different sized pots. "Hey, little bro. I guess dad still takes care of you, huh? I'm ... I'm sorry I haven't been here for a while, Joey. It's difficult. I've missed you, buddy. Ever since you ... left. It's just been me. Dad still doesn't talk, but you know what he's like, he could hold a grudge until the end of time. I met someone but I guess you know that, right? Emily's perfect; she just gets me. I can be myself with her and I don't trip over my words in front of her. Well mostly.

You know how rare that is for me. Remember that time you persuaded me to go out to a club with you? I saw that pretty girl at the bar and you introduced me? And do you remember what the first words out my mouth were? I stumbled around my brain, searching for something to say and my opening line was. 'Uh ... you have ... uh, nice breasts.' She slapped me and stormed off. You laughed for a month over that. Well guess what? I can have whole conversations with Emily without mentioning her breasts if I want. She's the love of my life. Did you send her to me, little bro? Did you send me into the diner that night?"

Dylan leaned her head back and took a deep breath, listening to the wind swirl around the graveyard as if it might carry Joey's voice.

"You helped her get the most beautiful little girl."

I know you never saw yourself as a family man type; it was always me that dreamed of having the wife, the kids, the white picket fence ... oh ... you? ..."

A thought flashed through her brain. She knelt down on the grass and touched the stone, hoping to feel closely connected Joey.

Her mind drifted back to one Christmas seven or eight years ago. She had come home to spend the holiday with her family. After a long day of church and opening presents, they

were now enjoying dinner.

"This has been a great day. We're glad you came home, Dylan. We miss you."

"I'm sorry, mom, it's just the show is really taking off at the club and I can't take my eye off the ball."

Tommy stood and clapped his daughter on the back.

"Well. We're together as a family and that's what it's all about. The only thing that will make it better is when you two bring me home some grandkids."

Father and mother left the two siblings alone, while they cleaned up in the kitchen.

"Well big sister, you do know it's your responsibility to provide the grandkids? I know you want to find a little lady and settle down one day. I think having kids would give me hives!"

Dylan laughed. Her brother could be such a queen sometimes.

"I would love that, Joey, but there are a couple of problems with that plan."

"And what would those be, dear sister?"

"One, whenever I talk to a woman I fall to pieces; and two, I lack the necessary equipment."

"Oh come on, Dylan. We both know you've always had more balls than I've ever had. Let's face it, sis, you're the son dad wanted."

"Joey, don't....."

"No. It's okay, Dylan. I'm not sad about it. It just isn't who I was meant to be. You were, and if you ever get that big motorcycle boot out of your mouth and catch a nice girl, I'll help you out. They'll be all yours."

Dylan's heart raced as she realized what this meant. "She's mine!"

She stood and kissed the stone. "Thank you for this gift, little bro. I love you."

She raced back to the car as quick as she could.

A lone individual sat in a room reading the article in People magazine. Their hands began to shake as they read on. All of a sudden, the figure's anger boiled over. "Argh!" They ripped the magazine apart, grabbed the chair and smashed it off the wall.

"Lies! Why are they lying! They're not yours, Morgan! They will never be yours!"

Emily paced up and down the office. "Somebody must know where she's gone, Lynn. How can she just disappear? It's been hours."

"There's nothing. We checked at Jimmy's office and People Magazine's local office. Nothing. I want to find her, believe me; I need to know how she wants to handle this. There are only so many times I can say, no comment," said Lynn sounding exasperated.

Emily sighed. "I'm sorry, I'm just worried. You know what her temper's like. I worry about what she'll do and Molly keeps asking questions. She's scared the ghosts got her last night."

"I'm sorry. Are you two okay? Do you want me to send Pauley over?" Lynn offered.

"It's fine, Jackson's with us. Just let me know if hear anything, okay?"

"Will do. Let me know if you hear anything, too."

"Thanks Lynn."

"Anything?" Jackson popped her head around the door and saw Emily looking worried and hugging her arms round her chest.

"Nothing. I don't understand why she wouldn't come home. I know it's a confusing and unreal situation, but it makes us family. I thought that's what she wanted, maybe I was wrong." Emily wiped away the tears that started to fall.

Jackson debated saying anything. She didn't like to reveal herself so much, but Emily was in pain and she couldn't help but like the beautiful woman.

I hope I don't regret this!

Jackson took Emily's hand and pulled her over to sit down. "I haven't known either of you that long but Dylan seems to me like someone who lives for her family, and this must have shook her to the core. I had a sister." Jackson's voice cracked with emotion.

"She joined the army as soon as she was old enough. She wanted to be just like me, but she was no soldier. She got into the medical corps and was stationed in Iraq with me. They were helping the injured in a local village when they came under attack from insurgents. My unit got the call to go in. When we got there, I found her dead; her body lying across a little Iraqi girl she tried to protect. The fact that my unit was too late tortures me. I should have made it on time. I imagine that's how Dylan felt finding her brother dead in his apartment. If I found out my sister had a child I didn't know about, all of those feelings of pain and hurt would come rushing back. I'm sure she's just gone someplace to get her head around it and deal with the hurt and pain that this has brought up."

Emily took Jackson's hand and said, "I'm so sorry about your sister."

Jackson looked down at her hand clasped in Emily's. She didn't normally let anyone this close, but Emily was a kind caring person and she trusted her with the truth.

You are one damn lucky woman, Morgan. If she weren't taken I would love to be the one to make her smile.

Feeling a little exposed, Jackson decided a tactical retreat was in order. "I'll just go and make sure Molly's okay."

"I'm going to run her bath and put her to bed. She wanted to stay up to see Dylan, but who knows what sort of mood she'll come back in.

"Okay, can I make us coffee or something?"

Emily could sense Jackson was itching for something to do.

"That would be great. Thank you."

Please be safe, honey.

Sometime later, Jackson jumped from the couch when she heard them door being opened; her hand hovered over her weapon.

She relaxed when the door opened to reveal Dylan creeping in.

"Dylan. You're back at last."

Dylan detected annoyance in Jackson's voice. "Yes, I'm back. Any problems?"

"No. Just Emily and Molly being worried where you were."

Well what happened to Miss Emily and Miss Molly?

There was something in Jackson's tone that irked Dylan. "Well, I'm back, so you can get home now. Tomorrow we'll discuss the package from last night. Where's Emily?"

"I think she's in her room now. She was putting Molly to bed."

Jackson gathered her case but couldn't help having another shot at the TV star.

"You know Emily's been in tears. She's been so worried and Molly thought the ghosts had gotten you."

Jackson saw a steely look come over Dylan's usually warm eyes.

"I'm back now, so you can go home and leave me to see to my family."

After Jackson left, Dylan went over to the liquor cabinet, poured herself a whiskey and downed it in one.

This is it, Morgan. You have to face her and if she kicks your butt then you take it. You deserve it.

She made her way down the hall and, taking a breath, walked into the bedroom. Emily was sitting at the dressing table in her nightgown, brushing her hair.

She turned and, when she saw who it was, launched herself at Dylan, kissing all over her face. Dylan gathered Emily up and squeezed her tight.

When she was sure her girlfriend was alright, the temper came. "Why didn't you tell me you were safe? I have been worried sick all day! And Molly has been asking for you every five minutes! Did you call Lynn?"

"Yes. On the way back. I'm sorry. I had to think. I was so confused."

"You were confused? I heard it this morning on the news, don't you think I was confused and needed you?"

"I went to the graveyard to talk to Joey," Dylan said sadly.

Emily immediately calmed down. "Oh? And did you come to any conclusions?"

Dylan stroked the side of Emily's face tenderly. "Yes. Molly is mine. Yours and mine."

"Of course she is, honey. You know I want us to be a family, even if the donor hadn't been your brother ... "

"No, you don't understand. She really is ours. She was meant to be mine."

Dylan explained the memory that had popped into her head when she spoke to her brother at the grave.

"Oh my God. You're right. If he had lived, he would have helped us with this donation. He would have helped us conceive our babies."

Dylan looked down at Emily with a new, deeper connection. She didn't think she could love Emily or Molly anymore than she did, but something had changed. They were forever linked. A family not just of the heart, but of flesh, blood and DNA.

"She is ours," Dylan said huskily.

Emily saw the look of hunger and want on her partner's face. She felt a pull in her stomach and a steady thud begin deep inside.

Their mouths came crashing together in a fiery passionate kiss.

They both felt the need to connect at some deep level, to confirm the bonds between their souls were now unbreakable.

Dylan needed to take, to prove what was hers and hers alone. She untied the dressing gown, delighted to find Emily naked underneath. She picked Emily up, her girlfriend's legs wrapping around her waist while the bruising kisses continued. She carried Emily over to the wall, balancing her against it. Dylan's big hands found Emily's breasts, alternating between squeezing them hard and pinching the hard nubs with her fingers, while Dylan's teeth bit and marked their way down her neck.

"Oh God yes, Dyl! I like it hard. Take me. Take me fast and hard. Please?"

Dylan growled and felt a rush of power. She thrust two fingers straight into Emily, who still had her legs wrapped around her.

"Ah! Oh God! Yes! That feels so good, Dyl. Fuck me! Fuck me harder!"

Dylan felt she could come any second without any stimulation. It always made her so hard and ready to come hearing the normally very polite Emily talk in vulgar terms.

Dylan used her hips to thrust her hand into Emily harder. She could feel Emily tighten around her fingers and knew it wouldn't be much longer.

"Oh! I'm going to come, Dyl."

Dylan thrust even faster then said into her ear, "you're mine. Mine forever. Come for me now!"

Emily's legs tightened around her waist and her nails dug into Dylan's shoulders as she fell over the edge into a white hot heat that seared though her body, soothed by the words of love Dylan was whispering over and over in her ear.

Panting, Emily came back to earth and opened her eyes, holding onto Dylan's neck like a life preserver.

"I love you, Dyl." She reached down between them, starting to undo Dylan's belt.

"No. I want to feel closer. Inside you. Please?"

Emily knew what she was asking. It had arrived in the mail yesterday. They hadn't used it yet but Dylan had worn it around the bedroom. She said she had to bond with it.

As soon as she put it on, Dylan felt at home; it felt like a natural extension of herself. She knew that as soon as she touched it and felt the pull in her clit at the same time. Emily had loved seeing Dylan wear it. The coloring was a near-perfect match for Dylan and it felt so real.

Emily ran her fingers through Dylan's thick dark hair. "Yes. I want that. I'll wait for you in bed.

Dylan lowered her to the ground, letting her get into the big bed. Emily watched as Dylan got ready. She began to throb again when she saw her girlfriend stalk towards her with the look of a predator about to devour her prey.

Dylan slipped between the sheets and on top of Emily, resting her elbows either side of Emily's head and looking deeply into her eyes.

"I want you so badly it hurts; I want to be so deeply inside that I'm a part of you." Emily saw the look of longing in Dylan's eyes, and could feel the new feeling of hardness

between them. "Then take what's yours."

Dylan reached down and felt the copious amount of wetness Emily had produced.

"Oh God! You're so ready for my cock." Dylan felt her own hard nub stiffen to an almost painful point underneath the base of her strap on.

"Yes I am. Let me feel you, stretch me, fill me up Dyl!"

Dylan eased in slowly until she completely filled her partner.

"Feels so good inside baby."

Emily ran her hands up and down Dylan's muscled arms and shoulders. They were among Emily's favorite parts of her partner's body, and to know that she was the only one who could enjoy them like this thrilled Emily.

Dylan moaned as she started a gentle thrust. Emily looked up at Dylan, mesmerised by the look on her partners face. She saw only pleasure, love and devotion.

"Baby? Can you feel me? I'm deep inside you. I feel like I can't get close enough."

"I feel you, honey. You're part of me."

"Need ... need to be closer. It's not enough." Dylan quickly came up on her knees, all the while staying inside, and placed Emily's legs on either of her shoulders. She pulled Emily's hips closer. Dylan then leaned forward a little and began a long slow thrust.

"Oh god, Dyl. It's so deep!" This new position touched a place inside her that made her feel exquisite pleasure but made her want to cry at the same time.

"You feel so good around my cock. Shit!"

"Yes, give it to me harder. Make us come together!"

"Fuck yes!" Dylan grabbed on to her hips and pulled Emily towards her thrusts, which were getting faster and faster. The erotic sound of slapping flesh spurred her on towards the end.

Dylan felt all the tension and pleasure begin to build up to a point where she knew she couldn't stop.

"I'm coming baby. Can't stop!"

"Yes, come now. With me, please?"

"Fuck!" Dylan leaned back and roared, holding onto Emily's legs and thrusting fiercely as her orgasm seemed to flow from her groin into her girlfriend.

Dylan collapsed on Emily, whose arms came around her reassuringly and held her tight as she shook from the power of her orgasm.

"It's okay, honey." Emily cooed.

"I ... I ... love you." Dylan's voice sounded raw.

"I know, honey. I love you."

Dylan lifted her head and tears were running down Emily's face.

Oh God! What have I done!

"I'm so sorry, baby. I was too rough wasn't I? Shit! I ... "

Emily placed a finger across Dylan's lips.

"Stop. You didn't hurt me and you weren't rough. You were passionate and in control, just the way I like it. You had me so turned on." Emily smiled saucily. "And that way you made love to me? You touched places so deep it made me want to cry, scream, scratch your back and smile at the same time."

Emily watched a cheeky smirk develop on Dylan's face. She wagged her hips, her strap on still inside. "It was that good?"

"Ugh. It's tender in there, goofy!" Emily play slapped her partner's backside. "Yes, it was that good. I loved it."

Dylan pulled out gently and, lying on her back, gathered Emily in her arms.

"I got to tell you, baby girl, that was fucking amazing. I thought I was gonna pass out!"

Emily leaned up on her elbow full of smiles. "Yeah?" She stroked Dylan's hard abs. "And how did you like using our new friend?"

"It was amazing! It was like it was a part of me. It felt like nothing mattered but being deep inside. I think it's gonna be my new favorite friend."

Emily grabbed Dylan's cock and gently stroked it from base to head.

"Ugh! Baby. I can't concentrate when you do that and we have to talk before tomorrow."

"You can feel it when I do this?"

Dylan nodded. "Dylan nodded. "Yeah. I told you it's like it's connected to my clit. It feels like a part of me and watching it in your hand just blows my mind."

"Could you come this way?"

Dylan put her hand over Emily's and brought it up to her waist.

"Yes. Easily. So that's why you have to be a good girl so we can talk."

Emily smirked. "Okay I'll be good, but you do realise my mind is now whirling with things I want to do to you and have you to do to me?"

Dylan whimpered. "Yeah. I think you might kill me, but I'm looking forward to it. Come here, baby girl." Dylan quickly took off the strap on, so they could talk without temptation.

"So how do you feel about today?" Asked Dylan.

"Well, apart from the way we found out via that horrid man, Jimmy Daniels, I'd say it's the most wonderful thing that I could ever have dreamed of. I was meant for you, Dylan Morgan. Even before I knew you, I had your baby."

Dylan's smiled a goofy smile. "It makes me so happy to hear those words."

"When I went to the clinic and looked through the available donors, you would think that I would pick a blonde donor because Toni and I are blonde, but when I came to your brother I just pictured a beautiful dark haired, blue eyed baby. I knew it was right. It was meant to be, Dylan. From the moment we met, it's just been right. Look at the way Molly took to you right away? She's always shy with strangers, it's as if she knew you were her other Mom."

"Mom? I'm a mom? Whoa. I never thought of that. Wow." Dylan looked stunned.

Emily ticked Dylan's stomach, smiling. "Well you're not exactly the mama type like me, are you?" Dylan laughed. "I guess not. Too butch huh?"

Emily raised herself above her partner and kissed her obviously wanting more. "Yeah. But that's just the way I like you."

Dylan pulled away moaning. "Baby girl, you're killing me here. I'm trying to be all grown up and talk about this, and you're making me want to have you again!"

Emily giggled like a naughty schoolgirl. "I'll behave. Sorry. Eh ...I was looking at your brother's picture today, the one in the frame on the bookcase?"

"Yeah, that was taken when I made him go hiking with me. He hated it. He could be such a queen. You would have had fun with him. Shopping and that boring stuff."

"All that boring stuff?"

"You know. Girl stuff."

"Oh. I see." Emily nodded indulgently. "Well even though he's Molly's biological parent, she's so much more like you. He's dark and blue eyed but he's smaller in height and build. I think Molly's going to have a bigger build like you. And going by her love of all things like cars, gadgets and games, I think she'll have your personality too."

"Well what do you expect, she is my kid?" *It feels so good to say that!*

Dylan said proudly, "But there's one thing she doesn't have."

"What?" Dylan rolled Emily over onto her back and placed a big hand in the centre of her chest.

"She doesn't have my heart. That little girl's loving and caring nature is all yours, Emmie."

Emily ran her fingers through Dylan's hair. "You are my everything, Dylan. Molly and I couldn't live without you."

I hope this isn't pushing to soon! thought Dylan.

"That's good because I've something more to say. I want no more talk of going back to your apartment when things are safer. I want you both with me forever. I'll be damned if my family is going to live in two different places." Emily went to speak and was silenced again. "I'm not finished. I also want no more talk of giving me time and space before committing to me. I want that commitment, especially now."

Dylan caressed Emily's face, her heart thudding at what she was about to do. She had decided at the cemetery what she needed to do, but deciding and actually doing it were two different things. She got up, got the box from her jeans pocket, and walked around to Emily's side of the bed. Dylan got down on one knee.

"This should probably be done in a much more romantic way but ... well today pushed things along a bit."

Oh my God! She's not going to ... is she?

Dylan took her hand, held out the open box and said, "Emily Grace Taylor, you are the mother of my child and the love of my life. Will you do me the honor of becoming my wife and making us a family?"

Emily sat up, holding the sheet around her. A million thoughts rushed around her head as she looked down at the most beautiful ring she had ever seen.

"When ... " gasped Emily.

"I stopped off at DeBeers on the way back. They weren't too impressed with how I was dressed but when they realised what I was buying, they changed their mind. Is it okay? I ... I wasn't sure what to get but I told the assistant that you liked simple, but that I wanted something really special. She suggested this."

Emily looked open mouthed at the large square cut diamond atop a platinum band.

"Yes." She whispered.

Dylan looked confused. "Is that a yes you like it or yes you'll marry me?"

Emily smiled warmly. "Yes to both. I'd love to become your wife."

Dylan launched herself towards Emily and squeezed her tight.

"Really?"

Emily laughed and nodded vigorously.

"Wow! You've made me the happiest I've ever been in my life. Oh, the ring."

Dylan very carefully took the ring from the box and placed it on Emily's finger. Emily lifted her hand to admire the ring.

"It's beautiful, honey. It's like a ring from a fairytale. I'm sure you spent too much money on it."

Dylan peppered little kisses across her knuckles.

"You deserve everything. I'm only sorry that you had to go through hard times when you were having Molly. You should have been at home enjoying every minute of your pregnancy, but I can promise you and Molly that from now on neither of you will want for anything for the rest of your lives.

Tears ran down Emily's face. She had always resisted Dylan spending too much money

on them, having to be independent through necessity for so many years.

"But the declaration Dylan had just made was not about control, it was about showing how much she cared. About how she loved Emily and Molly in a way that Toni never had. Dylan was a provider and protector by nature and it filled Emily with joy to know that she and her daughter were the sole focus of that protection.

"What's wrong? Why are you crying, baby girl?"

"I'm just so happy. I know we have more to talk about but please, will you make love to me now?"

"With pleasure."

And Dylan did just that. She poured all the love in her heart and soul into their passion, trying to show Emily just how much the blonde meant to her.

After making love long into the night, the two newly engaged women slept wrapped around each other.

Dylan woke up early, around 4:30, and went to make them coffee.

She came back with the tray and tried to wake Emily gently.

"Emmie? Wake up, baby girl."

"Hmm. Too early, Dyl ... go back to sleep."

"I know its early, baby, but I've got to go to work in a while and we need to talk before Molly gets up, and decide what to tell Lynn to tell the press. I brought coffee. It's not as good as yours, but it's drinkable."

"Alright! I'm up! I'm up! Give me a nightgown, will you?"

"Dylan grabbed one from the dresser and gave it to Emily. Dylan sat down and Emily took the cup of coffee and sat down beside her.

"Hmm. tastes good." She looked down at her sparkling ring smiling and said, "We're

engaged."

"Yes, I know. You've made me a happy TV star. Just don't lose that or a small insurance firm may go out of business.

"It wasn't too expensive was it?" Emily asked worriedly.

"You don't need to worry about that, all you need to worry about is how beautiful you look wearing it."

"You know, I feel a little smug." Emily said.

"Oh? And why, apart from having a devilishly handsome fiancé, would you feel smug?"

Emily smacked Dylan on the arm. I feel smug because Jimmy Daniels thought he had something on you that was really going to make you angry and upset out lives but, in fact, finding out about Molly was the happiest news that we could have been given."

"You're right. This is all I've ever dreamed of. That little girl through there is part me, part of my blood, my DNA, my family, and my heritage. Nothing could make me happier. What will we tell her?"

"I think we should tell her today in case she hears anything on TV. I think if we tell her the truth, that your brother helped me make a baby so you and I could be her Moms, I think that would be best. She's going to be one happy girl having you as a Mom."

Dylan smiled shyly.

"I hope so."

"There's one more thing you need to know about the donation."

Dylan's heart sank. *Shit I knew it couldn't all be good news!*

"What is it?"

Emily put her coffee down on the bedside table.

"You know that my dream had always been to have a large family?"

Dylan nodded. "Well, when I chose your brother's donation, I bought the whole lot so that Molly could have full brothers or sisters in the future, if I could afford to have them.

I didn't want anyone else to have it. I checked with the clinic when I called yesterday and the donation is still healthy and viable."

Dylan looked a little stunned. "You mean ... if we want to have some more kids, they'll be ours? The same as Molly?"

"Yes honey. If you want to, you can get me pregnant whenever we want."

Dylan leaped on Emily, pinning her to the bed and raining kisses on her face and neck. "I want! I want! When can we start?" She wiggled her hips suggestively into Emily's groin.

Emily chuckled. "Hey calm down, goofy! How about we wait till we're married? You really want to have more children with me?"

"Are you kidding? I want as many as you're willing to have. Remember I told you about how I wanted to buy a house on Long Island on the beach? Fill it up with a family? Have a workshop so I can play with my tools, a boat maybe to take the kids out in? I'll have a big gym, I can teach Molly Taekwondo, and whoever else comes along." Dylan said excitedly.

"The night you walked into my diner you made my dreams come true, you know that?" Emily replied.

"I think both our dreams came true, and I think Joey guided me to that diner. I can't imagine my life without you."

Their lips met, not in fiery passion this time, but in a tender way the spoke of all the love these two people held for each other.

"I guess we've decided how we'll handle the press, huh?" Dylan asked.

"Yes. Tell them we were delighted with the news and announce that we're getting married. No angst or pain here."

"You do realize, with this story and the wedding, you're going to be in the papers even more. They'll be speculating on what dress you'll be wearing, where we're having it, guest lists, the whole lot." Dylan warned.

"I don't care. I have you and that's all that matters. I think I'm ready to become the wife of a TV star."

"Great I'll go and phone Lynn before Molls gets up."

Suddenly a thought flashed through Emily's mind.

"Honey! Did you put away your ... your ... you know, before Molly comes in?"

Dylan laughed at Emily's embarrassment over it. "You weren't so shy about it when my little buddy was inside you! You were screaming his name."

Emily threw a pillow at Dylan's head. "That's enough, TV star! That is if you ever want to have sex again?"

Dylan dropped to her knees on Emily's side of the bed. "I'm sorry, baby girl." Dylan leaned in to kiss Emily's neck. "You know I can't live without your touch, your sweet kisses."

"Get going you goof!" Emily smacked Dylan on the arm.

After getting dressed and making her calls, Dylan made her way back to the kitchen. Lynn gave her an earful for leaving yesterday but she soon cheered up when she realized she had a wedding to help organise. Lynn advised that the couple should do one big interview with a major TV station, so the public could see them, and then ask for privacy for the wedding. Dylan had promised she would ask Emily.

When she entered the bedroom, she found Molly cuddled into her mother.

"Dien! Ou back! I miffed ou. Did da ghosts get ou?"

Dylan lifted the girl and, lying down beside Emily, brought Molly into her lap.

"Nah! They were scared of me, Smurflet! I missed you an awful lot yesterday too, and I'm sorry I didn't come home till after bedtime but something came up I had to sort out."

Molly cuddled into her chest, seeking reassurance. "It's otay Dien. I ove ou."

"I love you too, Molls. More than you know."

Emily cleared her throat. "Molly, Dylan and I have something important to tell you. Come sit between us."

The little girl looked at her mother with Dylan's big blue eyes. *How did I not see it before? She's like a little clone!*

"Remember when you asked me before if you had a daddy?"

Molly nodded.

"I told you mama went to the hospital and a man helped me make you? Well we found out that the man that helped me make you was Dylan's little brother, and he wanted Dylan to have a baby with mama. So that means you belong to both Dylan and me."

Emily watched her little brain trying to work out the puzzle, she probably wouldn't understand fully until she was a little older.

"Dien are you my daddy?" Dylan gave Emily a panicked look.

"That's sort of true honey, but Dylan is a girl so it's probably better to call her your other mom. We are family sweetie; we all have the same blood, just like you and mama."

Molly crawled up to Dylan and touched Dylan's cheek with her little hand. "Dien? Ou my mom?"

"Yeah Smurf. Is that okay with you?"

Molly threw her arms round Dylan's neck. "Ou my Mom! I have a mom and a mama!"

Dylan thought her heart would burst from the joy she was feeling.

"That's right, Smurf. You're my kid and I love you. You know what else?"

Molly shook her head. "I asked your mama if she would marry me so we could become a real family and she said yes. Look at your mama's pretty ring."

Molly's mouth formed an "o". "That's so pwetty, mama. We going to be a family? Mom won't ever go away?"

"Never. I don't think we could get her to leave even if we hit her with a big stick!"

"Ha! Ha!" Molly laughed and jumped up and down on the bed. "I have a mom! I have a mom and a mama!"

Emily kissed Dylan on the cheek. "You've made her the happiest little girl in the world."

"Come play wiv me, Mom." Molly tugged at Dylan's hand.

Feeling she should let them bond more, Emily said, "You two play and I'll make us breakfast, but after that mom has to talk with Jackson and get ready for work. She's on the TV tonight."

"Otay mama. Come on, mom!"

"I think she may never let you go now," said Emily.

Dylan had a happy, goofy look on her face. "Good. My daughter is someone you never let go of."

Molly pulled Dylan off to the playroom.

Emily sighed. *Well, you've done it, Emily. You've got the family you always wanted!*

Jackson walked up to the door of the Morgan home at 7 am, unsure what she would find. When she left the night before, Dylan had been AWOL all day and Emily was getting madder by the second. When Dylan eventually came creeping in, she was glad she wasn't the one to face the young woman.

When she knocked and Emily opened the door, whatever scene she thought she would find, it was not this. Dylan was on the floor wrestling and tickling Molly, who was laughing and having the time of her life, and Emily was beaming watching them.

"Good morning Jackson. Come in, I kept some breakfast for you. Dylan Morgan! If you make your daughter sick, you can clean it up!" Emily chastised.

Her daughter? That's new, thought Jackson.

"Alright Smurf! We better calm down before your mama kicks my butt!"

"Otat mom, but mama wouldn't tick your butt, she oves ou."

"That's good to know, Molls." Dylan patted Molly's head.

"Dyl, I'll go and get her dressed so you can talk to Jackson. Before I do ... Jackson? We have something to tell you."

Emily had lifted Molly up and Dylan stood proudly with her arm round Emily's shoulders.

Emily nudged Dylan in the ribs. "Oh yeah. Uh ... last night, I asked Emily if she would do me the honor of becoming my wife, and she said yes. Lynn is releasing it to the press today."

Emily held out her engagement ring for Jackson to see.

Well played, Morgan. In one fell swoop you save yourself getting your balls busted when you get home by bringing a huge diamond ring, and you make sure this little family is yours legally, thought Jackson cynically. To Jackson, people and especially people in relationships always had agendas. She didn't believe in the love from romance novels, soul mates who would do anything just to make their partner happy, because even family went away eventually.

Jackson leaned in and kissed Emily's cheek. "Congratulations Emily. I hope you'll be happy. You too, Molly."

She then shook Dylan's hand. "You're very lucky, Dylan."

"I know," replied Dylan. "I'll spend the rest of my life trying to make her happy. Come, have some breakfast while we talk."

Jackson watched Emily walk off to get Molly ready for her day, the little girl chattering away to her mother.

They seem so happy. Maybe real love is possible for some; but not for me, thought Jackson sadly.

Dylan noticing her security guard looking off after her fiancé shouted, "Hey Jackson! Let's get started, shall we?"

"Sure, sorry. I was just thinking." She sat down and Dylan took breakfast out of the oven for her.

"Thanks. I'm going to put on weight doing this job!" Jackson joked.

"Tell me about it! Ever since I met Emmie, I've had to work a lot harder in the gym. I called Patrick this morning. He's got nothing on the letter or the package I got on location. They looked into the guy that Emily's ex flagged up but he has no criminal record, pays his taxes, and goes to work. Nothing unusual. Patrick tells me that without any evidence there's nothing they can do. They have to wait till he does something."

"My contact in the FBI traced the email you got to an internet cafe on west 49th Street, no traceable details."

"I need you to be extra vigilant. Whoever this is doesn't like Emily being in a relationship with me, so it might get worse once our engagement's announced."

Jackson finished eating and lifted her cup of coffee. "Emily have any plans today?"

"Yeah. I don't want her to, but how can I ask her to keep Molly cooped up for another day without answering some awkward questions? She wants to go shopping. Oh, and she has an appointment with a decorator this afternoon.

Emily going to the park worried Jackson. A big open space would be hard to keep safe.

"I wouldn't recommend it. The press are camped out on the street downstairs. I don't think I could keep them safe without more people. I think you should tell her the truth."

Dylan looked down at the floor. "I can't. Not yet, at least. She'll be so angry that I've kept this a secret; they've both been through so much over the last few days. I need to let them settle a bit first. I will tell her, just not yet. I'll just tell her it would be too unsafe with the press and stuff."

Jackson sighed. "It's your call. Listen, the decorator Emily set up the appointment with, Rosie Henderson?"

Dylan nodded. Emily had finally found a decorator she liked. After going through all the usual big companies, Emily had found the website of Rosie Henderson. A recently graduated artist, who had just started her own business. *That's so like my Emmie*, Dylan thought. She'd rather give a chance an enthusiastic beginner than a slick conventional business.

"I had my associates run her details."

Dylan had no idea who Jackson's associates were, but she was delighted that she had employed such an excellent professional.

"I don't have to worry about anything, do I?" she asked Jackson.

"Not as such. She seems to be your classic arty hippy type. A couple of warnings and an arrest at an anti-war rally."

Dylan tried not to smile as she observed the disgusted look on the very conservative soldier's face.

"Well, she's young. I'm sure she's not much of a threat. Do you?"

"Maybe not, but I'll be keeping my eye on her. I don't trust that un-American, anti-government sort as far as I can throw them."

"Okay. Whatever you think's best. Remember, Emily and Molls are coming into the

studio tonight. I'll leave the Jeep with you, the studio is sending a car for me. I need to get another car organized from the dealership."

"Understood."

"In the meantime I'm going to try and convince my fiancé that she can't go out today."

Jackson smirked. "Rather you than me."

"Gee thanks!"

"Look, I'm sorry Emmie. It's just till things settle down a bit. The press would make it impossible to look in the stores anyway."

Dylan had broken the news to Emily that she must stay in today. She had not taken it well and was now, rather forcibly, folding the laundry in their bedroom.

When Dylan received no answer, she tried again. "Emmie please. I'm doing my best here to try and make things okay for you both."

Emily ceased her frantic folding and sighed. "I know you are. I don't have to like it though. We're like virtual prisoners in here, and all because of a one-off burglary and some empty threats."

Dylan stood and walked over to Emily. Slipping her arms round her fiancé's waist.

"Even if the intruder thing hadn't happened, the press following would be the same anyway. Why don't you get on the net and do the shopping you wanted to? I'm sure you'll still find it fun. There's more choice and less hassle, and it's exciting to get deliveries." Dylan was trying hard to sell the idea.

Emily let her head fall back onto Dylan's chest in resignation. They had decided last night that Emily would shop for new clothes for Molly and herself. Since they were now engaged, Emily had accepted that their finances would now be shared and let go of her fierce independence and Dylan, as Molly's mom, said she had a lot of birthdays and Christmases to catch up on.

Emily turned in Dylan's arms. "You know what's so infuriating about you, goofy?"

Dylan smiled, knowing she was going to be let off the hook.

"I'm sure there's a ton of things annoying about me, baby girl."

"Well yes, but the main thing is that no matter how angry I am at you, I can't stay mad with you. You look at me with those blue goofy eyes and I want to hug you tight and kiss you." Emily proceeded to do just that, her hands going straight to Dylan's butt. It was one of the many places on her fiancé's body that she adored. She loved the way it felt rock solid but also how it looked in the type of slouchy jeans Dylan wore, with the low hanging back pockets and buckles, her Calvin Klein jockey shorts visible above the waistband.

Dylan broke the kiss while she still could. "Hmm. I love your kisses, Emmie, but you shouldn't kiss me like that unless you want me to rip your clothes off! And, unfortunately, I have to go to work."

"Alright, spoil sport!"

Still holding Emily in her arms, Dylan asked. "So? You gonna buy up the internet? Remember, get everything you both need and even if you don't need it, buy it." Dylan gave Emily's nose a quick kiss.

Emily placed her head on Dylan's chest. "It's going to be hard getting used to not worrying about what things cost. I had to struggle to get what Molly needed. So be patient with me."

I'm so sorry you had to go through that alone. Never again, Dylan vowed as she kissed Emily's head.

"I understand, but you don't have to worry again. I'll always take care of you. Your bank and credit cards will take a few days to be posted but you have my card in the meantime, so just enjoy it. What time's the designer coming?"

"One o'clock. Going by her website, she seems quite the colorful character. Should be interesting."

"Well, have fun. I better get to work. Jackson will bring you to the studio later. Make sure you do what she tells you and follow her advice when you go out."

"Yes dear!" Emily said sarcastically.

Previously:

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Episode 7

Rosie Henderson checked her appearance in a store window for what seemed like the fiftieth time today. At twenty-five and fresh out of art college, this was her big chance. When a Miss Taylor called for an appointment, it had been a godsend. Only six months out from college and with a little help from her dad, she set up her small interior design business. Rosie had no idea Miss Taylor was someone special until she had received a call from a rather stiff-sounding bodyguard. Jackson Hunter had told Rosie that under no circumstances was she to give out any details relating to Miss Taylor or Dylan Morgan. She had been astonished that such a famous couple would choose a small company, that barely had any commissions, to style their home.

The phone call had annoyed Rosie; she would never give out any client information. A request would have been fine but the security consultant, as she described herself, had ordered her as if she were some sort of naughty school girl.

I hope I don't bump into her!

With one last check she walked the few yards further along the road and made her way

into the apartment building.

Jackson answered the intercom, "Yes, thank you. Send her up."

She walked to the living room where Emily was sitting on the sofa with the laptop on her knee and Molly was playing with some toys on the floor.

"Emily, the decorator's here." Jackson told her.

She shut the laptop and stood. "Thank you. Could you sit with Molly while I show her the room?"

"I'm sorry, Emily, but I cannot leave you alone with a stranger. I have to be with you."

"Jackson, what exactly do you think is going to happen?" Emily said exasperated.

"I don't have any idea what's going to happen and that's why I must be physically with you. Please let me do my job"

This is ridiculous! But it's not worth fighting over, thought Emily.

"Fine! Molly, bring a toy okay? We're going to meet the lady that's going to decorate your room.

Picking up her toy fire truck, Molly tottered after her mother and Jackson.

Jackson opened the door and was a little confused. This young woman looked about eighteen, not the owner of an interior design business. The young woman was petite and very pretty, with long dark hair and big brown eyes.

Whoa! I'll take a guess you were the one giving orders on the phone, thought Rosie.

"I have an appointment with Miss Taylor. I'm Rosie Henderson."

"Come in. Miss Taylor is in the family room. Follow me." Jackson barked.

Yes Sir! Jeez! Have you got a stick up your ass? Rosie followed and entered the room to a much warmer welcome .

She had seen pictures of Emily in magazines, but the pictures did not do her justice. She was beautiful in a very natural way and was dressed simply, in figure hugging jeans and blouse.

With a huge smile, Emily welcomed Rosie. "Hi! Please come in. I'm Emily."

Rosie shook Emily's hand. "I'm delighted to meet you Miss Taylor."

"Emily, please. This is my daughter, Molly. It's her room you'll be decorating. Say hello to Rosie, Molly."

Molly looked up from her toy and smiled brightly. "Hi Wosie."

"Hi there, Molly. Nice to meet you."

"Let me take your coat, Rosie, and then we can have a chat."

"I'll get it, Emily," Jackson said.

The security guard watched as she took off her jacket to reveal an indie-girl style outfit. A long print T-shirt dress belted at the waist, showing John and Yoko with the phrase 'War is over'. Underneath, her black leggings ended at pink and white checkerboard sneakers. The outfit was finished off with a grey knitted beret and bright pink bangles.

"Going by the FBI report her contact had run for her, the woman before her was exactly as Jackson thought she would be.

An arty, anti-war, anti-globalization, un-American hippy! Jackson thought with disgust. Everything that Jackson despised.

Rosie handed over her jacket and saw the way Jackson looked at her. As she left the room, Rosie asked Emily, "What's her problem?"

Emily smiled. She had seen Jackson visibly bristle as Rosie entered the room.

"Jackson can be a little ... uh serious, but she's very nice when you get to know her."

"Mmm. Soldier? Ex-police? By any chance?"

Emily laughed. "She was in the army. How can you tell?"

"I've been to enough protests and demonstrations to know military or cop types. They talk and stand like they have a stick up their ass."

Typical old school butch! Thinks it's the 50's. I wonder if she ever smiles, thought Rosie.

Just as Rosie said that, Jackson returned to the room. She obviously heard every word but, just as her training taught her, she did not react and instead kept guard at the door, staring straight ahead.

"Please sit. I love your sneakers, by the way. So cute!"

"Thanks!" Rosie wasn't quite sure what to expect from the woman who was now part of one of the most famous lesbian couples in the world, but she was warm and welcoming, and Rosie took an immediate liking to her.

"I'll need to follow your lead, Rosie, I've never used a decorator before. I'm kind of new to all this."

"Of course. I usually like to spend some time in the space, make some sketches and discuss it with the client. Maybe since it's Molly's room she could sit and draw with me. And we could come up with some ideas? What do you think, Molly?"

Molly jumped up and clapped her hands. "Me elp Mama! Pease?"

"Of course you can, sweetheart. Go get your crayons and some paper."

When she ran off, Emily said. "Thank you. That's a lovely idea. She'll really feel like it's her room now."

"No problem. It'll be fun. I'm kinda of a big kid myself; it'll be much more fun than designing an adult room."

"On that note, we better catch up with her before she starts drawing on the walls."

Jackson stood watching on as Emily, Molly and Rosie giggled and laughed on the floor. They'd got on very well and come up with some plans.

Emily was delighted to have picked Rosie. She was just a few years younger than herself and she didn't seem phased by who she was or who she was engaged to, or the fact that they were gay. She was fun, and Emily and Molly enjoyed their time with her.

"So Molly. We've decided on a jungle theme, yeah?"

"Yes thank ou, Wosie. Mama?"

"I think that would be great, sweetie. So what's next, Rosie?"

"I'll sketch out some more definite plans and come back to you with a price. If you're happy to go ahead, I'll order supplies and we can get to work. I like my clients to get involved with the project if they're happy to. So, we can choose furnishings and things together if you like?"

Emily loved that idea. "That would be fun! Absolutely, I'd love to," Emily enthused.

Rosie stood and got her stuff together. "Okay, well I better get going. I'll get back to you in a couple of days with the plans."

"Excellent. So are you doing anything nice for Halloween?"

"Sort of. I work part time at a bar in the Village. It's always fun on Halloween! I'm gonna try and spend a few hours down at the Occupy Wall Street protest before work, though." Rosie heard Jackson tut and mumble something under her breath.

Occupy Wall Street! Why I am not surprised? thought Jackson.

Very interested, Emily asked, "Oh? How's it going down there?"

"Great. A couple of my friends and I belong to a lesbian protest group, we all go together. The atmosphere is excellent and we're getting good media coverage. The police are their usual pleasant selves though."

She's gay? Great. There will be no awkwardness then, thought Emily.

"Let me give you a bag of homemade cookies and travel mug of coffee to take with you."

Rosie was smiling widely. "That would be really nice, thanks. I probably won't get a chance to eat before I start work."

"Well, you get your stuff and I'll get the cookies and coffee for you."

After Emily left the room, Rosie looked up to see Jackson scowling at her.

Rosie had only met Jackson and, already, she infuriated her. "Do you have a problem, soldier boy?"

"Yeah. I have a problem with people who make it their mission in life to bring grief and disruption to hard working people just trying to do their jobs."

Rosie said nothing and simply grabbed her stuff and went to march past Jackson. "A word

of advice, Miss Henderson. Emily is a very kind and friendly woman. Don't abuse that kindness."

"I would advise you to mind your own business, soldier boy!" Rosie said angrily and made her way to the kitchen.

Argh! Soldier boy? Jackson normally didn't let people get under her skin, but something about this girl made her feel off balance and extremely irritated.

I'll be keeping my eye on you, hippy girl!

Dylan sat in her office looking over the script. It had taken a lot of hard work during the day to catch up with the week, but in the end the production team had pulled together and got through it. She was pleased, as well, with the crew making a special effort with Molly. They had all taken to her the first time they met her, delighted that Dylan had Emily and the little girl in her life, and now that they knew the truth about her parentage, it was even better. Dylan had been on top of the world all day as crew members would come up, slap her on the back and congratulate her on finding out she had a daughter.

She was looking forward to seeing Molly's costume. Dylan remembered with a smile how they both kept tight-lipped this morning over it.

I have a daughter. Wow! Every so often she would remember and be blown away by the turn of events.

Her thoughts were interrupted by Lynn popping in. She did not look happy and held an envelope in her hands.

"Um, Dylan. This arrived by courier just now."

Dylan stood and grabbed the envelope from her.

"I'm sorry but security at the front gate has already inspected it. We should probably set in place some new procedures in case the police need to test anything."

Dylan opened the letter gingerly, her heart thudding. It read simply, ***Trick or treat?***

She handed it to Lynn to read and went to pour herself a drink.

"Trick or treat? What's that supposed to mean?" Lynn asked.

Dylan downed the whiskey in one. "I have no idea. Damm!" She shouted. "Who the fuck is doing this!"

"Should I call the police for you?"

"Yes, and I want security tightened up around here. All crew members must show their passes. I can't take any chances with Emily and Molly coming tonight. Oh, and Lynn? No one talks about this in front of my family."

"Understood. Excuse me."

Dylan poured another drink, the anger bubbling around inside, and dialled Jackson's cell phone.

"Jackson? There's been another one."

Rosie left and later in the afternoon, Jackson got a call from Dylan.

"Yes. I got it. There will be no problems." Jackson hung up her phone just as Emily entered the kitchen.

"Was that Dylan?"

Dylan had called and warned Jackson of the latest letter. Things were starting to get a little worrying.

"Uh yes. She wanted to know what time we were leaving."

"Oh. Funny, I haven't heard from her since she texted me at lunchtime."

"She's been very busy today, catching up with missed work I expect," Jackson tried to sound convincing.

"Oh okay, well Molly's ready. Wait till you see her. Molls! Come and show Jackson."

The little girl came running through from her room and stopped outside the kitchen door.

"Eady Mama?"

"Okay honey. Just like we practiced. Strike your pose!"

Molly stood side on, leaning against the doorframe, her arms folded, her head turned towards them, and then she winked.

Jackson burst out laughing. It was Dylan's signature entrance. On top of that she was dressed just like her mom. She had on little designer jeans, black boots, a light grey v-neck pullover with white t-shirt underneath and a mini pinstripe suit jacket. With her dark locks slicked back behind her ears, she was her mom's mini me.

"Oh god! That's brilliant. She so cute! You look just like your mom, Molly!"

The little girl beamed. She idolised Dylan and to be compared to her new mom made her very happy.

"Isn't she fantastic? I called Lynn and asked her to find out what Dylan would be wearing this week, so they are exactly the same."

Jackson felt a little sad that no one thought like that about her. Sarah had idolised her and Jackson felt that she had followed her blindly into the military, where Sarah met her death.

No one will ever feel like that about me again. I don't deserve it.

Emily noted the sadness on Jackson face. She touched her shoulder lightly and said, "Are you okay?"

Jackson pulled herself together quickly. "Sure. You ready to get going then?"

Emily wasn't quite persuaded but decided to let it go.

"Alright if you could grab Molly's pumpkin and stuff, I'll just get my coat."

Dylan sat in her office nursing another drink. She never drank on the day of a show but since she started receiving the letters, she found that the warm liquid was the only way of dulling the anger that rolled in her stomach.

Dylan did not cope well with personal stress. Work stress she thrived on, but when it came to dealing with emotions, especially the deep-seated anger that rode so close to the surface, she didn't know how to handle it.

When Joey died she had thrown herself into her work. She worked so hard that she didn't give her brain time to think.

Now, she didn't just have herself to think about, she had a family. A family depending on her to be strong, to protect them. The constant threat was bearing down on her shoulders and without being able to share it with them, the alcohol dulled the stress recently.

Maybe I should tell her. Jackson thinks so. No! You told Emily they'd be safe. It's up to you to bear that responsibility. She'll just worry. She's had so much to handle on her own for so long, it's time she enjoyed being with Molly and planning the wedding. I need to stop this drinking. It's a slippery slope.

"Come."

Emily came bouncing in smiling. "Hi honey!" She popped herself down on Dylan's lap, temporarily putting aside her fiancé's worries. Dylan's hands automatically went to Emily's buttocks, and pulled her into a deep passionate kiss.

When they broke apart Emily said, "Whoa! Did you miss me or something?"

"You have no idea." Dylan had that look in her eye that she knew only too well. It was the look that said, *I want you, fast and hard, right here and now!*

The thought made the familiar feeling of heat start to flutter in her stomach but, being responsible, she had to bring Dylan under control.

"Uh uh, TV star. I don't want to mess up your show clothes."

"You're no fun!"

She pecked Dylan on the nose and stood.

Emily was sure she could taste alcohol on Dylan. Looking around, she saw a half empty glass of whiskey on the desk and felt uneasy.

"I thought you never drank before shows because you needed to be clear headed for the stunts?"

Shit! thought Dylan. *How do I explain this?*

"Well, it's just this once because the dare is pre-recorded. I just wanted to relax, okay? So where's my Smurf?" Dylan tried to change the subject. It seemed to work as Emily smiled and said. "Outside. She's waiting to show you her costume. Wait there."

Emily went out and closed the office door to prepare Molly. Dylan looked at the whiskey glass and poured it down the sink.

Emily came back in and left the door open. "Are you ready?"

Dylan sat on the edge of the desk, wondering what was coming. "Yeah. Let me see my Smurf."

Ok Molls! After 1, 2, 3! Welcome to the Dylan Morgan Show! And here is your host, Dylan Morgan!"

Molly popped around the door and struck her mom's pose with a wink.

Dylan was gobsmacked as she watched her daughter dressed exactly like a mini me, with her hair and clothes exactly matching her own. Her heart soared with happiness and pride. She stood and scooped her daughter up in her arms. "Smurf! You look fantastic! Was this your surprise?"

"Yeah Mom! I wanted to be just like ou!"

Dylan pulled Molly in a tight hug. She looked over at Emily with tears forming in her eyes.

Emily turned to Jackson who was hovering at the door.

"Could you give us a minute, Jackson?"

Jackson nodded and closed the office door, leaving the family to themselves.

Molly pulled back from the cuddle and was worried by her mom's tears, wiping them with her thumb.

"Ou sad, Mom?"

"No Molls. I'm happy. Sometimes people get so happy it makes them cry happy tears."

"appy tears?" Molly was a little confused.

Emily walked over and joined in their hug. "Yes sweetie. You've made Dylan really happy."

"I love you, Molls." *God! I'm so lucky! This is why you take the pressure Morgan. I'm never gonna give this up. I would die for them!*

Pulling her two girls in tighter, Dylan said, "I love you two more than anything in the world."

"Ou like my costume, Mom?"

Dylan lifted Molly above her, flying the girl around her head. "It's amazing, Smurf! This is what you were keeping a secret?"

"Ha! Ha! Yeah. No ickle monster, Mom!"

Lynn knocked as she walked through the door.

"Hey Lynn. Come in and see my daughter!"

"Oh wow Molly! You look just like your mom." Molly and Dylan both beamed with pride."

"Did you clone her?" Lynn said to Emily.

Emily laughed. "They're just adorable aren't they?"

Putting Molly up on her shoulders, Dylan said, "Let's go trick or treat!"

Molly had fun visiting the production staff around the studio. Everyone made a fuss over the little girl and agreed she was too cute for words.

Dylan was as high as a kite, showing off her daughter and they all had fun with the monsters from the Halloween sketches. Her earlier anger and fear forgotten.

The show was a great success and after the credits rolled, Dylan gave the studio audience a treat by taking her daughter out to meet them. They loved it and Dylan thought she would put it on the show's website. It seemed a safe way of the audience seeing into her private life and Dylan, who knew TV, understood that you have to give a little of yourself to keep the audience interested in you.

Jackson drove the tired family home after the show. When they got home, remembering

the earlier threat, Dylan asked Jackson to look round the apartment while she waited at the door with her girls.

"Is this necessary, Dylan?" Emily, who was visibly tired, was becoming increasingly frustrated with this security.

Dylan had a sleeping Molly in her arms. "Please just humour me." They'd had a wonderful evening and Dylan wanted to keep it that way.

Emily sighed but said nothing. *Stubborn TV star!*

Jackson came back and opened the door. "Well was there anything sinister?" Emily asked with annoyance.

Jackson looked directly at Dylan. "It's all clear now."

The message was received and Dylan's heart sank. *What now!*

"Great! Now maybe I can get our daughter to bed." Emily's annoyance was growing to a temper.

"Do you think you could carry her through to bed for me? If you're sure there isn't an assailant waiting in Molly's toy box!" Dylan watched her fiancé march off towards the bedroom.

"I think you're in the dog house." Jackson joked.

"You think?" Dylan answered sarcastically. "Wait for me in my office. I'll be five minutes."

Dylan walked into her office, where Jackson was waiting.

"So? What we got?"

Jackson stood and handed over an envelope she had already bagged up for evidence.

"It was under the door. I thought it best to keep it under wraps until you saw it."

Dylan looked through the bag to see a black and white photo. It showed them leaving for the studio earlier that evening. In the picture Emily's head had been circled and the words

'Emily IS **MY TREAT!**'

Dylan said nothing and sat down at her desk, head in hands.

"Dylan, you can't keep this under wraps much longer. We're going to need to tighten security and for that we need Emily's cooperation. If she doesn't understand why then we won't get that cooperation."

Dylan looked up, her chin rested on clasped fists.

"I don't want her to worry. I need more time. Can your contact in the FBI get me an address?"

"Sure, but for whom?"

"Toni. Emily's ex." She said calmly.

"The police said there was absolutely no evidence against the ex."

"I know but there's been no one else in Emmie's life. She can at least give me the details of this other guy she named."

Jackson thought this was a bad idea but would she do any different in Dylan's place? She knew if her family was threatened she would want to sort it out herself.

"I'll do it, but you have to promise me you'll wait and give the police a little longer, especially with this new evidence. It's a picture, it can be analysed."

Dylan sighed. "Okay. I'll let the police do their work but if nothing comes from it, I'm paying her a visit."

Dylan made her way to their bedroom. The lights were already off and Emily was in bed turned away from her.

Is it frosty in here or what? thought Dylan.

She began changing into her boxers and sleeveless t-shirt, and then got into bed lying on her back, not knowing whether her usual cuddles would be welcome.

This is ridiculous! Dylan was used to the constant touch and connection between them.

She felt like a little puppy that needed reassurance.

Dylan moved over to Emily's back, and leaned over her.

"Emmie? Are you okay? Are you talking to me?"

She heard Emily sigh and turned over. "Of course I'm talking to you, Dyl. I'm just annoyed. There is absolutely no reason for this level of security. Nothing has happened."

What can I say? I don't want to lie to her but ... She stroked Emily's hair.

"You're so beautiful. Do you know that?"

"And you're not answering the question."

"I know it must feel like that, but listen, you're new to this. Being known, followed wherever you go. Even if there had been no threat, no intruder, I would have been getting you a guard to drive you around, keep the press away from you and our little girl. But there has been a threat, an intruder, so that makes me want to be doubly careful.

So you see, when you put it like that, it doesn't sound so bad. Does it?"

Emily thought about it. *Maybe I'm being a bit hard on her. It's true, I don't know this world.*

Emily looked into Dylan's eyes, seeing the insecurity and fear there. She reached up and caressed her face.

"I understand that you know more about this. It's just hard to be cooped up all the time."

Dylan took hold of the hand at her face and kissed it tenderly.

"I know it's hard, but you get on with Jackson don't you?"

"Oh yes. Jackson's really nice. I feel safe with her. She's a bit uptight but she's a sweetie."

"Not too sweet I hope?" Dylan took one of Emily's fingers in her mouth and swirled her tongue round it.

"Not as sweet as you, goofy." Relieved that this wasn't a serious argument, Dylan smiled and lay back down, opening her arms to her fiancé.

"Come snuggle, baby girl." Since being with Emily, Dylan had discovered there was nothing she liked more than simply snuggling in bed or on the couch with her fiancé,

with no expectations of anything more.

Emily went willingly to her arms, her head resting on Dylan's chest and her hand that always went straight under Dylan's t-shirt, rubbing soothing circles on her stomach.

"Hmm. This is so good." It always made Dylan purr with pleasure, to have such attention and comfort lavished upon her.

"Did you like the show, baby?"

"Sure did. You were so funny, goofy, with those monsters, and my heart melted when you brought Molls out with you."

"I've never felt prouder. My little girl with me, showing her off to the world, and my baby girl watching us. Do you think our next one will be like you? I hope so."

The thought of having more kids with Dylan thrilled her. "I would be happy just to have a little goofy gang that all looked like you."

Dylan smiled thinking of chasing after that goofy gang and causing mischief with them.

"I can't wait to see you pregnant. I'm going to treat you like a princess, just like I should have been able to with Molly."

"I think I'll lap up any attention you give me, honey. Oh, I got on great with the shopping online today; I'm really starting to pick up the internet. I got some lovely stuff for Molls, for when she starts preschool. I hope this place we're going to see on Monday is as good as it looks. I think she needs to mix with more kids."

"I'm sure it will be, and if not we'll keep looking till we find the right one. I sent for some kid games, you know, for the consoles? Watch for them when you get deliveries in the mail."

"You're going to spoil her. It's not long till Christmas you know."

Dylan kissed Emily's head. "Indulge me. I have a lot to make up for. I can't wait to spend my first Christmas with the little Smurf."

"She's going to be so happy, not because of the things you can buy her but because she has you, her mom, to spend it with."

"Yeah. It'll be great. How did you get on with the decorator?"

"Oh she was really nice. I thought a designer would be uppity, snobby you know? But she was just a normal girl, not long out of art school. She got on great with Molls. Jackson didn't take to her though." Emily smiled as she remembered the irritation on

Jackson's face.

"Oh, why?"

"I guess she's everything that Jackson hates. An anti-globalization protestor, anti-war demonstrator. Jackson positively bristled when she was around and Rosie didn't like Jackson's soldierly 'do this, do that' attitude. I'm sure though that Jackson is a loyal, caring person, but she hides it deep down.

"Some people just don't like showing emotions, baby. You're the only one I've ever been able to talk to."

Emily raised herself up over Dylan, smiling. "I guess it's that butch thing you've both got going on in abundance, eh?"

Dylan smiled back cheekily and asked in a low husky voice.

"I guess so. Don't you like my butch thing?"

Emily lowered her lips to Dylan's. "Oh I love your butch thing, TV star, but I'm afraid I'm too tired to handle it tonight."

Dylan laughed. "Me too. Let's go to sleep. Since there's no show tomorrow, let's make plans for the wedding."

"I'd love that and I love you. Goodnight goofy."

"Night night, baby girl."

Dylan had a rare Saturday off after her special Halloween show last night and was up early.

She knew that Emily and Molly had been inside too long and decided she wanted to take her family out for the day. Her plans set in her mind, and with a couple of hours before her girls would get up, she called Jackson and invited her over early to spar. Jackson jumped at the chance to spar with an Olympic champion and made her way over with her gear.

Dylan was downing a protein shake when Jackson arrived.

"Hey buddy. Thanks for coming over early," said Dylan.

"No problem. I'm always up early, and it's great to get a chance to spar."

"Let's get started then. I want to see how easy it is to kick a special ops soldier's butt!"

Jackson smirked and rose to the challenge. "Well, TV star, show me what you got."

An hour later, both were sitting on the matted gym floor gulping down water, sweat streaming off them, and trying to catch their breath.

"Whoa! You aren't half bad for a civilian. I wouldn't have minded having you by my side on operations." "Thanks. Your style is different to what I've come up against before."

"Our training involves non-lethal moves in order to subdue targets, so it's probably a little different than what you're used to. I don't get a chance to spar much anymore. Mostly it's individual training I do now."

"It was great. Any morning you want to spar or train with me just come over early. I usually work out with Mark and Patrick on a Monday but I'll probably be scaling that back with this threat hanging over us."

"Sure, I'd like that," Jackson said with a smile, after taking a long gulp of her water.

"Did you get out of the dog house last night?"

Dylan laughed. "Yeah after a while. I understand how frustrated she is, but what other choices do I have?" She sighed and rubbed her face.

"I wish there was some sort of handbook for this relationship business for us newcomers. Most of the time I'm stumbling around in the dark," complained Dylan.

"Well I'm no help to you. I've never been in a relationship that lasted longer than a night, and never will," Jackson stated.

Dylan stood and offered her hand to Jackson and they both walked over to get their towels.

"That's what I thought, buddy. Then I walked into a diner to get a coffee, looked into Emmie's eyes and I was gone. Bagged and tagged. Now I have a family and I'm getting married. I never imagined I'd have this, and I can tell you my friend, it feels fantastic."

Jackson saw the love sick look on Dylan's face and felt a pang of regret that she would never know that feeling.

"I'm glad you're so happy, you should be. Emily is a wonderful woman and I could see how she would bring down the walls around anyone's heart, but there aren't many Emily's about. Most women, in my experience, are not like her. I'm not going to put my heart out there unless it's for something as special, and I don't believe that is possible, for me anyway."

Dylan clapped her on the back. "Never say never, buddy. That's what I've learned. You can use the shower in the third bedroom, okay? Then come out and get some breakfast. We'll be going out today but I want to speak to Emmie first."

"Understood."

Emily was slowly wakened by the noise of someone else in the room. She saw Dylan exit the bathroom, completely naked, towel drying her hair as she went.

Emily smiled. One of the things she loved, and found so attractive, about her fiancé was her complete unabashed and unashamed confidence in her body. Right from the beginning of their relationship, Dylan had been so open and affectionate with Molly and herself.

"Honey? Come snuggle with me." Emily said seductively.

Dylan looked over her shoulder to see Emily patting the bed with a coquettish look upon her face.

Dylan gave her a wry smile and quickly pulled on her jockey shorts.

"Oh no! If I get into that bed, we won't be snuggling."

"Spoilsport!"

Dylan finished putting on her jeans and t-shirt and sat on the bed.

"Come on, baby. I have a Saturday off and I've got plans for us."

Emily reached out and took Dylan's hand.

"But honey, I never get a chance to sleep in with you. You're always up at the crack of dawn to train or run or work!"

Dylan lifted Emily's hand and kissed it tenderly. "Emmie, I want to spend a quiet Saturday with my family and we have got a lot to pack in. I tell you what, why don't you go and take a nice relaxing bath and I'll get Molly up and dressed."

"You've convinced me. What about breakfast?"

"I think I can be trusted to handle a cereal box, what do you think?"

Emily sat up and smacked Dylan on the arm.

"Yeah, even you should manage that, goofy. It's the dressing your daughter part I'm worried about, remember the socks have to match." Emily stood and put on her dressing gown.

"Hey! I can dress my daughter fine." Dylan said pouting.

Emily sensed a little sadness in her partner's voice; she took Dylan's face in her hands and gently kissed her lips.

"I know you've missed out on Molly, but I know you are going to make the rest of our little girl's life happy and fun. I couldn't have asked for a better parent for Molly."

Dylan grinned and pulled Emily into her lap. "Yeah. I am pretty great, aren't I?"

Emily kissed her. "Yes you are. So what are these plans you have for us today?"

"Well, we were going to set a date for the wedding and decide what kind of ceremony we wanted. I thought we could do that over a quiet dinner tonight. First, though, I would like to take you both out to Long Island. Have a nice lunch, do some fun stuff, look at a couple of houses...."

"Houses? Why?"

"Well, we're getting married, we need a family home."

"This place is huge; I'd hardly say we're struggling for space."

Dylan gently stroked Emily's face. "Yeah, but it's not a home. I want us both to have our dream family home. Remember we talked about dreams? You wanted that big old warm kitchen? And I wanted somewhere by the sea with a big training space, and a place to play with my tools?"

Emily smiled and nodded.

"That's what we're shopping for today. Somewhere Molly can run and play outside in the fresh air. Somewhere we can build a family. We can't do that here."

Emily sighed happily and kissed her partner on the nose. "You, Dylan Morgan, are a girl's dream come true."

"I aim to please." Dylan swatted her lightly on the butt. "Come on, baby girl. Get going! We've got so much to see and do. We're meeting the realtor at one so we can look around first."

"Okay. Make sure Molly wears a sweater, its cold out."

"Emmie ..."

Okay! Okay! I'm going! I'm going!"

"Lift up your foot, Smurf."

Dylan knelt on Molly's bedroom floor helping her get dressed; the little girl wasn't helping by jumping about.

"Ou not going to work today, Mom?"

"No Molls, I have a whole day to spend with you and Mama."

Molly bounced on the bed, full of excitement. "Yeah! Where we goin, Mom?"

"Hey. Quit bouncing, Smurf, and I'll tell you."

Sorry, Mom. I just cited."

It made Dylan's heart soar to think that just spending time with Molly, made the little girl so happy.

"It's okay, Molls. Well, we're going for a drive to a place called Long Island. It's by the sea, so we'll go on the beach. Your Mama thinks it's too cold but it's never too cold for the beach, is it?"

"Nuh uh, Mom!"

"That's my girl! Then in the afternoon, were going to look at a new home for us, 'cause

remember Mom and Mama are getting married?"

Molly nodded enthusiastically. "Well, we need a family home."

"A foever home?" Molly asked.

"Yeah, a forever home. Somewhere you can play, and Mama will be happy."

"Mama always happy wiv ou here, Mom."

Dylan stood to help Molly on with her sweater. "Yeah? That's nice to know, kid."

"She sad before, but now she smiles."

Dylan's heart was overwhelmed with happiness and she lifted Molly into her arms and cuddled her tight.

"I love you and your Mama with all my heart, Molls."

Molly kissed her on the cheek. "We love ou too, Mom."

"Let's get some cereal in you so we can start our day."

After a few false starts, the family plus Jackson set off on their journey to their meeting with the realtor in Southampton village, Long Island.

Dylan drove with Jackson in the front seat, while Emily tried to keep Molly occupied with the Nintendo 3DS Dylan had bought her.

They arrived at twelve, later than Dylan had hoped, so they grabbed some lunch quickly and went to meet the realtor at the first property, Dylan promising Molly they would get a chance to play later.

Emily wasn't sure what she was expecting when they pulled up at the first house, but it wasn't this. It was extremely large and ultra-modern, on a large expanse of beachfront.

Dylan saw the shock on Emily's face and said, "Hey, I know it's not what you're used to but give it a chance, alright?"

"Of course I will, honey."

Dylan kissed her forehead. "That's my girl."

She lifted Molly up in her arm and took Emily's hand as they met realtor.

"Ms. Morgan, pleased to meet you. I'm Pam Scott and I'll be showing you around today."

"Pleased to meet you, Pam. This is my fiancé, Emily Taylor, and our daughter, Molly. Oh, and our security consultant, Jackson Hunter."

"Pleased to meet you all." Molly, typically, buried her head in Dylan's shoulder.

Emily did keep her word and give the place a chance as they walked around but she knew this could never be the warm home she was looking for. Everything was minimalist, chrome and white. It did have everything they were looking for in terms of outside space, but it just wasn't a home.

Jackson took Molly for a walk down to the beach so they could talk.

They stood in the stark white kitchen. "So? What do you think?"

"I don't mean to seem ungrateful, honey, but it's so huge. It's just a bit too much."

Dylan took both her hands. "You know anyplace we look at is going to look big. We need somewhere we can grow into with space outside for play stuff for Molls, a pool ..."

"Yes, I know, but it has eight bedrooms, Dyl. There's space, and then there's too much, and I've got to look after the place."

"We'll get help in."

"Honey, I'm not going to be a pampered rich wife, spending my days getting my nails done. I may need someone to help with the cleaning but I'm going to look after our home, and you and Molly."

Dylan smiled warmly, liking that idea immensely. "Alright. More homey, less bedrooms, but still lots of outdoor space."

Emily hugged her partner. "Exactly. How much are these houses anyway?"

Dylan pulled away and cleared her throat. "Um, we better find Pam and tell her what we've decided." Dylan pulled Emily on quickly.

"Dylan!"

They made short work of the next house. It was a little smaller, but again a little too modern for Emily's tastes. They arrived at the third house of the day, which Emily had insisted be the last due to Molly restlessness.

They pulled into the driveway of a classic shingle style house, which had large grounds to the front and sides, the beachfront to the back.

Emily stepped out of the car and came to Dylan's side. "This is beautiful, Dyl."

Dylan was a little surprised. "Really? You like this, Emmie?"

Emily lifted Molly up. "Yes. It's traditional, like a home."

"Great. Tell us about the place, Pam." Then turning to her partner. "Here, let me take the Smurflet."

Jackson came up beside Dylan and said, "Do you want me to take Molly around the grounds?"

"Not just now thanks. Molly, I want you to tell us if you can imagine living here when we go in and which would be your room, okay?"

"Otay Mom."

"Please Pam, carry on."

They walked towards the front door as Pam described the estate.

"This property is set on over two acres of land with two hundred and fifty feet of ocean frontage. The house itself offers six bedrooms with seven and a half baths. It has a large living room, formal dining room, large kitchen and breakfast room."

Dylan smiled at the look on Emily's face as they went from room to room. She was sure this was the kind of house her fiancé would like, a traditional home on a modern beachfront.

They stepped into the living room and were blown away. The dark wood floored room was open and light as it had big windows and French doors on three sides of the room,

looking on to the ocean.

"Wow! This is nice. Look Molls, can you see the beach and the waves?" Dylan asked her daughter.

"Mom! We play on the beach all the time!" Molly said excitedly.

"We sure could, kiddo. Here, go and take a look out the windows, Smurf," Dylan said putting her down.

Jackson immediately followed Molly across the room, giving the couple some space.

"It's a great room, Emmie." *I hope you like this one, Emmie, because I think I've fallen in love with it,* thought Dylan.

Emily looked a little in awe of the surroundings. "I can't imagine a room having a more beautiful outlook. Could I see the kitchen?" Emily asked Pam.

Dylan smiled at the obvious excitement in her voice.

"Of course. Come this way."

"Molly? Come with us, we'll look outside soon." Jackson took the little girl's hand and headed her towards the kitchen.

"The house also includes staff quarters, media room and panelled library. The guest rooms on the north side have great views of the Old Town pond."

Emily's heart soared when they entered the kitchen. *Oh my God! This is my dream kitchen.*

It was a large traditional kitchen. Wooden cupboards, stone floors, and in the centre was an island area. The cupboards, built-in appliances and stove ran around three walls. The fourth was given over to floor to ceiling sliding doors, which led out to a grassed sitting area and views right onto the beach.

"Dyl! Look at this, I can be cooking or baking and looking out to the ocean."

Dylan walked over to her fiancé and put her arm around her.

"Can you imagine baking in here, baby?"

"Oh yes! It's warm and cozy and Molly could play out on the grass there, so I could keep an eye on her. Even like now, in the winter, it would be wonderful to be all cozy in here

and watch the stormy sea."

Dylan brought her lips to Emily's ear and said quietly, "It makes me feel so good to see you so excited and happy."

Then speaking to Pam, she asked, "What do we have outside?"

There is a pool and a pool house, which has two bedrooms and kitchen. There is a tennis court and, also, you have a private wooden walkway that leads straight onto the beach."

"Sounds fantastic. There's a lot I could do with all that space."

Emily smiled, she could see Dylan's mind whirling over ideas.

"Honey, maybe we should let Pam show us upstairs now?"

"Oh sure, carry on. Hey Molls, let's see if you could find a nice room here."

"Yeah, come on Mom, Mama!"

They walked around the impressive top floor and were very impressed. Molly was walking around the bedrooms with Jackson, as Dylan and Emily looked at the master bedroom. It was a large, long room in which the bed sat against the back wall to look out of the entirely glassed opposite wall. The couple had been completely stunned with this room. Pam had discretely left them to talk. As soon as she left, Emily came into Dylan's arms.

"Have you ever seen a bedroom like this, honey? We could lie in bed looking out on the ocean. The whole house is simply amazing."

"I'm so glad you think so, baby, 'cause I love it. I can really picture us here. I think we would be really happy here."

Emily pulled Dylan over to the windows. "What about the studio? That's a really long journey for you every day?"

"Most of the people who live here commute every day, and they have to do it in rush hour first thing in the morning. Most days, I don't really have to be in till 10 or 10:30. I'll get a driver from the studio and we'll keep our apartment in the village, so we can have somewhere we spend over nights and stuff."

"How much is it? Can I see the information sheet?"

Dylan became a little nervous. *Oh boy! This is gonna be the hard part!*

"Em ... it's reasonable compared to others around here."

"Dylan Morgan! Give me that flyer."

The TV host handed it over and watched nervously as Emily read it through. "Now, bear in mind that this is a home. A home for our family for the rest of our lives, and we can easily afford it."

Oh my God! 26 million? I knew she had a lot but this ...

"You can easily afford this?"

Dylan took Emily's face in her hands. "We can easily afford it. We're going to be married, you're my family, Molly is my daughter, it's our money. I told you I've made a lot of money since I own the production company and the format. I've sold it all over the world, it's made me a load of money. That plus investing, advertising, I guess we're worth close to 100 million. So, in fact, we could afford a much bigger place but you said you weren't comfortable with that."

Emily's eyes were wide. "I can't believe ..."

"Listen, we're going to have a great life. This is a home and Molly will love growing up here. I'll put playground equipment up for her, build a tree house, and maybe before long we can add another couple of kids to our little family?"

Dylan smirked at her fiancé and pulled her in closer.

"Come on, baby girl. We love this house, don't we? Let's buy it, let's make this our family home."

Emily sighed drastically then burst into smiles and laughter.

"Yes. Let's buy it, honey. This is the one. This is our home."

"Yes!" Dylan lifted Emily and swung her round in a circle, raining kisses on her fiancé.

"Oh baby girl, we are going to be so happy! Let's go tell Molly and Jackson, and then put in our offer to Pam. Come on!"

Dylan took Emily's hand and they went in search of their daughter.

The young family had been as high as kites when they returned home. Pam had contacted the seller and their offer had been accepted. Molly had been difficult to settle down, after not having as much time to play as they had planned, but after Dylan promised her a day at the park tomorrow, she soon settled down. Jackson had left early since the couple were in for the night.

Dylan ordered in some dinner from a nice little local Italian restaurant and Emily set the table in the dining room. They both wanted this evening to be special.

Molly had been fed earlier, so Dylan told her to rest while she bathed their little girl.

Molly had loved Dylan before she found out they were family but since she knew she had another mom, she was constantly glued to Dylan as if trying to make sure she wouldn't disappear. The feeling was entirely mutual, Dylan felt she had a lot of time to make up for and loved the time she could spend with her little girl.

After getting her washed, the two were now engaged in ocean warfare with Molly's toy boats.

"Ombs away! I get ou, Mom!"

"Boom! Ah! We're going down, captain! Help! Ugh!"

Molly laughed and splashed the water as Dylan theatrically had the boat sink in the bath. Dylan was soaked.

"Woah Smurflet! I really did get sunk." Dylan was soaked but smiling.

"Come on kid, let's get dried up."

Dylan got Molly settled in bed and read her a story. She was nearly asleep by the time Emily came in to kiss her goodnight.

"Night night, sweetie." Emily leant over and kissed her head.

"Night Mama, night Mom. Love ou."

Dylan stroked Molly's head. "We love you too, Molls."

Emily took her partner's hand and pulled her through to the bedroom, where she began undoing Dylan's shirt buttons.

"Let's get you out of this wet shirt before dinner comes."

Emily took off Dylan's shirt and went to get a t-shirt for her out of the dresser. Dylan pulled her back in a panic. The TV star knew she had a box with all the threatening letters from the stalker hidden under a pile of her t-shirts.

"Uh ... why don't you go and pick out a bottle of wine for dinner?" Emily looked at her quizzically. "I don't know about wine, honey? I wouldn't know which to choose."

Dylan stroked Emily's cheek. "It's easy, Emmie. Pick a red one for Italian and then just choose the nicest looking label. That's what I do." She gave her fiancé a quick kiss.

"Besides, I want to freshen up before dinner."

"Okay, but don't be long, honey." After Emily left the room, Dylan sank onto the bed and held her head in her hands.

You are going to be in so much trouble, Morgan, when she finds out.

The couple enjoyed a delicious romantic meal and were now finishing the bottle of wine on the couch.

Emily was cuddled into Dylan, who had her arm tightly around her.

The blonde sighed in contentment. "Hmm. That was amazing, honey."

"Yeah, it was. It's a great restaurant. Well, what a day. We bought a house."

Emily giggled and cuddled in closer. "We sure did. Oh I can't wait to live there. I'm going to bake every day. It'll be heaven!"

"Aw, baby, I'm so glad you're happy. I'm going to order some playground equipment for Molly, maybe I could change the tennis court into a playground area and basketball court. I'll bet Molls would love to play ball with me when she gets bigger."

"I think that's for certain, our little girl is a little tomboy in the making."

Emily turned to Dylan and said, "Molly adores you, you know. She just loves spending time with you, and just loves the rough and tumble fun you have with her. You've made her so happy."

"The feeling is entirely mutual, Emmie. I've never been happier in my life. Having a daughter is just ... wow! I don't have the words to describe it."

"You're just a big old softy, aren't you, goofy?"

"Huh? Never! Now, about this wedding. Lynn is looking for a wedding planner for us but we need to decide on a date and what kind of size we want."

"Well, the realtor told us we can't move in to the house until January, but you wanted to get married as soon as possible."

"We can still get married before that. We're comfortable here in the meantime, and once you see how Rosie works out, maybe you can use her for the new house?"

"Yes, that's a good idea. She's a lovely girl, I'm sure she's going to work out. So what kind of date do you think?"

"Well. I have this romantic vision of us spending Christmas together as a family, you know, legally. I want to have the perfect family Christmas."

Emily's mind envisioned Dylan decorating a big tree with Molly, hanging lights and stockings. Giving the little girl the warm family Christmas she'd never had.

"I think that sounds perfect, but what about the show? Do you get any time off?"

"Yeah, we stop two weeks before Christmas then back the middle of January. We run right through till April, then we're off till the new season in August."

Emily jumped onto Dylan's lap. "You mean you'll have all summer to spend with us!"

"Yeah. I mean, I will have commercial things to do but just a day here and there. We could go on vacation then; make it our belated honeymoon."

Emily kissed Dylan on the lips. "That would be fantastic! Oh, but we wouldn't leave Molly, would we? If we went somewhere in the summer?"

"Of course not. It would be a family vacation. Maybe we could get Lynn to look after Molly, just for a few nights after the wedding. So we could have some time alone?"

"Absolutely. So, date?"

Dylan opened up the calendar on her phone. "What about December 16th? Will you marry me then?"

Emily looked deeply into Dylan's blue eyes. "I can't wait to be your wife, Dylan Morgan."

Dylan gently kissed her lips.

"You'll make me the happiest TV star in the world."

"Make love to me, Dyl," Emily said huskily.

Dylan growled deep in her chest. She stood and lifted Emily off the couch in one movement and carried her to their bedroom.

Dylan undressed Emily slowly and asked her to lie on her front.

"What are you doing, honey?"

"Patience, baby girl. You'll get what you want. I'll be back in a sec."

Dylan went to the wardrobe and got out a bag of things she had bought when she ordered her strap-on.

What is she up to?' thought Emily.

Out of the bag Dylan brought out candles, an incense burner and massage oil. Having placed and lit the candles and incense, she divested herself of her clothes. Next she opened her iPhone to set her love playlist to start playing through the speakers.

"Honey, the room is beautiful."

Dylan straddled Emily's buttocks, and leaned over to whisper in her Fiancé's ear. "I'm going to rub every part of you, baby girl."

Emily shivered. "Yes, please!"

Dylan poured a generous amount of oil onto her hands and rubbed them together to warm the oil.

She began by massaging Emily's upper back, pushing her strong fingers into Emily's tired muscles.

A series of moans and groans came from Emily as Dylan worked her way down. When she started working on Emily's buttocks, the moans became louder.

"Oh god, Dyl. That's so Good! You're making me so wet."

"Good. I want you to be really ready for me."

Dylan smiled when she felt Emily lift her hips to try and direct Dylan's hands to her centre.

When Dylan moved down to her thighs and legs, Emily whined in frustration.

"Please honey. I'm ready for you now. Take me."

Dylan leaned over and whispered in her ear.

"Be a good girl now, Emmie. Just relax and enjoy. I'm in charge tonight, okay?"

Dylan resumed working on Emily's legs, down to her feet. Then instructed the blonde to turn over.

Emily's eyes widened as she watched Dylan hold the oil bottle over her chest and drizzle it over her breasts. She could only moan and gasp as Dylan's big hands massaged and squeezed rhythmically.

"You like that baby?"

"God yes! Squeeze harder."

Dylan did just that and also brought her lips into play, sucking and licking the hard nipples in front of her.

"I can't take much more!"

Dylan, deciding it was time to put her girl out of her misery, began kissing her way down to Emily's wet center.

She lifted the blonde's legs over her shoulders and licked her way along the length of Emily's sex.

"Oh yes, just like that Dyl!" Emily felt her orgasm build steadily until she was pushed over the edge by Dylan's fingers thrusting inside her, while her tongue laved Emily's nub.

"Oh God. Oh God, Dylan!!!!!" she screamed.

While Emily tried to catch her breath, Dylan climbed up her body and began to devour her lips.

"Was it good, baby?" asked Dylan.

"Are you kidding? It was amazing! I love your mouth!"

When Emily went to reciprocate, Dylan stopped her.

"I'm in charge, remember?" Emily smiled and nodded.

"Turn over on your front again." When Emily complied, Dylan grabbed her buttocks and said, "I love your ass; it sways in front of my eyes and makes me drool. I want it!" Emily moaned.

"Oh yes, Dyl. Take it!"

Dylan opened herself up and placed her center on Emily's ass cheek. She then gathered up her fiancé's hands and pinned her wrists above her head with one hand. Emily was so turned on; she loved to be pinned down by her partner. Dylan began thrusting against Emily's buttock.

"Oh yeah! I love your ass baby! I've dreamed about doing this."

"Yes, Dyl! You feel good on me." Emily pushed herself up hard into Dylan's sex.

She felt Dylan thrust faster and felt her partner's wetness paint itself over her behind.

"Ugh yeah! I'm gonna come all over you baby! Shit!" Dylan fell over the edge into her release ...

An hour or so later, the couple lay sated and exhausted, cuddling close. Emily's mind had been whirling with an idea for a while now, but hadn't known how to bring it up. Now in the dark quietness, she felt it was as good a time as any.

"Dyl? Dyl, are you awake."

"Hmm? Yeah. Just about." After making love to Emily, Dylan's whole body felt languid and pleasantly tired, and she was gently drifting off to sleep.

"Can I talk to you about something?"

Dylan's eyes snapped open, tension returning to her body.

What could be wrong? I thought everything was going perfectly.

"Of course. You know you can talk to me about anything." Dylan rolled onto her side and leaned on her elbow above Emily.

"I've been thinking about us. Us, you and me, and us as a family."

Please don't tell me you've changed your mind. I can't live without you!

"Okay..." Dylan replied nervously.

"We are already a family but when we're married, I want us to be one in every sense of the word. I want to start proceedings for you to adopt Molly. I want there to be no doubt who her other parent is."

Dylan's face lit up in smiles. "Really? There's nothing I would love more."

"I haven't finished yet, goofy."

"I'm so sorry, do carry on." Dylan gave Emily a kiss on the nose.

"How would you feel if Molly and I took your name after the wedding? I want everyone to know we belong to you. I would understand if ..."

Emily was silenced by Dylan's passionate kiss. "Tell me. Are you a dream? This can't be real, because I don't deserve this much happiness. I would be honoured, baby. The Morgan family. Has a nice ring to it, huh? I know Molly's part Morgan already but won't you be sad to lose Taylor completely?"

Emily stroked Dylan's cheek.

"My family didn't care about me or who I was. Apart from my grandmother, and Molly's middle name is after her, the first person to care was you. So no, Taylor doesn't mean anything to me. We want to be part of you."

"You both are part of me, part of my soul. I love you both with everything that I am and I can't wait to introduce you as my wife, Mrs. Morgan."

Emily smiled warmly.

"Kiss me, Dyl."

Previously:

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Episode 8

It was Sunday morning and Dylan was trying to get Molly ready to go out.

"Dyl, make sure Molly wears her warmer jacket, its cold," called Emily from the kitchen.

Dylan, who was in Molly's bedroom getting her ready for their day out, rolled her eyes at her daughter.

"Mama thinks we can't cope without her, Smurflet." Molly giggled.

Dylan pulled on Molly's gloves and whispered, "I'll tell you a secret. I couldn't live without your Mama or you. Let's get to the park."

When Molly was ready, Dylan grabbed her jacket and they made their way to the kitchen.

Emily turned and smiled when she saw them. Molly looked like a little marshmallow, ready to brave the cold with scarf, gloves, hat and a thick jacket. Dylan had her usual jeans, black padded jacket and beanie hat with sunglasses sitting on her head, ready to try and protect her identity.

"You two all ready?"

"Yeah. Were gonna head over to the park, play with the ball, get something extremely unhealthy for lunch and play some more."

Emily shook her head. "I know you want to have fun but try not to stuff her so much that she's sick."

Dylan picked Molly up in her arms and pouted. "Hey, I'm not that irresponsible."

Emily gave her partner a kiss on the cheek. "Aw. I know that, goofy. Molly you make sure your Mom behaves at the park, okay?"

"I will, Mama." Molly shook her little finger at Dylan, "Ou promise to ehave, Mom?"

Emily burst out laughing and Dylan growled, pretending to bite the little finger offered to her, making Molly join her mother in laughter.

"I promise, Smurf. And as for you, Mama Smurf?" Dylan quirked her eyebrow. "You will be punished for laughing."

"Oh sure! I'm quaking in my shoes!"

Dylan leaned over and whispered in her fiancé ear, "Oh, you will be."

Emily felt a shiver run down her spine. *Oh honey, I'll look forward to that.*

The blonde cleared her throat and smiled. "Changing the subject completely. Jackson says there are only about five paparazzi downstairs. So our plan should work."

They had come up with a plan to offer the paparazzi that followed them one picture in return for leaving them alone for the rest of the day, or Dylan would publish a picture of them out and about on twitter and facebook, making the paparazzi pictures less valuable.

"I hope so. It's a bit late to keep Molly's face out of the public domain but if we can control it, then that's half the battle."

They had both found that since the initial media frenzy, the large throng of paparazzi had thinned down to a core group of about four or five, and they were much easier to negotiate with.

"What time is Rosie coming?"

"She should be here any minute."

"Okay, well remember what we discussed. If you're happy, just go with her and get what you want but if you do go out shopping with her for stuff, Jackson goes everywhere with you."

Emily sighed. "Yes, dear! I'm going to put some of Molly's things into the guest room. She can sleep there until we've finished her own room."

"Okay, but if you need anything heavy moved, please ask Jackson. I filled her in this morning when we were sparring. Where is Jackson, anyway?"

"Just checking her cameras, I think. And don't worry, I have Rosie to help as well."

"Okay. Well have a nice day to yourself. I love you."

Emily kissed them both goodbye. "I love you both, too. Stay safe."

"Love ou, Mama. Bye!"

She walked to the door to see them out. "Have fun!"

"I don't think she realizes how difficult going to the park with a 3 year old is!" Emily chuckled to herself.

Jackson watched from the living room as Emily and Rosie laughed together. Emily had insisted on sharing a cup of coffee and some chat before they got down to business.

Emily had told Jackson just to relax and to use the TVs or computers while Rosie was there but Jackson wanted to keep an eye on Emily's new friend. So she tried to look busy with some paperwork in the living room, all the while keeping an eye on the kitchen table she could see through the door.

"So the cop was like," Rosie lowered her voice in an imitation of the cop. 'Hey, little lady. If you don't move from this vicinity I will be forced to remove you forcibly.' I say, 'well I'd like to see you try!' I knock the guy's hat off and his face goes purple with rage, and I think, 'oh well, I guess I'm not going to make my shift at the bar tonight.'" But just then the crowd surges from behind me, some guy fighting with another cop, I get pushed off to the side and the cop can't find me. So I take that as a sign that it's time to call it a day ahead to work."

The two women laughed. "Rosie. You really are committed to the cause!" "Well someone has to stand up to the government and big business."

While they were talking, Jackson had entered the kitchen. Rosie saw Jackson tut and shake her head in disgust.

"Sorry to interrupt, Emily, but do you mind if I get a cup of coffee?"

"Of course not, I'll get it for you." Emily jumped up to get the coffee.

Rosie could feel angry eyes boring into the back of her head. She turned quickly and found herself staring into Jackson's stormy eyes.

"Something bothering you, soldier boy?"

"Yes, you."

"Oh? Do tell me why?" Rosie replied sarcastically.

Here they go again! This is going to be fun with Rosie working here most days, thought Emily.

"It bothers me that while hard working people are trying to get to their jobs, they get held up by the likes of you. It bothers me that brave public servants have to deal with you and

your hipster friends, while they should be out helping and protecting law abiding citizens."

Rosie's face was turning slightly red with anger. *Of all the ... low down ...*

She stood, facing Jackson head on. "It's the likes of me that will save this country from people like you who will give us a future of war and global warming, with the rich getting richer on the backs of the poor!"

Jackson smirked. "What? Did your yogi teach you that?"

"Argh!" Rosie squealed in frustration.

Emily thought this was the right time to intervene. "Okay, why don't we agree to disagree? Rosie? Shall we go to Molly's room and discuss the plans?" As she steered Rosie out of the kitchen, she patted Jackson on the shoulder and said with a smile, "Why don't you have some cookies with your coffee, Jackson, and relax."

When they left the kitchen, Jackson slapped her hand down on the counter.

That was so unprofessional, Hunter! What are you doing? Why are you letting that hippy get to you?

For the moment, she had no answers.

"I'm so sorry about that, Emily. What must you think of me? Listen, I'll just go. You don't want someone who shouts her mouth off like that to work for you."

Emily looked at her with a smirk. "Don't be ridiculous. I found it quite amusing," said Emily.

"I don't know why she annoys me so much. I hardly know her and she just makes me angry."

"I know she appears kind of buttoned up and moody, but she's really very nice."

"I'll take your word for it, Emily. Thanks for giving me this chance. Can I show you my plans and test out the paint samples?"

"Sure, I've been looking forward to it."

"Mom! Mom! Higher!" Molly shouted. Dylan was pushing her on the swings.

"Any higher, Smurf, and you'll be flying." She let the swing come gently back down to earth.

They had been playing for about an hour and Dylan didn't think she'd ever had as much fun.

Dylan swung her little girl up in her arms. How about we get some lunch, Molls? Then we can play with your ball."

"Yeah! Me hungry. We get pizza and fries, Mom?"

"Sure, kid, and ice cream for dessert. You can get whatever you want today, but don't be surprised if Mama makes us eat healthy stuff tomorrow to make up for it!"

Molly screwed up her face. "Ew! No like ealthy."

Dylan smiled. "Me neither. Let's go get pizza, Smurf."

Across the park, someone watched the mother and daughter walk away.

"That girl is your double, Morgan. She has nothing of my precious Emily running through her veins. You can keep your brat. My Emily and I will make our own family. Soon. You may have imprisoned her with your so-called security, Morgan, but I'm too clever for you. I will rescue my woman. No one takes what is mine!" the figure thought feverishly, and slipped away.

The sound of the new friends' laughter brought Emily and Rosie into the apartment. Jackson followed with a scowl on her face, laden down with all their purchases.

"Hey, it was an accident!" Rosie said defensively.

"Yeah. Of course it was!"

Emily and Rosie had spent the afternoon shopping for furniture and paint samples. In Home Depot there had been an incident with a sample can of paint, that Rosie was holding, and Jackson's shirt.

"Listen, soldier boy. If I had wanted to get paint on you, you'd be covered from head to foot!"

Emily thought she should intervene before this escalated any further.

"Jackson, I'll get you one of Dylan's t shirts to put on. Why don't you two stop arguing and dump the stuff in Molly's room, okay?"

Jackson sighed and padded off with the bags. As soon as Jackson's back was turned, Rosie stuck her tongue out at the tall woman, smirked at Emily and followed her nemesis to Molly's room.

Emily shook her head and went to get the t-shirt for Jackson. "What am I going to do with those two?"

Dylan and Molly came crashing through the door. The TV star had her daughter slung over her shoulder. They'd had a wonderful day together, bonding and making up for the time they had missed together.

"Now where did I put that Smurf of mine? I must have left her at the park? Oh well, I'm sure Mama will understand."

Molly giggled and kicked her legs trying to get Dylan's attention.

"Ou no forget me, Mom! I up ere!"

Dylan made a big show of twirling round, looking for where the voice had come from.

"That sounded like Molls? Where'd that come from?"

"Ere, Mom! Up ere!" The excited girl shouted.

Dylan looked up and faked a shocked expression. "Molls? There you are! I knew I put you somewhere."

"Ha! Ha! Put me down, Mom."

"Okay, kid. Let's go and see what your Mama and Rosie have done to your room."

They found a tense looking Jackson and Rosie, trying very hard to ignore each other. Molly ran over to get one of her toys still left in the room.

"Hi guys. Hey Jackson, did you have an argument with a can of paint?" Dylan joked.

"Very funny. It was an accident, apparently." Jackson looked pointedly at Rosie, who gave her a disgusted look in return.

"O...kay. Can you tell me where my fiancé is?"

"She went to your room to get me a t-shirt to change into, but that was about twenty minutes ago. Must have got caught up in something.

T-shirt? My t-shirt drawer? The letters! Shit! Fear gripped Dylan's heart. The fear that she kept hidden deep inside, that life with Emily and Molly was too perfect and she would somehow mess it up. Either that or the stalker would steal her away.

"Um ... could you guys watch Molly for me?"

"Sure," replied Rosie. Jackson was immediately on alert. "Is everything okay, Dylan?"

"Yeah ... just ... um, I'll be back in a bit, okay?"

Dylan rushed to their bedroom. The door was shut. She took a deep breath. *Come on, Morgan. You can do this!* She opened the door to find an empty room. Dylan's drawer was turned upside down, the t-shirts strewn all over the floor. Dylan's heart began to beat faster as her eyes lifted towards the bed where the letters were set out. The originals of the more recent letters that Dylan had not turned in to the police yet and photocopies of the rest. They were all there, but Emily was not.

Dylan checked their bathroom and, when she found nothing, she frantically checked through the rest of the apartment.

"Emmie? Emily? Are you here?" Jackson and Rosie appeared, reacting to Dylan's shouts.

"What's wrong?"

"She's not here! She found the letters and she's not here. She's left me, Jackson!"

"What's wrong? Is Emily okay?" asked Rosie, totally confused at what was happening.

Dylan grabbed her jacket and keys. "Will you please watch Molly for me?"

Jackson stood in front of her employer, blocking her path. She knew Dylan was so distressed and panicked that she shouldn't be out there alone.

"I'll come with you. Rosie can watch Molly; you can trust her. Just let me do my job."

"No. I'm going alone. Emily's out there upset and angry and without protection. I need to find her, quickly. I trust Rosie but the stalker could take this opportunity to take Molly, to hurt us, to use her as leverage to get to Emily. I need you to protect her. Rosie? Jackson? Please take care of our daughter."

"Of course we will." Rosie lifted Molly, who had wandered into the hallway after hearing her mom's shouts.

She looked worried. "Mom? Where Mama?"

Dylan stroked her little cheek. "I'm just going to pick Mama up. We'll be back soon."

As she turned to leave, Jackson grabbed her arm. "Dylan, she'll be close by. There's no way she would leave cute stuff here for long. Call me, okay? Let me know she's safe. If he has gotten close to her, come back and let me do my job, alright?"

Dylan nodded and left the apartment. Out in the hall, she braced herself against the door, taking a few deep breaths to help with the wave of nausea that came over her.

Fuck! Get yourself under control, Morgan! Emily needs you.

The wave passed and she headed to the elevator.

Dylan found her herself standing on the sidewalk, with no idea where to go.

Her heart thudded and her hands shook in panic. She nervously ran a big hand through her dark hair.

Think! Where would she go? She doesn't know anyone! What If he's got her? No. Stop it! You can't think like that .

"Where are the paparazzi when you need them? They follow her around for months and then I choose today to manage to get them off her tail."

As Dylan looked up, she noticed a man with a camera leaning against a building across the street.

She rushed across the road, narrowly missing a taxi cab on the way to the lone paparazzo.

The photographer looked a little shocked at the sight of the big, angry, muscled, TV star bearing down on him.

"You! Did you see my fiancé leaving my building?"

"Uh ... I ..." The young man thought she was angry about him harassing them.

"I don't have time for this!" Dylan grabbed his camera and flicked through the shots he had taken and spotted a few showing Emily walking down the road.

Dylan grabbed the photographer by the shirt. "Where did she go after this?"

He couldn't believe his luck when he saw Emily Taylor come out of the apartment building alone. She was usually surrounded by a pack of photographers, each vying for a shot, but today he was the only one. Morgan had offered a shot to the assembled pack earlier in exchange for leaving them alone for a day out. The rest had, but his editor wanted him to hang around and try to get a shot of a new arty looking woman who had been seen coming and going. So when he had seen Emily leave, he took a few shots before turning his attention back to the apartment.

"Tell me now!"

"Sh ... she walked down to the end of the street and I think went into that bar."

With a sigh of relief, he watched the TV star run off down the street.

Dylan stood outside the bar door catching her breath. It was one of the many gay bars in the village. She had passed a few times but never went in for a drink.

Plucking up her courage, Dylan walked through the door.

The place was quiet. A few people sat at the bar and tables up front, or in the booths in the back.

"Hey Dylan! Nice to see you. Get you a drink?" The barkeep had spotted her already; she had forgotten to put on her usual dark glasses and hat.

Dylan walked up to the bar.

"No, that's okay. I was looking for my fiancé." She took out her wallet to show her Emily's picture.

"Has she been in here?"

"Hey, I don't need the picture, everyone knows what your honey looks like. She's been in the magazines for I don't know how long. By the way, you lucked out getting that girl; she's one fine looking woman!"

Dylan was getting exasperated. "Yeah. I know. Listen buddy, this is kind of urgent, could you tell me if she's been in here?"

"Sure! Could you sign this for my girlfriend?" She held out a napkin and pen.

Dylan grabbed it and scrawled out her autograph. "There, now Emily?"

"Thanks. Oh, she's in the last booth down there. Some dyke's been hitting on her for the last twenty minutes."

Dylan's head snapped around towards the back booth. She couldn't see Emily, but saw a short looking butch woman in a business suit hanging over the side of the booth. Dylan growled and shot off towards them.

Emily had no success in getting rid of this woman who couldn't seem to take a hint. She had just wanted to have a quiet drink somewhere she could think and process what she had discovered.

"Listen baby, why don't we go get some dinner somewhere. I just got a big promotion today at my law firm. I'm a partner now."

The woman looked rather smug, as if being a lawyer usually impressed women she decided she liked.

Emily sighed. "Listen, I told you, I just want to be on my own. Besides that, I'm engaged, see?" She lifted her hand.

That's some sparkler! thought the lawyer. *Still, she's fair game .*

"She's not here, though, is she? A woman as pretty as you shouldn't be without company." Emily was feeling suffocated as the lawyer blocked off her exit and stroked her shoulder.

The lawyer felt herself yanked backwards by the collar. "Get your hands off what doesn't belong to you and beat it!"

"Hey! Who do you think you ... oh." The overconfident lawyer turned around and had to look up to see the face of a huge, obviously angry, girlfriend who happened to be a famous TV star with a gold medal in taekwondo.

"Sh ... she's your ..."

"Yeah, she's mine. So I'd advise you to get out of here before I throw you onto the sidewalk on your ass!"

The lawyer moved away from the booth as quick as she could, tripping over tables and chairs on the way.

"Uh ... sure thing. Listen, if I knew she was with you ... I'll just ... just go. Sorry."

With that she was gone.

Dylan sat across from Emily, who was staring into her glass.

"Um ... hey, baby."

Emily looked up from her drink with a scowl. "Don't "baby" me. I'm not interested."

Shit! You knew you would fuck this up!" Listen. I know you're upset ..."

"Upset?" Emily barked. "You think I'm just upset? Do you know what it felt like to find those letters? To know that I've been happily going around day-to-day thinking you and Jackson were just being over the top, only to find out the threat is real and very dangerous. What gave you the right to keep that from me like I was some little child who needs to be taken care of? When I read those letters, it took me right back to finding those

messages on Toni's phone. "

Dylan slammed her hands down on the table.

"You're comparing me to your lying cheating ex? I don't believe this! I was trying to protect you. It's my job! You should never have left the apartment; it's not safe for you out here."

Emily was shocked at Dylan's outburst of anger. It was supposed to be her that was angry.

"Don't you shout at me like that. Just leave me alone to think!" Tears were beginning to roll down her cheeks.

Dylan's heart was breaking watching Emily cry, knowing that she was crying because of her actions.

Great, Morgan. You come here to beg for forgiveness and you end up yelling at the woman you love!

"I'm so sorry for shouting. I'm just panicking. When I got home and you weren't there ... I've never been more frightened in my life. Please just give me fifteen minutes to explain. Come home with me and let me talk. If you still want to go, I'll have Jackson take you wherever you want. I promise."

Emily silently stared into her drink. "Please! Just fifteen minutes. Look, Molly was really worried when you weren't home; I told her I was just going to pick you up. If I don't come back with you ..."

Emily stood up. "You have fifteen minutes but if I'm not satisfied, Jackson can take Molly and me somewhere, a hotel or something."

I could lose them over this. Lose everything , thought Dylan dejectedly.

"Thank you, Emmie." Dylan stood to follow her partner when Emily stopped and looked her right in the eye.

"Don't ever use our daughter to get what you want again."

She walked on with a chastised Dylan close behind.

The couple's walk home had been in silence. When they entered the apartment they found Jackson, Rosie and Molly playing in the living room. Rosie and Jackson felt the tension immediately take over the room. Molly ran straight up to Emily, who lifted her up and cuddled her tight.

"Mama, ou back! I din't know where ou were," Molly pouted.

Emily kissed her daughter. "I just popped out for a bit, sweetie."

While Emily talked to Molly, Dylan spoke to Jackson.

"Jackson would you mind taking Molly to McDonalds for some dinner?"

Jackson patted her on the back. "Sure."

"Uh Emily? How about Jackson takes Molly to McDonald's?" Dylan asked gently.

Emily sighed, "Yes. That's probably a good idea. Molly you want to go out with Jackson?"

"Yeah! Wosie come, too?" Jackson looked nervously at her nemesis, wondering what the young woman's reaction would be.

"I'd love to, sweetie!" Then turning to Jackson said, "Come on, soldier boy!" Rosie grabbed Molly's jacket and they walked hand in hand towards the door. Jackson followed behind, hands in pockets, muttering, "God help me!"

Emily and Dylan found themselves alone in the living room.

Emily sat down and said, "Well, I'm waiting."

Dylan paced and ran her fingers through her hair.

"After the break in and the message scrawled on the mirror, you and Molly were so scared, so upset. When I went to work the next day there was a letter waiting for me. I told Patrick and Mark right away. I asked them not to tell you. You and Molly were happy and settled and beginning to relax. If I told you about the letter, you would have been upset again and you would have been watching your every step and looking over your shoulder all the time, waiting for the next letter or for the stalker to pounce; instead of doing what you did do, which was relaxing into family life here, with me. When I

didn't tell about you the first letter and more kept coming, I was committed to that path, I got in deeper and deeper. Jackson said I should tell you, but I knew you'd be angry and I didn't want to spoil everything we've built."

Emily shook her head. "That was not your decision to make, Dylan. I swore after Toni that I would never be kept in the dark or have a partner make decisions for me again."

Dylan was shaking. *I'm going to lose everything.* The big woman fell on her knees in front of Emily, tears welling up in her eyes.

"Please. I'm sorry. I made the wrong decision. I thought I was doing the right thing to protect you both. I love the two of you more than anything in the world. I'll never keep anything from you again."

Emily's resolve was crumbling as she saw Dylan cry, terrified of losing them both.

When I see her upset like this, all I want to do is put my arms around her and make it all better. This is her first serious relationship. She finds out she has a daughter and gets engaged; her life is changed beyond recognition in a few months and all the time a stalker has been hanging over her head, threatening to take her family away. Think about the pressure she's had to bear, alone , thought Emily.

She took Dylan's tear stained face in her hands. "I don't agree with what you did but I can understand why you did it. I love you with all my heart. Molly and I are so lucky to have you to keep us safe, but don't ever keep things from me again!"

Dylan's emotions overflowed in sheer relief. She threw her arms round the blonde's waist, head in her lap. "Oh god, thank you! I love you so much, baby girl, I promise you there will never be any secrets between us again. Shit! I thought you'd take Molly and leave me."

Emily stroked her partner dark head. "Oh, goofy. I was mad and hurt but please know I would never leave you, I might be angry for a while, maybe a few days but we'll always work it out, I promise. I will never leave you. You're the love of my life."

Jackson smirked. She looked over at Rosie as she unloaded their meals from the tray.

The tall woman had annoyed Rosie when they reached McDonald's by insisting on paying for dinner. She was sure she heard the words chauvinist pig being uttered.

Jackson got her way and now Rosie was sorting Molly's food for her, while trying her best to ignore Jackson.

"There you go, Molly. You want ketchup?"

"Yes, please."

Rosie started on her fries and apple pie. She could almost feel Jackson's smirking face without looking up.

"You got a problem, soldier boy?"

Jackson picked up her huge double cheeseburger with bacon and took a big bite. "Let's just say it wasn't a huge surprise that all you got was fries and an apple pie."

"Meaning?" asked Rosie, her annoyance growing.

"Let's just say if there was a checklist for being a lesbian, you would have every box checked off."

"Excuse me?"

"Come on? You're in the art business, anti-war, anti-government, anti-authority, anti-big business, professional protestor, vegetarian and I'm quite sure you have some rainbow flag stickers or jewelry somewhere around you or your apartment."

Rosie was enraged. "Excuse me, soldier boy! But if you were to ask everyone in the restaurant who was the lesbian here, every single one would point to you, sitting in your men's suit with your extremely short men's hairstyle, and your 'Oh I'll pay the bill, little lady,' attitude. Ms. Butch of the Year, 1955!"

Jackson smiled. She mentions my being butch all the time. Hmm. Interesting . "Well, perhaps Molly doesn't need to hear us bicker? Truce?" Rosie took a deep breath and nodded. *Oh! That woman infuriates me!*

"How are you doing, kiddo?"

"Otay Dackson, ou build my toy from my appy meal?"

"Of course. Give it here." Jackson began to build the toy car from a Disney movie.

Rosie decided to change the subject. "So what was that all about? Dylan said Emily

found some letters?"

"I don't think we should talk about it with little ears listening." Jackson indicated her head towards Molly.

"Oh...yeah. Sorry," Rosie replied quietly.

"It's not something I could talk about to outsiders anyway. For security."

"Oh yeah, because I'm really a threat to security, aren't I?!"

Jackson leaned across the table and said in a quiet but firm voice. "You're an unknown quantity, to an extent. I don't know as much about you as I would like to, and I don't take chances with my work."

"What do you mean? Have you been checking up on me?"

Jackson leaned back in her seat, looking smug. "I ran a few background checks, its normal practice."

Rosie's face was a picture of rage. "Normal practice? How dare you! I have a right to privacy! That's a breach of my human rights!"

"Grow up, hippy girl! That's the way the real world works."

Molly who had been watching her friends get angry said, "Wosie otay, Dackson?" J

ackson smirked. "She's fine, munchkin. Just a bit excited, that's all."

Rosie directed a fiery look towards her dinner companion.

You are the most infuriating person I have ever met!

Dylan and Emily were cuddled up on the couch when Jackson and Rosie returned with Molly.

Dylan refused to let go of her fiancé. She had come so close to messing things up and vowed to do anything to keep her family together.

Emily stood to take Molly in her arms.

"Thanks for taking her, guys. I appreciate it," Emily told Jackson and Rosie.

"Anytime. Why don't I leave you guys to it? I'll come back tomorrow," said the young decorator.

Emily nodded. She felt Dylan join her and snake an arm round her side.

"Yeah, thanks you two. Jackson, you can pull out if you like. We're in for the night now. If you want to come over early tomorrow and spar, I'd like that. It will give us a chance to talk about our plans, as well," Dylan told Jackson.

"Will do." Then turning to Rosie said, "Can I give you a ride anywhere?"

Rosie just scowled back at her. "I don't think so. Emily I'll just go and collect my things from Molly's room."

Ungrateful hippy freak! "Fine. That's the last time I try to be nice!" Jackson said as Rosie walked away.

Emily saw the look of hurt on Jackson's face. "She's young, Jackson. You two just seem to clash. Don't worry about it."

"I'm not worried. I couldn't care less what she thinks of me. I'll see you two tomorrow."

Emily could tell that the tough looking woman was bothered but said nothing.

"Bye Jackson. Thanks for today."

"Yeah thanks, buddy," added Dylan.

Later when they had put Molly to bed, they shared a glass of wine on the couch, Dylan still holding onto Emily at every opportunity.

"So what will we do next, honey? About the stalker situation."

"I thought maybe I could invite Mark and Patrick over to talk about it. Now that everything's out in the open, when can see where they are with it and you can ask them any questions you may have."

"Sounds like a plan. Let's go to bed. We've a lot to do tomorrow. We have to visit the preschools, remember? And Lynn wants us to meet with the wedding planner. I thought we could just leave Rosie to her work here. Is that okay?"

"Yeah, sure. I called Mark earlier and told him I wouldn't make training, I'll just spar with

Jackson in the morning. I can't wait to marry you, baby girl."

Emily kissed Dylan on the cheek. "Me neither, goofy. Let's go to bed and snuggle."

Dylan lifted her fiancé from the couch. "After today, that sounds like heaven, Emmie."

It was Monday morning and the new family had a lot to pack in. Dylan was in the office talking with Jackson, while Emily got Molly ready for their day.

"So is everything sorted now?" Asked Jackson.

Dylan let out a long breath. "Yes, thank god. She was so angry. Her ex kept things from her before so this hit a raw nerve. I made a bad choice but she's forgiven me, and I won't make that mistake again."

"It's better in the long run if she knows. We can now secure the apartment and any outings properly, with her full cooperation."

"Yeah. I called Mark and asked him to come over with Patrick and have a talk with her about it." Dylan explained.

"Great idea. So what's on the agenda today?" Jackson asked.

"Were heading over to visit a couple of preschools, then meeting with the wedding planner Lynn recommended," Dylan scowled.

"I thought you couldn't wait to be tied down? I mean the very thought of marriage makes my stomach queasy, but you're Dylan Morgan, responsible family woman."

"You're right, I can't wait. I wish it were tomorrow, but I wish Emily would just tell me where to show up and when. It'll be all 'What do you think of this fabric?' and 'Green or blue?'"

Jackson laughed. "I hear you, my friend!"

Dylan heard someone clear their throat at the office door. Her head darted around to find Emily glaring at her.

Shit!

"I heard that, goofy!" Dylan jumped up.

"You know I don't mean anything, baby. I just ..." Dylan was silenced by a kiss.

"Shh! I know, honey. Relax, okay?" Emily said with a smile. She knew Dylan was a little sensitive after last night.

"Okay, um ... you two ready to go?"

"Sure, and as a special treat, you and Jackson can pick the table decorations!" She turned on her heel, and left the two women rolling their eyes.

"And so here at Greenfield School, we pride ourselves on diversity and a dedication to teaching young people the responsibility that they have in their communities."

Dylan and Emily were meeting the principal of the second school of the day. Lynn had said that this school was favored by a lot of gay couples, due to their progressive policies.

The first school had been a little traditional and Emily felt the staff were uncomfortable with Molly having two mommies.

As soon as they arrived at Greenfield, they felt a completely different atmosphere. The principal was warm and friendly, and quite eager for the famous couple to choose the school. They had been escorted to a large playroom where Molly could play, so Dylan and Emily could talk with Mrs. Whitmore, the school principal. Jackson stood guard at the door.

"That sounds great. What do you think, Emily," asked Dylan.

While driving over, Emily had looked through the school brochure and balked at the cost, \$20,000 a year, but Dylan managed to bring Emily around by talking up the security benefits.

"Are there any entrance requirements?"

"Yes. We have an entrance exam, but I'm sure Molly will have no problem. We usually require children to be four years old on, or before, September 1st, but in your circumstances, with Molly just moving into the area, I think I can bend that rule for you."

"You understand our need for security? Jackson Hunter, our security consultant, would need to escort Molly, with either Emily or myself, to and from school. Jackson would need full access to the school, and we need your assurance of Molly's security during the day," added Dylan.

"We will have no problem accommodating your needs, and I can assure you that we have a number of families, here at Greenfield, who have similar needs. As you saw when you entered the school, no one gets in or out without going through our security. For any field trips we will, of course, be flexible on any extra security you think is necessary."

"Well that answers all my questions. Could we have a few minutes to discuss our options, Mrs. Whitmore?"

"Of course, just call me when you're ready."

When she left the room, Dylan called her daughter over and lifted her onto her lap.

"Hey Molls. Remember we said this could be your preschool?" Molly nodded.

"Well, what do you think? Do you like it here?" When Mrs. Whitmore had shown them around, Molly seemed excited by the brightly colored and friendly environment.

"Yeah, Mom. They ave tool toys! And loads of puters!"

"Well that's good. What do you think, Emmie?"

Emily let out a breath. "Well it certainly is an impressive set up, but then it should be at those prices!"

"Emmie, come on, we talked about this," Dylan chastised.

"I know. It will give Molly an incredible start in life. I like the principal and her staff, and it seems like a warm and friendly environment, compared to the place this morning."

Dylan turned and took Emily's hand; Molly had darted off to play with the toys again.

"That's what I want for our daughter, the best start in life. We both had normal working class families and educations, and there's nothing wrong with that, but if we give Molly the best education we can, then her life has so many more options. I want Molly to be able to do everything she wants to with her life. That's not so bad is it?"

Emily smiled and kissed Dylan lightly.

"No, it's not. You know you are just the sweetest TV star in the world!"

Dylan flashed a smug smile and said, "Well, I do try."

"You know what this means, don't you?"

"What?"

"Shopping! Molly's going to need lots of new clothes for preschool. You wanted me to be more comfortable with spending our money; well you're going to end up being sorry you ever encouraged me!"

"Never! I love to see you two getting nice things. I'm sure Jackson will be delighted about more shopping trips."

Dylan looked over to the door and caught Jackson giving her a disgusted look. Dylan simply smiled back.

"Well, let's go tell Mrs. Whitmore the good news."

Dylan stood and went in search of her.

After setting an appointment for the entrance test, Dylan, Emily and Molly stopped for lunch before heading off to meet the wedding planner. They tried to make the first meeting as quick as possible as Molly was getting tired and restless.

They decided the wedding would take place at the Metropolitan Community Church, followed by a reception at the Four Seasons Hotel, where they would stay overnight. Emily promised Justin, their wedding planner, that she would return soon for a more in-depth appointment, without Molly, to discuss dresses, food and all the other details.

They arrived home with a tired and grumpy Molly. Dylan and Jackson promised they would play video games with her until dinner, which cheered her up immensely.

Emily went to check on Rosie's progress.

"How's it coming?" Emily asked.

The room was now completely empty. Dylan and Jackson had cleared out the furniture for her.

"Oh hi, really good. I've given the walls a base coat of paint. Tomorrow, I'll start

sketching out the jungle designs in pencil, before they're painted."

"Great, I should be able to help tomorrow. I've got no plans. I do want to go clothes shopping for Molly, but I think it would be unfair to trail her around the stores after today. Especially since Dylan's working, so I can't leave her here."

Rosie nodded. "How did everything go today?"

"Great. We got Molly signed up for preschool, then made some very brief arrangements with the wedding planner. Molly had had enough by that point so we couldn't plan too much. I'm going back to have an appointment on my own."

Rosie observed that Emily looked a little sad.

"Are you okay?"

"Yeah, it's nothing. It's just that, at times like these, I miss having a mother to share this with, to help make decisions. My family and I are estranged and I don't really have any girlfriends, it's just been Molly and me for so long, and Dylan will be no use at choosing things."

Rosie felt sorry for Emily. She knew how it felt to miss a mother. "Listen, if you ever want a second opinion or someone to go with you, feel free to ask me. There's nothing I like better than choosing dresses and fabrics."

Emily beamed in relief. "Really? Oh that would be wonderful! This whole celebrity wedding thing is really overwhelming."

"No problem. It'll be fun, and I get to annoy Jackson, even more fun!"

The women laughed. *Poor Jackson!* thought Emily.

In the evening, once Molly was safely put to bed and Rosie had left for the day, Mark and Patrick came over to talk with Emily, Jackson and Dylan.

After serving coffee and cookies, Emily sat close to Dylan, gripping her hand for reassurance.

"Anything new?" asked Dylan.

"Not really. We checked out the waiter Toni had mentioned was overly interested in Emily. His name is Drew Simpson. He seems like a quiet guy. Lives with his elderly mother. He did have a few magazines lying around that had you both on them, but he struck me more as a fan than anything." Mark said.

Dylan turned to her fiancé. "Do you remember him, Emmie?"

"Yeah. He was harmless, it was just a crush. If I met Toni at the restaurant, he would make me feel uncomfortable by looking and 'accidentally' brushing past me. Just your typical guy who's not very successful with women."

"Well they're the type to watch out for, so we'll keep an eye on him but until we get anymore leads, there's not really a whole lot we can do," Patrick added.

Dylan sat forward in her seat, obviously agitated.

"What about Toni? Are you sure about her? She has a history of violence."

"Dylan! I don't like to talk about that. Toni wouldn't do something like this. She was a cheater yes, but she liked women, lots of women. She wouldn't get fixated on me like this." Dylan was annoyed by being chastised in front of everyone and Emily defending Toni. She got up and poured herself some scotch, a scowl on her face.

Jackson, feeling a need to change the subject and break the tension, said, "What about the wedding, guys? We're going to need extra protection for the day."

Mark agreed. "You're right. The wedding may be a catalyst for whoever this is to act, so we have to take extra care. We'll coordinate with you on security."

Dylan still stood with her back to the group. Emily could feel the anger coming from her.

She needed to talk to her alone.

"Thanks for coming over and talking with me," Emily said, standing and brining the meeting to an end.

"No problem, Emily. We'll be in touch. Goodnight. Night, Dylan."

Dylan turned briefly and said goodbye.

After she and Emily saw them out, Jackson said. "I'll head off, too. Go talk to her. She's just stressed."

Emily nodded. "Thanks, Jackson. Goodnight."

When they were alone, she walked over to her partner, who had her back to Emily.

"Well, that was rude!" Dylan just snorted in reply.

"And drinking isn't going to help! Why are you so angry?"

Emily reached and touched her partner's shoulder, only to have it pulled away.

Dylan turned. "Why am I angry? Are you serious? You defend your lying, cheating, and abusive ex right in front of my friends! You talk to me like I'm some child! And you ask why I'm angry?" Dylan stomped over to the couch and sat down with her drink.

What is wrong with her? This isn't like my Dylan? thought Emily. "Oh and I'll drink where and when I like!"

Emily was hurt but tried to remain calm. "I don't know what's really bothering you, but I only said that Toni wouldn't want to harm and frighten me like this. I know she was violent but this is a whole different ball game. I think you're frightened and a little jealous of my past with Toni, and that's why you're acting like this. So I'm going to let you sort it out in your head yourself. I'm going to bed." Emily knew Dylan could be emotionally fragile and was struggling to cope with a threat coming from a faceless person. She knew, given some time to calm down, she would come seeking love and reassurance.

Dylan was left in the living room by herself. She drank the rest of her whiskey and got up for another.

She felt foolish. How could she say that in front of Mark and Patrick! Made me look like some jealous idiot. How can no one else see it's probably Toni?! Someone who's violent like that! Of course it could be her!

Hmm. Maybe Emily felt embarrassed having her past talked about like that. Shit! That's why she busted your balls, you idiot! Fuck! Dylan sat wondering how to get back into Emily's good graces.

Dylan crept into their bedroom. Emily was asleep but had laid out Dylan's sleepwear of white sleeveless t- shirt and boxers. *Always thinking of me, baby girl. You don't deserve her, Morgan!*

Dylan got ready for bed in the bathroom, so as not to wake Emily. She got into bed and lay on her back. She desperately wanted to reach out to Emily but thought she would be rebuffed.

A few minutes later, unable to wait any longer, she caved.

"Emmie? Emmie?"

Emily, who was only half asleep, opened her eyes.

"What is it, honey?"

"Em ... I'm ... I'm sorry, okay. I was out of line. I just get really scared and Toni is an easy target because she hurt you before. I hate to think of you with her."

"It's okay, goofy. I know you're scared. Come here." Emily opened her arms to her partner and Dylan latched onto her fiancé like a limpet.

"I'm sorry, I'm an idiot." Dylan mumbled into Emily's breasts.

"You're not an idiot. You've been through a lot, honey. From bachelor to just about to be married with a child in the space of 3 months. It's a lot of responsibility. You're just scared."

"I just want to protect you. I want you and Molly to have a happy calm life."

"We will. We'll get this sorted out somehow."

"You always make things better, Emmie. How do you do that?"

"Because I know you, Dylan Morgan. You're in my soul and I love you."

Dylan climbed up and kissed Emily tenderly.

"I love you with all that I am."

"Can I talk to you about something?"

"You know you can." Dylan lay down and pulled Emily into her arms. "You know how we said if I got along well with Rosie that we'd ask her to do the decorating on the new house?"

Dylan nodded.

"Well how would you feel about her doing our bedroom here? I mean it's going to be well into January before we move to the beach, and we're still going to be staying here every so often."

"Of course, I told you before this place is yours to do with what you want. I know it's bland, I want you to make both places homey, do the whole place if you'd like."

"Great. Gives me something to do. I'm used to being out at work every day. Oh, and Rosie offered to come with me to see the wedding planner, and to take a look at some dresses. I really appreciated it. I don't have friends and a girl usually has her mother," she said sadly.

"I'm sorry, baby girl. I'm sorry you don't have her to share it with."

"I can only guess what she's making of us from the newspapers and magazines. Disgusted, no doubt. She's probably asking Father Peters to pray for me."

"We don't have the best luck with families do we?" Dylan said sadly.

"We have the family we're creating together and that's what counts."

Dylan kissed Emily. "Your right again, baby. I'm glad you're making a friend in Rosie. She seems like a nice girl."

"She is. Let's get some sleep, goofy. Night."

"Sweet dreams, baby girl. I love you."

Dylan closed her eyes and silently prayed that no harm would come to her beloved little family.

"What are you doing on the show this week?" Emily asked Dylan the next morning.

"It's really cool! You'll like this, Molls. It's a basketball challenge, the contestant to get the most baskets wins. Boring you might say, but not when you put a trampoline in front of the basket. We run up, jump on the trampoline, which sends us high in the air, well above the basket, then you get a really cool slam dunk before you come crashing down to the mats." Dylan enthused.

"Dats so tool, Mom!"

"Isn't it dangerous, Dyl?"

"Well, of course, a little bit. That's what my show is all about. But I'll be fine."

Emily looked unconvinced.

"Mom, me come see you do it?"

Dylan smiled eagerly. "Yeah! What do you think, Emmie? Will you two come on Friday?"

"Yes, that's fine. But don't blame me, TV star, when we're at the emergency room because Molls has been copying your stunts!"

"Nah! You'll love it won't you, Smurf! So what's on the agenda for my girls today?"

Emily walked around to clean Molly's face of breakfast.

"We goin to paint manimals, Mom!"

"We're going to help Rosie with the room." Emily explained to Dylan.

"Ah, okay. Well have fun! I better get going. Where's Jackson?"

"Oh, playing with her security cameras, I think."

Standing, Dylan said, "Okay Molls, where's my kisses before I go?" Molly stood up on her chair to be lifted by her Mom for a hug and a kiss.

"Now you be a good girl for your Mama, all right?" Molly nodded.

"Love you, Molls."

"Love ou, Mom."

"Go on to your room, Molls, and I'll come and get you dressed in a minute."

Molly ran off happily and Dylan pulled Emily into her arms.

"You be good as well, baby girl."

Emily smiled, her hand teasing down Dylan's chest. "I'm always good, TV star. Now go and do some work, and stop distracting me with your good looks!"

Dylan laughed and kissed her fiancé thoroughly. "I'll take my good looks to work then. I love you."

"I love you too, honey. Be careful doing that trampoline stuff."

"I will. I'll call at lunchtime."

As Emily saw Dylan off to work, she welcomed Rosie in, and promised to join her as soon as she had Molly dressed.

Dylan walked into the studio building and was met by Lynn. They talked as they walked to Dylan's office.

"Morning Lynn. What do we have planned today?"

"Meetings with the writers at one, Christian Donald the actor will be in at 11 to meet you. Oh, and we need to make a decision about the interview with you and Emily before the wedding."

Dylan laughed and joked. "So not a lot, then?"

"Funny!" Lynn said sarcastically.

"Okay, okay. I've been thinking about the interview thing. Emily's willing to do it and get all the attention out of the way, but I don't want her going on a show with an audience. That's too much pressure for someone who's not used to it. I think the interviewer should come to the show when Emily and Molly are there watching. They can get an interview with us before I do the show, and get some good footage of Emily and Molly watching. The main thing being, it's on my territory and I can control what footage is taken."

"That's a great idea Dylan, I agree. Should I contact the short list of interviewers and feel them out?" asked Lynn.

"Yeah. If they are free to do it Friday, Emily and Molly are coming in anyway. But make it clear that I want final say on what goes out. My first choice would be Mattie Edwards of the Today Show. She's done this sort of thing before and wouldn't be very aggressive. I'll okay it with Emily when I call her at lunch."

"No problem. I'll get right on it. I'll be back with your protein shake in a minute, okay?"

"Sure. Thanks, Lynn."

Jackson had heard laughter coming from Molly's bedroom all morning. She had to reluctantly admit that Rosie seemed to cheer Emily up.

Jackson was doing some research into both Drew Simpson and Toni Bianchi.

Her contacts in the FBI had forwarded all the information on file with police and government databases. They had assured her that there was nothing in them but Jackson wanted to go over them with a fine-tooth comb, as they had nothing else to go on. She didn't really think there was any evidence that it would be Toni but since Dylan was so wary, Jackson felt she had to look into her background.

She started with Drew. He had no police record whatsoever; his employment record looked okay, although he did seem to move from job to job a lot.

'Hmm. Looks like he's in a job for six months or so then let go. I think I need to talk to some of his past employers.'

Her thoughts were interrupted by Molly running into the office.

"Dackson! Dackson! Come see dhe manimals I drewed. Molly said jumping up and down.

Jackson smiled. "Sure, munchkin. Lead the way."

Molly ran ahead of her into the bedroom. Jackson found Emily and Rosie sitting on the floor, laughing at Emily's attempt to draw the outline of a giraffe.

"I think I should leave the outlining to you Rosie, and I'll help color them in. Hey Jackson! You come to see our handy work?"

"Yeah, Molly wanted me to look at the drawings." Molly pulled her over to the little corner she was responsible for.

"Ook, Dackson! Dis a ion and dis a hippo." Molly said proudly.

"Hey that's great, kid. It's going to look cool."

"Yeah you're a great help, Molly." Rosie added.

Emily stood and said, "Can you two keep an eye on Molls while I make us some sandwiches for lunch?"

"Sure," replied Rosie. "Okay Molly, let's see if we can get Jackson to draw a monkey for us." Molly ran to get her pencils. "Can you actually do something artistic with those hands or can they just shoot guns?"

Jackson shot Rosie an angry look then walked up and whispered in her ear, "You have no idea what I can do with my hands, and you'll never have the pleasure of finding out."

Rosie gulped hard and shivered at Jackson's deep voice. She quickly shook off the feeling and watched Jackson sit and draw with Molly.

Why do you do that to me, Hunter!

Emily was nearly finished making lunch when the phone rang.

"Morgan residence."

"Hey, I like the sound of that."

"Hi honey! How's your day?"

"Oh busy, you know. I bet you and Molls are having more fun."

"Yes. I've laughed so much this morning. Rosie is really funny and Molly is taking decorating so seriously."

"I'm glad you're both having fun. Listen, I wanted to talk to you about something. You know we discussed doing one big interview before the wedding?"

"Yes. Do you have something in mind?"

"Yeah, I would like it done at my studios, so I can control it. I thought of asking them to do a piece when you're at the show Friday. You know, a kind off behind-the-scenes type of thing, with an interview first. What do you think?"

"Hmm. I suppose that sounds less scary than going to some other show with people I don't know. I'll still be really nervous though, I won't know what to say."

"Don't worry, you'll be fine. I'll look after you. I'll set it up, then?"

"Sure, if you think that's best." Inwardly Emily was terrified at the thought of talking to a camera.

"Okay, baby, I'll set it up. I better go, I won't be late tonight. I love you and tell Molls I love her."

"I will. We love you, too. Take care, honey. Bye."

"See you later."

Oh Dylan. I hope I don't disappoint you!

The day of the interview arrived and Emily had been a nervous wreck all day and was currently pacing up and down Dylan's dressing room.

"Baby, you look sick with nerves. I'm sorry we have to do this because of me." They had come into the studio earlier than usual to do the interview and were waiting for the TV crew to get there. Molly was totally absorbed in playing her Nintendo 3DS in front of the TV, and Jackson was off doing a security sweep with Pauley around the studio.

Emily stopped pacing and turned to look at Dylan. "I'm sorry, honey. I don't want you to ever feel bad. We agreed that this was the best way to handle the public interest in us."

"Come sit here, Emmie." Dylan patted her lap.

Emily sat and cuddled into Dylan's strong neck. "I just don't want to let you down."

"You never could. Just remember, follow my lead and if you're unsure about anything or don't want to answer a certain question, just tell me and we'll stop. It'll be edited afterwards, anyway."

"Okay I will, and you're sure they won't ask Molly anything? I don't think that would be appropriate."

"That was my first stipulation, don't worry. They can only take shots of her playing while we talk and when they follow you while I'm doing the show, but that's all."

"Mom? Ou elp me? Me can't get by dis bad monster." Molly padded over with her Nintendo in hand.

"Sure Smurflet, up you come." Emily moved onto the couch and Molly took her place.

"What have we got here? Whoa, that's a big monster!"

"Get him, Mom! Kill him dead!" Molly bounced up and down on her lap.

"What kind of games are you buying your daughter, TV star?" Emily asked wryly.

"Hey, they're just kid games. Nothing wrong with killing monsters."

Emily watched Dylan's fingers whizz over the buttons, while Molly looked on engrossed. Emily's heart melted. *They are so alike. I'm so glad I found you, Dylan.*

"You killed him dead! Yeah! Tanks, Mom." Molly jumped off her lap and toddled back to her space in front of the TV.

"She seems happy."

"She's happy since she met her Mom." Emily told her partner.

Dylan smiled. "So did you have a good time shopping today for Molly's new clothes?"

Emily had taken Molly to Greenfield School for her entrance test on Wednesday and she had passed with flying colors, so she had asked Rosie if she would like to go shopping with her to buy Molly new clothes and school supplies.

"It was fun. It was really good going with someone who enjoys shopping as much as I do. I think she's going to be a good friend." Dylan saw a strange look cross Emily's face. She gently stroked her fiancé's face.

"What is it?"

"Well I was just thinking how nice it was to get Molly exactly what she needed, and really nice things at that, without worrying or sacrificing something else. Molly missed out on a lot before we found you and I just want you to know that we appreciate what you provide for us."

Dylan's chest puffed out a little at the compliment. "Thank you, baby, but that's my job. Don't feel sad about the past, you did a great job bringing up Molly on your own. She's a happy, bright kid and she loves you. I'm just glad I can take care of you both now."

Dylan kissed Emily lightly then, as her kiss was getting deeper, Lynn knocked and came in.

"Sorry to interrupt you both but Mattie Edwards and her crew are set up in the conference room."

Dylan turned to Emily and said, "You ready for your first trial by television?"

Emily gulped. "As I'll ever be!"

"Let's go then. The camera is going to love you. Just like me!"

Previously:

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Episode 9

Jackson led the way to the conference room where Dylan and Emily were meeting Mattie Edwards of The Today Show. Dylan held Molly protectively in her arms as they walked into the meeting room. The conference room had been reorganised to accommodate the

outside TV crew and to give an appropriate background for the interview. A couch had been placed at one end of the room, and the camera equipment was set up directly in front of it. Mattie Edwards walked forward to introduce herself.

"Hi, I'm Mattie, pleased to meet you Dylan." Mattie Edwards was a petite and beautiful African American woman who was gaining a good reputation in TV news.

Dylan immediately went into professional mode. "Good to meet you, Mattie, this is my fiancé, Emily Taylor."

"Pleased to meet you, Emily."

"You too," Emily said nervously.

"And this is our daughter, Molly." Molly had her head buried in Dylan's neck.

"Hi Molly! Aren't you just a cutie pie?"

"Say hello to Mattie, Molls. She's shy with new people," Dylan explained.

"Ello," Molly whispered.

"Why don't I go and get her set up with her toys on the floor and then we can get started," Dylan said and moved off with Molly.

"So Emily. Are you okay with this? You look a little nervous."

"Yes I'm okay with it, but I'm nervous. This is all very new to me, and to be honest I think it's strange that anyone would find watching me interesting. Dylan I can understand, but ..."

"Oh but there's a great deal of interest in you, Emily. You are living the fairytale. Every woman has a fantasy of being whisked off their feet by their knight in shining armor. Like Richard Gere in *An Officer and a Gentleman*. Throw in a rich and famous TV star and your daughter being a Morgan then believe me, you're very interesting to the viewing public.

Listen, just relax. I'm not here to trick you into saying something or to get gossip. I just want to film a nice light-hearted look into your family life."

Emily felt she could trust this woman and began to relax. "Thanks for saying that, Mattie. I feel better."

"Shall we get started then?"

Emily nodded and led Mattie over to the interview area.

Two weeks later, a lone figure sat glued to a special report on The Today Show.

,

I'm Mattie Edwards and one week ago I met with TV personality Dylan Morgan on the set of the Dylan Morgan Show. I was granted backstage access to the taping of an episode, with Dylan's fiancé Emily Taylor and their daughter Molly watching on. I also got a chance to talk to Dylan and Emily about their whirlwind romance, their upcoming wedding and being parents in this exclusive interview ...'

The camera followed Mattie as she walked down a corridor into the makeup room to find Dylan getting her pre-show makeup done. Molly was in the next chair getting a spider drawn on her face. The pair were giggling and laughing with the makeup girls while Emily sat on the sofa behind them, beaming at her family.

The shot then cut to the formal interview. Dylan and Emily sat close, holding hands; Molly sat at their feet playing with her toys.

'Dylan, Emily, thank you for agreeing to this interview. The public has been fascinated by your story over the last few months and they 're eager to hear the true story of how you found each other. Dylan I know you're a big twitter fan, and after we've had a chat I'd like to ask you both some questions your fans have tweeted in to the show.'

'We'd be happy to Mattie' replied Dylan.

Emily gripped Dylan's hand tight.

'Dylan if I can turn to you first. You're known for your dangerous death defying stunts. Is becoming a parent and getting married the scariest thing you've done yet?'

Dylan laughed, looked lovingly at Emily and said. *'No. Not scary. Daunting maybe, but scary? No way. I think getting married will be the best thing I've ever done.'*

Dylan lifted their clasped hands and kissed the back of Emily's knuckles.

The camera caught Mattie smiling warmly at the gesture.

'So, there's a lot of myth and rumor about how you two met. Can you tell us how it really happened?'

'Well I had just finished a show and decided to walk home instead of taking a cab. I needed to clear my head a bit. I passed Emily's diner and, since it was starting to rain, I thought I'd go in and get a cup of coffee. I sat down at the counter and then Emily turned around to serve me, I looked into her eyes and I was a goner.'

Dylan looked at Emily with a big goofy look on her face.

'And Emily, what did you think when you saw this huge TV star in your diner?'

Emily cleared her throat nervously. *'We'll that's the funny thing. I seemed to be the only person in the western world who didn't know who Dylan Morgan was. So I saw this tall extremely good looking woman sitting there with sunglasses on.'*

'I usually wear sunglasses and a hat just so I don't draw attention to myself.' Dylan interjected.

Emily laughed softly. *'I just thought she was either extremely arrogant or some criminal! But then she took them off and well ... I was a goner too.'*

'That's very romantic. You say you didn't know who Dylan was Emily?'

'That's right. I worked all the time and the only TV I ever got to see was kids' shows.'

'What did you think when she told you about herself?'

'I couldn't believe it. I mean, I'll tell you a secret, Dylan away from all this is shy and quite reserved. I couldn't imagine this person I had met could be on television.'

The figure watching the TV shook with anger, their knuckles growing white as they gripped the arms of the chair.

"Look at her! She's been seduced. My beautiful Emily. You've been tainted but I'll rescue you, don't worry. You'll soon forget that dirty abomination ever touched your perfect body!"

On the TV, the interview continued. After talking and taking viewers questions, the cameras then followed Molly and Emily as they watched Dylan perform.

"I love you Emily," the figure said to the screen.

Dylan and Emily were cuddled up in bed watching the interview as it aired. It was Dylan's day off and they were spending the morning in bed.

"Well, it seemed to go well. Let's see what people thought of it." Dylan reached over Emily and grabbed her phone from the bedside table.

"How are you going to do that with a phone, goofy?" Emily asked.

"My twitter buddies will tell me."

Emily cuddled into Dylan's side while her partner opened up the twitter app.

"Wow! Look at that! We're trending."

"Trending? What does that mean?"

"Really? I need to get Molly to teach you about this sort of thing."

Emily play slapped her partner. "Okay goofy. Behave! What does it mean?"

Dylan put the phone down, rolled on top of her fiancé and kissed her nose.

"It means people all over the world are talking about us, about the show. It's good." Dylan's hand started to wander, stroking down Emily's thigh and squeezing her bottom.

"Your daughter will be running in here any minute, TV star."

Dylan began kissing Emily's neck and then whispered in her ear, "I bet she won't be up for a while, she was up late watching a movie last night. Besides, I locked the door."

Emily gasped as she felt her nipple harden under Dylan's big hand.

"Ugh! Honey, we have so much to do today. Mark and Patrick are coming over to work out with you, and Jackson and I are going with Rosie to meet the wedding planner later. Oh god that feels good!"

"You feel good, baby girl. I woke up wanting you and I have to have you. I can give it to you fast and hard."

"Oh ... you know I can't resist when you say things like that." Dylan lifted Emily's cream satin chemise and pulled it off.

"You shouldn't wear these silky things to bed. They make me so hot!" Emily helped Dylan pull off her own clothes until they were both naked.

"Well you're the one that buys them for me ..." Emily was silenced by Dylan's hard kiss, her tongue probing, tasting the sweetness that was Emily.

"I love you so much!" Dylan reached down and parted her fiancé's slick wet folds.

"Honey, take me! Fast and hard like you promised."

Without another word, Dylan opened herself up and mounted Emily's thigh, then without warning thrust two fingers deep inside Emily.

"Oh god you're so deep, I want more Dyl. I want to feel you in every part of me."

"Jesus! You feel so fucking good," said Dylan as she added a third finger into Emily and thrust faster against her thigh.

"I can never get enough of you, baby girl. I need you all the time."

"Yes Dyl!" True to her word Dylan gave Emily fast and hard, she could feel Emily frantically claw at her back as a deep orgasm threatened to overwhelm her.

"Ah! Dyl! Dyl! It's going to be too much!"

"Let go baby. I'm here." And she did. Dylan swallowed Emily's screams in a kiss, trying to keep the noise down.

Emily lay gasping for breath at the power of her orgasm. She opened her eyes in time to see Dylan throw her head back and grunt out her release as she thrust herself onto Emily's thigh.

As she always did, Emily threw her arms around Dylan's neck and held her while she cooed and whispered words of love into her partner's ear. After making love, Dylan was at her most vulnerable and Emily knew she needed the reassurance of Emily's love until she came back to earth.

"I love you so much it hurts," whispered Dylan.

"That was amazing, honey. I wanted you everywhere, so deep."

"You are amazing, Emmie."

"What brought that on?"

Dylan tenderly removed her fingers from Emily and lay down, pulling her fiancé into her arms.

"It was watching you talk about us. I could see the love pouring from you as you talked."

I'm so, so lucky to have you two. I can't wait till we're married."

"Were lucky to have you, honey. I can't wait till I'm your wife. 'Mrs. Emily Morgan' has a great ring to it."

"Yes it does."

Emily quickly sat up. "I can hear Molly moving around in her room." She pulled on her chemise and robe.

"I'll distract her while you get washed up. Mark, Patrick and Jackson will be here in the next hour.

"Okay, thank you baby. Tell the Smurflet I'll see her in a minute."

With one final kiss Emily headed off to get Molly. She smiled walking down the hall as she heard Dylan whistling her way into the bathroom.

She's happy. I hope it can always be like this, Emily silently prayed.

Later that morning after Mark and Patrick had left, Jackson decided to follow up on the information she had on Drew Simpson. She called a couple of his previous employers to find out why he'd been let go. She was just hanging up the phone when Dylan walked in.

"Hey, you look serious. What's up?"

Jackson let out a long breath. "Remember I got my contacts at the FBI to dig up all they could on Drew Simpson and Toni?"

Dylan nodded. "Well I've been going over it. I was sure there must be some small detail we had missed."

Dylan came and sat on the edge of the desk. "And was there?"

"Yes and no. Nothing big. I just noticed a pattern in his employment history. Within four to six months of starting a new job, he's getting fired."

"So he's a terrible employee. How does that help us?"

"It's the reason why he's being fired that tells us something. Each manager told me there

started to be incidents with female members of staff. He would fixate on one woman, at first just being annoying and displaying all the signs of a crush, then the women would start to report he was harassing them. Inappropriate touching, taking an over-interest in the female employee's personal life, and reports of him following them home. He sounds like he has problem with women and appropriate boundaries."

"That sounds like exactly the type of guy we're looking for. What do we do next?"

"There's nothing we can do unless he does anything and we can prove it."

Dylan stood and slammed her fist down on the desk angrily.

"Why do people keep saying that to me? Let's go over and see him. Just you and me, we'll have a quiet word."

"Dylan, it won't be a quiet word if we go over there. You'll do something you'll regret and the press will be all over you."

Jackson stood and walked over to Dylan, placing a hand on her shoulder. "Even if it is him, he can't get to her. Our security is too tight. Mark and Patrick said this morning they're going to get patrol cars to do drive-bys during the day. You or I are always with her and now that Emily knows everything, she's not going to take any chances."

"I guess you're right." Dylan sighed. "I'll just go and see Emmie before you guys go out."

"Sure. Don't worry, okay?"

Jackson followed Dylan out of the office into the hall and saw Rosie struggle to move a heavy toy chest into Molly's newly decorated room. The room had been finished the previous night and now all that had to be done was to dress the room.

Jackson moved to Rosie quickly and pushed her gently out of the way. "Let me get that for you." Jackson having a much bigger and stronger frame, picked up the toy box easily and carried it into Molly's bedroom without a problem.

Rosie came stomping behind her and said furiously, "If I wanted your help I'd ask for it. What gives you the right to take over something I'm doing? I'm not a weakling; I'm a woman just like you, or have you forgotten that you are one?"

Jackson saw red and came face to face with her. "Oh excuse me! I know we're both women but I think even a child Molly's age could recognise that I'm bigger and stronger than you!"

As Jackson said those words, both women felt a heat pass between them. They were both breathless and angry, their faces getting closer and closer until ... Molly came running in

looking for her toy box.

The sudden rush of sexual arousal was unmistakable. Jackson had to get out of there.

"Don't worry. I'll never help you again." Jackson headed out of the room and when she found herself in the kitchen, she grabbed onto counter.

Fuck. I almost kissed her! What is wrong with me? She is everything I can't stand about being a lesbian. God! Why is my body reacting like this?

In the other room Rosie was having similar problems.

Oh my God! I almost kissed her! Rosie knew there was no mistaking the clenching low in her stomach.

She's exactly the sort of lesbian I hate. I like a woman to look like a woman! Rosie tried to convince herself but Jackson 's words said kept replaying over and over in her head, making her heart pound. *I'm bigger and stronger than you.*'

"I'm just overtired. That's what it is," Rosie told herself. She took a deep breath and pushed the attraction that her body was feeling down. Out of sight, out of mind. Or so Rosie thought.

Emily was in the bedroom, standing at the windowsill, where she had set up a mirror and her makeup. She was getting ready to go out when Dylan came in.

"When Rosie decorates this room, I need to get a vanity. It's hopeless trying to put on makeup in here.

Emily felt Dylan come over and put her strong arms around her waist. Dylan rested her chin on Emily's shoulder and met her fiancé's gaze in the mirror.

"Is there something wrong, honey?"

"Just frustrated. Jackson did some research into Drew Simpson."

Emily turned in Dylan's arms. "What did she find?"

"He has a history of getting fired because of complaints from female co-workers. He would fixate on a woman and bother her, harass her, even following her home. It seems to fit."

Emily shivered. "It does sound like it, I guess."

"You don't think so?"

"Well he was sleazy but I don't think he had the intelligence to plan this sort of thing. I could be wrong."

Dylan thought, *Maybe this could be the perfect excuse to suss Toni out.*

"Um, maybe we should talk to Toni about it. Get her opinion?"

Emily froze and her heart started to beat fast. Even though it appeared from what Mark and Patrick said that Toni had gotten help with her problems and had settled down, the thought of seeing her face to face scared Emily.

"No! No! I couldn't do that. I don't want to see her, Dyl!"

Dylan pulled Emily quickly into a tight hug and stroked the back of her head.

"Sh, baby. It's okay. I meant Jackson and me. I would never want you ever to see Toni. Ever!"

"I know it was a long time ago and she's sorted herself out, but just the thought of seeing her makes me panicky."

Dylan lifted Emily's face in her hands. "Forget I said anything. I shouldn't have brought it up when you're going for a nice day out. I was just frustrated because Jackson said we would have to wait to see if Simpson made a move.

Trying to lighten the mood Dylan said, "Tell me what you're going to do today? You look beautiful, by the way. I love you in skirts!"

Emily wore a black Armani pencil skirt with a cream silk blouse. Over time Emily was building up an excellent wardrobe, which suited Dylan's way of life.

"I know. That's why I buy so many!"

Sitting on the bed, Dylan patted her lap as she usually did to get Emily to sit.

"So what are you two doing?"

"Well we're meeting Justin, the wedding planner, and going to look at dresses." Dylan was delighted at the huge smile of Emily's face.

"Cool! Do I get to see?"

"Not a chance, TV star. I want you to be surprised when I walk down the aisle."

"Hmm. I can't wait." Dylan pulled Emily forward for a kiss, lightly grasping her chin.

"So what are you and Molly going to be up to today?"

As Dylan was about to answer Molly came in with the toy toolbox Dylan had gotten her.

"Ou comin, Mom?"

"In a minute, Smurf. Molls and I are going to build a bookcase and a desk for her room. She's got her tools and I've got mine." Dylan gave her fiancé a cocky smile.

Emily's breath hitched at the image in her head. "... Do you have a tool belt?"

Dylan looked at Emily like she crazy. "Of course. I love tools, remember?"

Emily gulped. "Molls can you go and ask Rosie if she's ready to go for me?"

"Yeah Mama."

When she was out of the room, Emily kissed Dylan deeply and passionately.

"Hmm. You're so incredibly, gorgeously, deliciously butch!"

The kiss left Dylan breathless.

"Tool belt? That does it for you?" she asked in a husky voice.

"Oh yeah. I want to book an appointment with you when we have some alone time. Hmm, your worn- looking low-hanging jeans, tight t-shirt, tool belt," Emily squeezed Dylan's crotch.

" ... and your new little buddy."

Dylan growled. "Oh God yes!"

Emily quickly stood up and said, "I better get going or I'll be late for my appointment."

"Tease!"

"Me? Never," Emily said, feigning innocence.

Dylan stood and took her fiancé in her arms. "Me and my tools plan on collecting on your promises."

"I'm counting on it, goofy!"

Molly ran into the room and said. "Mama? Wosie weady."

Dylan scooped her daughter up in her arms.

"Give me a kiss, sweetie. You and your Mom behave, okay?"

"Yeah Mama."

Emily put on her jacket, grabbed her purse and went out to meet Rosie and Jackson at the front door. Rosie and Jackson were trying their best to ignore each other. "I left your lunch in the fridge, okay?"

"Yes mama Smurf, now get going and have a lovely time."

"I will."

After giving each of them kisses, Emily, Rosie and Jackson made their way out the door.

"Stick close to Jackson, baby." Dylan shouted after her.

Dylan shut the door and said, "You ready to have fun, Smurf?"

"Yeah! C'mon Mom, me want to ammer!"

After meeting with Justin and the dress designers, Emily and Rosie were enjoying a quiet lunch in a small restaurant that Jackson had selected. After much negotiation, Jackson sat at a separate table near the back of the room. Emily had wanted them all to sit together but Jackson insisted that she must have a clear view of the room.

"You definitely made the right choice Emily, that dress is gorgeous," said Rosie.

"I completely agree; it 's perfect. I'm so glad you came with me, I would have been lost without someone to bounce ideas off of."

Rosie smiled. "No problem. I'm always happy to shop, and I don't often get to do it in designer stores."

"I'm still getting used to it. It's amazing really. I never would have imagined that my life could change so dramatically and so quickly. The magazines have called our story a fairytale, and that's what it is to me. Things like this don't usually happen to people like me. Getting the love of my life and creating a family for Molly. I mean, me, the wife of Dylan Morgan? It's incredible."

"Not to anyone who sees you two together. Dylan looks at you like she'd walk to the moon just to see you smile."

Emily blushed. "Dylan is wonderful and unique. I've never felt so loved or experienced the unshakable security that she gives me." Emily watched Rosie stare off into the distance, a look of sadness on her face.

"What about you, Rosie. Are seeing anyone special?"

Rosie laughed with no hint of humour in her tone. "No. I date, but no one special. I guess I'm waiting for the passionate, can't keep your hands off each other kind of love that you have." She looked down and swirled the drink in her glass, thinking of the way Jackson made her head swirl and her heart pound. "Maybe not everyone deserves it."

Emily took her hand and smiled. "You deserve it, and I'm quite sure the woman for you is out there. Just be open to it when it comes along."

It had not gone unnoticed by Emily that, as well as being constantly on the lookout for danger, Jackson's eyes had flitted back and forth over Rosie.

Interesting, thought Emily.

Rosie checked her cell phone and started laughing.

"What? What's funny?" asked Emily.

Rosie handed over her phone. "Look at twitter. Dylan posted a picture of herself in her tool belt, holding her drill like a gun! Lesbians all over the world will be swooning."

Emily laughed. "She is such a goof, isn't she? So, are you working tonight?"

"Not officially, but I am going into the bar. I do volunteer work with a breast cancer charity and I'm organising a charity night at the bar to raise money."

Emily sat forward in her seat, very interested. "Really? How did you get involved with that?"

Rosie hesitated and then said, "Um ... my mom died of breast cancer when I was 14. It's just been dad and me since then. We've both had a lot of help from them over the years,

and I like to give something back."

"That's a wonderful thing to do Rosie. Is there anyway Dylan and I could do something to help?"

"Any help would be wonderful. If you and Dylan came to the charity night, it would sell more tickets, bring in more money."

"Let me talk to Dylan. I think we can come up with something better than that."

Rosie smiled warmly, "Thank you. That would be great."

"Shall we head back?" Rosie nodded and Emily signalled to Jackson, who came over quickly and took the shopping bags for them.

"I just need to finalize my plan to start your bedroom tomorrow and then I'll head down to the bar."

"Okay, I'll talk to Dylan about your charity night later, what's the bar called again?"

"O'Reilly's." Jackson looked suspiciously. *What has she got Emily to agree to?*

"Let's get home and see if Dylan still has all her fingers, Jackson!"

Rosie and Emily laughed as Jackson led the way to the car.

"Mama! Oook what we built!" Molly and Dylan stood proudly beside a cute little drawing desk and wardrobe.

"Wow! Great job, sweetie! Were you a big help to your Mom?"

Dylan walked over and kissed her fiancé. "She was brilliant. Couldn't have done it without her." Molly's face beamed with pride.

Emily picked up her daughter and gave her a kiss. "Did you follow all the instructions?"

"Instructions? Nah! Instructions are for wimps! Aren't they, Smurf?"

"Yeah, imps."

Emily shook her head and laughed.

Jackson saw that Emily was safely with Dylan and decided to join Rosie in the master bedroom, where she was preparing her plans to start decorating the next day.

Rosie looked over her shoulder when she heard someone enter the room.

"Something I can't help you with?"

"When you first started working here, I warned you not to take Emily's kindness for granted."

Rosie turned and sighed. "And what, in your estimation, have I done to take that kindness for granted?"

"Whispering in Emily's ear, trying to get her to influence Dylan into helping your little charity night. What is it? Save the whale or the save the beaver? Some shit like that? That's usually what your kind is into."

Rosie felt the fury boil up inside her.

"My kind? And what kind is that?"

"The animal loving, protesting, vegetarian, crystal loving, lesbian, let's get in touch with mother earth and our womanhood kind!"

Rosie was struggling to hold her tears back.

"And your sort of lesbian is better? Aping everything masculine and upholding the male dominated society we live in! Your way of being gay should be consigned to history. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm going home, and you can keep your opinions to yourself in the future."

Rosie hurried out of the room, holding back her tears. She quickly popped her head around the door to Molly's room and said. "I'm just going to head out now, okay guys?"

Emily sensed something was wrong. "Oh? Do you have to rush? I was going to make dinner for us all?"

"That's really kind but I've got a lot to get ready for tonight."

"Okay. I'll see you out."

"Please don't bother. I'll see you all tomorrow, alright?"

Strange. They must be bickering again, thought Emily.

"Bye Rosie. Thanks for going with my girl today." Shouted Dylan.

"No problem. Bye then."

"Bye Wosie. Tank ou for my woom."

"You're welcome, Molly."

"Honey, check and see if Jackson's okay."

Dylan looked puzzled, "Why would anything be wrong with Jackson?"

"Because Rosie looked upset."

"Why ... I don't ... sorry baby, I don't understand."

Emily sighed indulgently and kissed Dylan tenderly. "No, you wouldn't my goofy TV star. Just trust me and go."

"I'm going, I'm going!"

A short time later Emily came into the office where Dylan and Jackson had been talking.

"Honey, dinner's ready." Emily turned to Jackson who was packing up her case.

"Jackson would you like to stay? There's plenty?"

"Uh ... no, I'll just head home thanks. I've got a couple of things to take care of."

"Oh, okay. Oh Dyl? Before I forget, I was talking to Rosie today about some volunteer work she does for a breast cancer charity. Her mother died when she was a teenager and they really helped Rosie and her Dad out a lot. She's having a fundraising night at the bar she works in. I said I would talk to you about doing something to help out? I'm sure you could attract people to buy tickets by doing something?"

Dylan nodded. "Sure, I'd love to help. Let me think on it and I'll come up with something, okay?"

"Thanks honey." Emily looked over at Jackson, who was just staring ahead looking as white as a sheet.

"Are you okay, Jackson?"

Oh my God! The things I said to her. Fuck! Her Mother died! I've got to apologize.

"Jackson!" Dylan asked a little louder.

"Wh ... what ... sorry?"

"You alright?"

"Yeah listen, I'm going to go. See you tomorrow." Jackson rushed out of the apartment quickly.

Emily and Dylan just looked at each other. "What was all that about?"

"I don't know," replied Dylan. "She was fine earlier."

"Did you talk like I asked you?"

"Yeah."

Emily sighed in frustration.

"Well what did she say then?"

"I said, 'Is everything okay?' she said 'Yeah.' I said 'Cool.' Then we started talking about the Knicks. I said I could get courtside tickets if she wants to go with me."

Emily threw her arms up in the air. "Unbelievable!" Emily turned on her heel and marched back to the kitchen, shaking her head as she went.

Dylan was a bit dismayed and shouted, "What?"

Later that night, Emily and Dylan lay together in bed, Emily with her head on Dylan's shoulder, her leg thrown across her fiancé's thighs.

"Hmm. I love this time of day."

"Bedtime?"

"Yes. Lying here all snuggled up, in the dark, relaxed until we fall asleep, safe and

warm."

Dylan smiled in the darkness and kissed Emily's head.

"Yeah, you're right. Before you and Molls moved in, I hated the night, the silence. I used to just sit up in bed and mess around with my iPad until I fell asleep."

"Poor goofy. I wasn't much better. I felt nervous all the time, especially at night. Noises, bumps in the night. I was always afraid I wouldn't be able to protect Molly."

Dylan pulled her in a little tighter. "Well now you don't have to worry about that."

Emily smiled and nuzzled into her partner's neck. "No I don't. I've got my very own six foot one, muscle bound, scary fiancé to protect us!"

"Grrr! Yes you do. So ... you're not going to tell me anything about your dress?"

"Nuh uh. You are going to be surprised."

Dylan let out a frustrated breath. "Will you at least let my suit designer see it? So we don't clash or anything?"

"Already done. Justin took care of that."

"Hmm. He would." Dylan grumbled.

"Hey don't grumble honey. I love you."

"Well, I don't get to know anything. And me and my tool belt never got to play with you, like you promised."

"Aww! Poor goofy! You were too busy playing with your daughter. I promise you can get your tool belt out soon. Just think, when we move into the new house you'll be walking around with it on all the time, fixing things, buildings things, catching me unawares in the pool house."

Dylan's fingers drifted under Emily's nightgown. "Mmm. That's what I'm talking about."

Before Dylan's gentle seduction got anywhere, Emily said, "I hope Rosie and Jackson are okay."

Dylan sighed. "Why wouldn't they be?"

"They both looked upset earlier. I think Jackson likes Rosie."

Dylan turned to look at Emily, "What? I thought they hated each other?"

"I think there's more to it. As much as Jackson protests about Rosie, her eyes follow her wherever she goes and she seems genuinely hurt when Rosie rebuffs any olive branch Jackson offers. I think Jackson's a sensitive soul really, quite sweet underneath it all."

"Sweet? You're kidding me right? This is the same Jackson Hunter special forces officer, who's trained to kill on command?"

"That's just on the surface, though. There's more underneath all that."

"You wouldn't say that if you saw her trying to throw me onto the mat when we spar."

"But you're getting quite friendly with her, you two must talk as well as train?"

"Yup. We do."

"Well?"

Dylan looked at her strangely. "Well what?"

"Argh! What do you talk about?"

"Oh! Uh? Your security, obviously, training, sports ... um ..." Dylan appeared to be thinking hard.

"She said she'd take me down to the gun club and teach me how to shoot!"

"I give up! I'm going to sleep."

"What'd I say? Baby? What did I do?"

"Nothing honey, just being your goofy self. Go to sleep," Emily mumbled.

None the wiser, Dylan shut her eyes. *What are we supposed to talk about?*

Jackson walked home that evening, hoping the night air would make her feel better. The guilt over what she had said to Rosie was weighing heavy. She found herself walking towards O'Reilly's Bar.

Maybe if I could see her and say sorry. Jackson walked through the doors and found a quiet corner where she could look out for Rosie. As she scanned the room she noticed some appreciative glances towards her. Jackson was a woman very confident in her

ability to find a companion for the night but that sort of entertainment held no attraction for her now. Then Jackson saw her. Out on the dance floor with an androgynous looking woman.

I knew that would be the kind she would go for. The sort that would love to be butch, dress and live like me but doesn't have the balls.

Jackson's stomach twisted as she watched the androgynous character pull Rosie close and whisper in her ear.

A waitress approached Jackson's table.

"Hey honey? Can I get you something?"

Jackson stood. "No thanks. There's nothing for me here."

The waitress looked confused as Jackson left without looking back.

As soon as Rosie arrived at work the next day, Jackson sought her out. She had been feeling guilty about what she had said all night.

Jackson found her in Emily and Dylan's bedroom, drawing out some plans. When Rosie saw who had entered the room, she turned back to her sketch pad.

Jackson walked up to her sheepishly, and cleared her throat. "Um ... Rosie, could I have a word?"

"If you must," she said coldly.

"Um ... listen, I wanted to apologize for what I said yesterday. I had no idea what kind of charity it was or why you were involved with it. I jumped to conclusions, and I was wrong. I'm really sorry if I hurt you."

Rosie sighed and stood facing Jackson. "You jumped to conclusions because you're determined to dislike me, but that's fine. You don't like me; I don't like you. We have no need to be friends, we simply work in the same place at the moment, so let's just try to avoid each other as much as possible and if we are forced to speak, then we can at least be civil."

Rosie heard Emily call her name from the other room. As she left Jackson standing there,

she said, "Oh and as for hurting me? You don't have to worry. In order to feel hurt you have to care about the person, and believe me Jackson Hunter, I will never care about you."

Jackson felt like she had been kicked in the gut. She had no idea why, but this girl seemed to be able to bulldoze her way through the armor she had built up around her heart.

Rosie was just about out the door when Jackson said, "Rosie? I know what it's like to lose someone in your family. If you ever need to talk ... "

"I don't think so. You are the last person I would ever want to talk to."

Jackson was left alone in the room.

Rosie had followed Emily to Dylan's study after the blonde called her. When they entered, Dylan was packing her case, ready for work.

"Honey, you wanted to see Rosie?"

Dylan looked up and smiled. "Yes. Sit down. You too baby. Now my girl was telling me that you do a lot of work for a breast cancer charity and you were holding a fundraising evening?"

"Yes, 'In the Pink.' It's a small charity that helps families cope with the diagnosis, with finding the right medical treatments, money advice and in the end, if need be, they help young children and families with grief counselling. It helped my dad and me a lot."

"Sounds like a wonderful organization, doesn't it honey?" Emily added.

"Sure does. I'd love to help. I've been thinking about what I can do to raise money and raise the profile of the charity. As for raising money, I could compete in a pool tournament during the fundraising evening at the bar. You could charge an entrance fee and I'll put up some really good prizes."

Rosie looked delighted. "That would be wonderful, Dylan. Thank you. I think every lesbian pool player in New York will want to take part!"

"I hope that will raise some money but it'll just be a drop in the bucket. I want to raise some serious money for you. Every season The Dylan Morgan show takes on a charity,

we build up publicity from January until we go off the air in April. I encourage the viewers and advertisers to sponsor me on a segment of the show called 'Dylan Cares', it's a charity dare . In previous years, I've done mountain climbs, triathlons, marathons; things like that. We show it in the final episode, it's very popular and we raise a hell of a lot of money. Normally, charities send in their information and I get together with the producers to decide which one to choose. This year, I'd be prepared to take on 'In the Pink'."

Rosie jumped up, rushed around the desk and flung her arms around Dylan.

"Oh, thank you so much! You have no idea how much this will help."

Dylan's face turned red. Her awkward shyness kicking in. She wasn't used to anyone but Emily being this close.

Rosie suddenly realized what she was doing and disentangled herself. "Oh sorry." Rosie turned to Emily. "Isn't it fantastic?"

"It sure is! Thank you, honey."

"Is it all right if I phone one of the organizers and tell them the good news?"

"Sure. Go ahead."

Once Rosie had left the room, Emily came and sat on Dylan's lap and gave her a tender kiss. "You are the sweetest, kindest goofy I've ever met."

"I'm just glad I can help. Hey the pool tournament will be fun, it'll be like a night out, and we've never been to a gay bar together. Lynn could watch Molls for the night."

"Hmm. That would be great. I love you so much. You've made that young woman very happy, and you said you're not good with women."

"I'm not. Just you. Now I'm gonna be late for work, I better get going."

"You ' re right. I better get Molly ready for school."

"Okay remember, make sure Jackson drives. If anyone tries anything I want her at the wheel."

In the intervening weeks Dylan had gotten a second car for Emily to use, so she could still use her jeep for work.

"Honey things have been quiet. Maybe whoever it is has gotten fed up."

No. It's been too quiet and I don't like it."

I have the feeling something is coming. I don't know what, but I'm going to be ready!
thought Dylan.

The next few weeks remained quiet on the stalker front, but everything else moved on at a swift pace. Everyone seemed to be busy. With Molly happily settled in at preschool, Emily's days were freed up for wedding planning and decorating. Emily was gradually putting her stamp on the apartment. Their bedroom had been finished and now she and Rosie had turned their attention onto the family room. Rosie was delighted, it was the most stable work she 'd ever had, she 'd made a friend and she was enjoying helping with the wedding plans. Emily had also asked her about working on the new house.

Rosie's relationship with Jackson remained the same. There had been no more arguments though, and they were both being very civil.

Emily walked into the family room with lunch bagged up for Rosie.

"Rosie, I made you some lunch to take with you."

"You didn't have to do that! Thanks." Rosie was finishing up early to go down to hear a guest speaker at Occupy Wall Street.

"Well you have to eat. Take care, okay?"

"I will. Thanks for letting me leave early," Rosie said as she packed up her gear.

"No problem. You've given up so much of your free time to help with the wedding arrangements."

"Hey, I'm enjoying it. See you tomorrow."

Emily saw Rosie off and went to the kitchen to prepare this evenings dinner. About an hour later, Jackson wandered into the kitchen, looking as though she was at a loose end.

"Sit down and I'll make coffee. We've got plenty of time before we pick Molly up at preschool."

They sat and enjoyed coffee and some muffins Emily had made.

"You must get bored Jackson. I mean, you're used to protecting movie stars and politicians. The high and mighty. I don't exactly lead an exciting life. Trips to the store and school can hardly compare."

"I like you both and I have come to think of you and Dylan as friends, it matters to me that you 're safe and we catch this person. It's made a good change of pace to work with a family. It's made me think. I haven't really been round a happy family before."

"But your sister ..."

"She and I loved each other and would have done anything for each other but our home life wasn't that good. We moved around a lot with my father being in the army. My mother was more interested in going to the country club or tennis lessons than taking care of us. We were closer to the housekeeper than to our mother."

Emily saw Jackson lost in her memories, pain etched on her face. The normally stoic soldier seemed unusually open.

Emily covered Jackson's big hand with her own. "I'm sorry."

Broken from her memories, Jackson said, "Hey, don't be sorry. You, Dylan and Molly have shown me what a real family is like. What happiness can be like ... where's Rosie?"

Hmm. I wonder why she thought of Rosie when we were talking about happiness and family.

"Um, there's a speaker she wanted to hear down at the Wall Street protests."

Emily was expecting to hear some sigh or sarcastic comment, but none came. Jackson simply nodded.

That's new.

Their quiet companionship was interrupted by the sound of Jackson ' s cell phone.

"Excuse me Emily. Hunter. Yeah? Yes, we are going to pick up my client ' s daughter, but we don't go near Wall Street."

Wall Street? What's that about? Jackson looks worried.

The former soldier hung up the phone cursing. "Shit!"

"What is it?"

"That was my contact in the FBI. He was giving me a heads-up that there is going to be trouble at the Wall Street protests, in case I was taking my client anywhere near there. He

says they've been monitoring an underground anti-capitalist group. The internet chatter says they 're going to infiltrate the protest and cause unrest. The police have been informed and they've been ordered to go in hard. Anyone caught up in it is going to be in trouble."

"Oh no! Rosie!"

"Yes, I know. I can't let that happen to her, but I can't leave you unprotected." *I can't let someone else I care about get hurt! Do I care about Rosie? You know you do.*

"You have to go Jackson." Emily could see that Jackson was warring with herself and thought of a solution.

"How about I call Dylan and see if Pauley can come over? You could go then, right?"

"Okay. Thanks. I really don't want to leave her out there. She's not as tough as she thinks."

"I know. Give me five minutes, okay?" Emily lifted her iPhone and began calling Dylan.

Dylan sent Pauley over right away and Jackson was now making her way down to Times Square in the car. She had heard on the car radio that things were already bad. Rioters were charging police and EMT's had been called for the injured. Jackson made her way as far as she could before she was stopped by roadblocks.

She found a place to park the Jeep and started running towards the crowds.

Hang on, hippy girl. I'm coming to get you!

Rosie was scared. All around her was a mass of bodies pushing and pulling her all over the place. It was chaos. It had all started peacefully enough. There were a lot more people here than usual but she had put that down to the speaker the organizers had scheduled. As the speech was coming to an end, the tension in the crowd rose considerably as vans full of riot police arrived. First a few bottles and rocks were thrown by the crowd, and then

the whole event descended into a nightmare. Groups of the crowd were charging the cops and breaking windows with homemade weapons. Even those not wanting to be involved in the violence had no choice but to be swept along by the crowd. Cops were using batons and shields to try and quell the rioters. People were being trampled underfoot, and it was taking all of Rosie ' s strength to stay on her feet. She let out a scream when the man next to her was hit in the face by a police baton and blood spurted from his injuries onto Rosie. She frantically tried to push herself to safety but was trapped by the bodies around her. She was becoming frantic as the claustrophobia that she had always suffered with threatened her control.

Oh God! I'm going to die!

Suddenly her feet were knocked from under her and she fell to the ground. Rosie instinctively threw her arms over her head in an effort to protect herself from being trampled.

Just as she was giving up hope, she felt a big hand grab her collar and bodily lift her out from the crowd.

Her savior lifted Rosie up in her arms; Rosie threw her arms around a strong neck and opened her eyes to see Jackson looking down at her.

They gazed into each other's eyes, saying nothing, until a push from the side knocked them from their moment. Jackson used her body to buffet Rosie from the crowd and force her way to safety.

Rosie nuzzled her face into the crook of Jackson's neck, finding a sense of safety and protection in Jackson's quiet strength.

They made it to safety further down the street. Once on the sidewalk, Jackson put Rosie down but the young women didn't let go of Jackson.

Rosie clung to her like a life preserver and so the former soldier pulled Rosie in close.

Thank God I found you!

"Jackson! Thank you! Thank you so much for saving me!" Rosie was in shock and shaking all over.

"Shh. Just try and breathe normally, darlin'." The endearment slipped out in the emotion of the moment.

When Jackson noticed the blood splattered all over her, she grabbed Rosie's face in her hands. "Where are you hurt?"

"It ... It's not mine. I just got kicked in the face. How did you ... ?"

"I'll tell you everything once I get you somewhere safe. Follow me; I have the car parked further down the road. "

Rosie was numb and meekly followed Jackson, who pulled her along. Once Jackson had her safely in the car she said, "My apartment isn't far from here. I'll take you there and get you cleaned and patched up."

Jackson was in command mode but the usually feisty Rosie was so much in shock she never questioned it.

Ten minutes later they were at the door of Jackson's apartment.

"Come in and sit down. I'll just get some things to get you cleaned up."

Jackson's apartment was spartan to say the least. She had just the basics of furnishings and no art or pictures on the walls.

Rosie took a seat on the couch and looked around. *Empty. This apartment feels empty.*

She saw a picture frame on a side table and got up to take a closer look. Unbeknownst to her, Jackson had come back into the room and was watching her.

"That's my baby sister." Rosie turned to meet Jackson's eyes.

"She is very beautiful." And she was. A lighter-haired, more petite version of Jackson.

"She was."

"Was? What happened?"

"Um ... she was killed in Iraq." *Why am I telling her this?*

"She was an army medic. Sarah's unit went in to provide healthcare to the people of a small village. The village was targeted by insurgents because they had accepted help from the coalition forces. They came under fire and Sarah was killed trying to protect a little girl. I couldn't get there in time to save her."

Rosie was shocked. She had protested the war and thought she knew everything about

what was wrong there, but she had never come face to face with the human cost of the war. She felt the need to reach out and soothe the soldier who seemed weighed down by guilt. She grasped Jackson's hand.

"I'm so sorry Jackson. I know how painful it is to lose someone so close. You have to know it wasn't your fault?"

Jackson felt the tenderness of Rosie touch and words. Inwardly she wanted to let Rosie's touch take away the pain of the memories. Outwardly, she simply nodded and said, "Sit down so I can get you cleaned up."

Jackson came to sit beside her, carrying a first aid kit and a glass of what looked like scotch.

"Here drink this. It'll calm you down. I called Emily when I was in the kitchen to let her know you were okay. She was worried when we heard."

Rosie covered Jackson's hand with her own as the former soldier was getting things from the first aid kit.

"Wait! Who's watching Emily and Molly? You didn't leave them alone?"

"No, of course not. Emily called Dylan and asked her to send over one of the studio security guards. Here, keep your head up."

Jackson dabbed Rosie eye with an alcohol wipe. "How did you know there was trouble?"

"My contact at the FBI called to warn me in case I was anywhere near with a client." Jackson continued to dab at Rosie's injury.

"Why did you come for me?" It was a simple question, but Jackson didn't have a simple answer.

"I would have done it for anyone."

"You would have dropped everything, left your client and ploughed through a riot for anybody? You don't even like me."

Jackson hadn't realized that she was stroking Rosie's cheek with her thumb instead of the medicated wipe. Both their faces were inching closer together.

"I never said I don't like you, hippy girl."

Hearing the nickname that Jackson had called her from the start knocked Rosie out of their passionate stare.

"Didn't you? Ever since I started working for Emily and Dylan, you've made it clear you couldn't stand me."

Feeling the rebuff keenly, Jackson resorted to her usual defensive posture.

"Just because the things you stand for are wrong and un-American doesn't mean I dislike you."

Rosie pushed away from Jackson. "Un-American? Listen soldier boy, I'm grateful that you came and rescued me today but don't pretend we are ever going to like each other. I don't know why you came today but let's just quit while we're ahead, before we start arguing again. Can you give me a change of clothes? Then I can get out of your hair."

Jackson sighed in resignation. "I'll get you a t-shirt and some jeans; they'll be really big on you though."

"It's fine. It'll get me home anyway. Can I use your bathroom to wash this blood off?"

"Sure. It's the first door on the left, down the hall. I'll go get you some clothes."

Rosie looked at herself in the mirror in Jackson's bathroom. She had been shaken at how close she had come to kissing her nemesis again. *Why does this keep happening? I hate her. Don't I? She came and rescued me. Why would she do that? Maybe I'm being a bit ungrateful.*

Rosie heard a knock at the bathroom door. "I've got some clothes for you. I'll pass them in to you."

In a few minutes Rosie was dressed and walking back to the living room. Jackson laughed at the sight of Rosie swimming in her clothes.

"Hey, it's not my fault you're so freaking big, soldier boy! So quit laughing."

"Oh come on! You look sweet. Like a little girl."

Rosie shoved Jackson to the side on her way to the couch and began putting on her shoes as she retorted, "Do you have anything in your wardrobe that isn't men's clothing?"

"No. I like men's clothes. It's who I am."

"Yeah, I know what you are."

"Oh we're back to the butch crap."

"Yeah we are. Butches like you make straight people think we secretly wish to be men. Well I'll tell you, that sort of thing belongs in the past. The lesbians I know aren't afraid of our femininity and we don't need a strap-on cock to make love to a woman."

Jackson stood leaning against the wall and laughed. "You think I'm frightened? And you and your little friends and girlfriends at the bar aren't frightened?"

"What would you know about my friends?"

Jackson pushed off the wall and walked over until she was face to face with Rosie.

"I came to your bar one night. I saw you dancing with your little girlfriend."

Girlfriend? Wait she came to O'Reilly's? She must mean Jess.

Jess was one of her friends and a regular. They had gone on a couple of dates, but that was all. Rosie didn't have any interest in pursuing the relationship any further but she had a feeling that Jess did.

"She's not my girlfriend." Rosie barked back.

"Well you looked cozy enough to me."

"What does it matter how cozy I am with anyone. It has nothing to do with you."

Jackson realized that Rosie was right. She wasn't about to reveal how it twisted her guts to see Rosie in someone else's arms.

"Well I can still tell her type! The type that dreams about living their life the way I do, but doesn't have the balls to carry it off. You talk about not being scared of your femininity? I'm not afraid of my masculinity. Do you have any idea what it's like to live like me? You stick out whether you want to or not. The straight community signals me out as a lesbian, I can never be in the closet, and certain elements of the gay community like you and your little friends, ridicule people like me because it doesn't sit well with the modern fashion of what it means to be gay, and believe me, that's all it is. Fashion. It used to be fashionable to be butch and femme, now everyone has to look like girls or like an Androgynous 12 year old boy!"

"You don't know anything about my friends! And I like a woman to look like a woman; I don't find women who feel the need to dress like men attractive." Rosie moved towards

the door to leave. Jackson caught her arm and pulled Rosie back into her chest, keeping a firm grip on the young woman, not allowing her to move.

"I know one thing about you, Rosie."

The young woman gave up struggling, knowing Jackson wouldn't really hurt her.

"What is that?" she spat.

Jackson spoke into Rosie's ear, smiling when she felt the girl shiver. "You talk a lot about me being butch. All the time, in fact." Jackson stroked her fingers down Rosie's arm.

"It makes me think that far from hating them, you'd secretly love a big butch like me to take control of your body."

Jackson kissed Rosie's neck lightly, bringing a moan from the young woman and goose bumps down her arms.

"Pin you to the bed and fuck you till you scream my name."

Rosie seemed to be lost in the haze Jackson was creating. She moaned and wrapped her arm around the back of Jackson's neck, pulling her tighter into her own body.

What had started out as a game to prove a point to Rosie had turned into something different.

Jackson's heart was hammering in her chest, she couldn't believe she had her hands and lips on this beautiful young woman. Rosie's neck tasted delicious and Jackson wanted more. She grazed the young woman's neck with her teeth.

Rosie was faring no better, the feeling of Jackson's mouth on her was indescribable and it was overwhelming her senses. Rosie had never felt a response from her body like this. Jackson was like no one she had been with before. She was raw, passionate, animalistic, and totally in control of Rosie's body.

Jackson's hands slid from Rosie's hips up to her breasts and squeezed with two strong hands.

Rosie's hands covered Jackson's, encouraging her to squeeze harder.

"Oh god yes! Harder Jack..."

"Yes darlin'." And the older woman gave her harder, alternating between squeezing Rosie's breasts, pinching her nipples, kissing, and biting down on her neck. Jackson's hips naturally started to thrust into Rosie's buttocks.

"You want this?" "Uh ... yes ... Oh God, Jack!"

'Wait! Jack? What the hell am I doing?' Suddenly coming to her senses, Rosie pushed away from the soldier's grasp. She turned and shouted, "What the hell are you doing? Don't you ever touch me!" Rosie was shaking from the lust coursing through her veins and the shock of what she was about to do.

Jackson was struggling to come out of her own lustful daze, she stumbled forward towards Rosie. "Wh ... what?"

Rosie backed away from her. "Stay away from me! Why did you do that? We despise each other!"

What the hell is wrong with her? I know I was just trying to make a point at the start, but then she encouraged me. She wanted it. She told me!

"What the hell are talking about? I didn't exactly force you did I? Who was the one pulling my head down onto your neck, and whose hands were encouraging me to squeeze your breasts? And I suppose your nipples hardened under my fingers because you were cold?"

Rosie had no answers for these questions. At least none that she wanted to share with Jackson.

"You took advantage of me. I was in a weakened state. Injured and in shock. You come riding to my rescue then get me back here and immediately start seducing me."

"Seducing you? I can't believe this. I leave my job to come and save your ass, and this is the thanks I get? I opened myself up to you, I told you about Sarah. I never talk about her to anyone. I can see now that I made a huge mistake. You know there is something between us. You're just too frightened to admit you want someone like me."

Rosie grabbed her jacket. "Let's just pretend this never ever happened and go back to ignoring each other."

She slammed the front door leaving a bewildered Jackson wondering how her good deed had gotten her to this point.

On the other side of the door, Rosie leaned against the wall taking deep breaths.

What is happening to me? I've waited all my life to meet someone who makes me feel like

this. I feel like I want her to devour me, but I know it'll never be enough. Oh God! The feel of her lips on my neck, I know someone like Jackson would be difficult to let go. I need to fight this!

Previously:

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Episode 10

"I'll call you at lunch time, baby. Bye!" Dylan yelled as she left the apartment. Normally Dylan left it to the last minute before heading to work, as she hated to leave her family. This morning though, the tension in the Morgan household was palpable. Something seemed badly wrong between Rosie and Jackson. They always had some sort of tension between them but this morning if they got within three feet of each other, the bad feeling was virtually sparking off of them. Emily had promised to have a 'sensitive chat' later, and Dylan gratefully exited the apartment to get an early start at the studio.

The TV star was walking towards her jeep in the parking lot when she noticed an envelope on the windshield.

Her heart sank as she lifted the envelope and started to open it.

Are you ready for the end game Morgan?

It's time to take back what is mine!

Dylan scrunched up the paper in her hand. "Fuck! I'm going to get you, you bastard!"

She grabbed her phone and called Lynn. "Lynn, send Pauley over to my apartment and push back my script meetings till late this afternoon."

"Is everyone alright, Dylan?"

"Yeah. Don't worry. I just need to borrow Jackson for a bit, so I need Pauley here."

"Okay I'll send him right over. Just be careful, whatever you're up to."

Dylan dialled again and got Jackson. "I got another message. Pauley's coming over to sit with the girls. We're going to pay our chief suspects a visit."

It had taken some convincing to persuade Emily that this was a good idea, but Dylan had been determined. She was sick of constantly playing catch up. Now was the time to take control.

"Are you sure we should visit Toni first?" Jackson asked from the passenger seat.

"Yeah. Everyone is so convinced it can't be her, if that's true she can give us an insight into this Drew guy."

"Okay. Let's just keep it calm though, okay?"

Dylan just nodded, but it didn't convince Jackson.

Back at the apartment things were tense. Molly had been kept from going to preschool because of this new threat. Pauley had come over with a few of his studio security team. He posted one with the doorman at the front, one at the door leading from the parking lot, one outside the apartment door, and finally he was standing guard in the apartment. Rosie was sitting in the kitchen with Emily and Molly.

Emily, who had long since given up sitting and doing nothing, had emptied the cupboards and was now standing on a stool scrubbing them out.

Molly knew something was wrong and could feel the nerves pouring off her mother.
"Mama, ou otay? When Mom comin' back?"

Emily sighed and said a little sharply, "I don't know, Molly. I don't seem to have any say in what your Mom does."

Molly looked up at Rosie worriedly. "Hey Molls, why don't I put on a DVD for you in the living room, okay?"

When Rosie returned, she found Emily fanatically scrubbing. The kitchen was upside down, with food and dishes from the cupboards strewn around the kitchen.

"Emily? I got Molly settled. Are you okay?"

The blonde climbed down from the stool and collapsed onto the kitchen chair, sobbing.

"Oh Emily, come here!" Rosie pulled her chair up next to Emily and pulled the blonde into a hug.

"It'll be alright, Em. Dylan and Jackson will sort this out and be back before you know it."

"I don't know what's happening to me. I'm even being horrible to my daughter."

"You're not being horrible. She just doesn't understand what's happening."

"I don't think I do either," Emily said sadly.

Rosie grabbed the box of tissues and handed one to her friend.

"Why the cleaning though?"

Emily sniffed and tried to wipe away her tears. "Oh, it's what I do when I'm stressed or worried. Clean everything, whether it needs it or not."

"I can understand, well not the cleaning. I lock myself in my apartment and draw and paint. I can lose myself in it."

Emily was starting to calm a little. "Every time I start to relax and enjoy just being a family, this whoever they are does something and the fear and the worry comes right back. It's always hanging over our heads."

"It must have been difficult, and in a new relationship and all."

"It has been. I can sense Dylan worrying about it, even when she says she's not. It weighs heavy on her. I mean imagine meeting your future wife and discovering you have a daughter all in a matter of months, and on top of that there's someone constantly trying to take that away from you."

"Must be hard on her."

Emily sighed, "It is, and she seems to fixate all her anger and worry and jealousy onto Toni."

"Well from what you've told me about how Toni treated you, I'm not surprised."

"Yes I know, but it's the past. Toni's the past and is no threat to Dylan, but she just can't see that and she's mixing up the stalker threat with Toni."

"Well ..." Rosie hesitated. "No, it's none of my business really."

"What we're going to say? You're my friend; please tell me what you think."

"I can understand why she's super sensitive about Toni. Apart from the normal anger you would feel hearing about a partner's bad treatment by an ex, you were having her kid when you were with Toni. That's got to cause some jealousy, but worse than that you told me Toni roughed you up a bit and was violent while you were pregnant. Then when you left her, you had to bring Molly up yourself in really difficult conditions. Knowing how protective she is and how she likes to look after her family, I guess Dylan feels a lot of guilt for not being there for you even though there's nothing she can do about it now. I think that's why she fixates on Toni."

Emily dabbed her tear-stained eyes and smiled. "You're right. I don't know why I didn't connect it. You're wise beyond your years, Rosie Henderson."

"My dad always said I was an old soul. When mom died, he fell apart. Even though I was just a teenager, it was up to me to support him and talk him through it."

"I can see how you were such a comfort to him. So wise one, tell me something or talk to me to keep me distracted."

Suddenly Rosie's face looked strained and she said out of the blue. "I think I'm falling in love with Jackson and I can't stand her."

"Oh boy! I better make some coffee."

Dylan parked the jeep across the street from a nondescript downtown apartment building.

"We should have let Mark and Patrick know we were doing this," said Jackson.

Dylan turned off the engine and turned to her friend. "They would have stopped me, and you know I have to do this."

"Alright, but remember to keep calm. We're only looking for information on this Drew character, we don't have a shred of evidence that Toni is involved. Okay?"

Dylan said nothing but nodded. Jackson wasn't convinced. "My FBI buddy tells me she doesn't start work until five, so she should be in right now."

"Let's go." Dylan led the way over to the apartment buzzer. Just as Dylan was about to buzz up, someone exited the apartment building, allowing the pair to get past the security

door.

"Apartment 15 should be on the second floor," Jackson said after checking the mail boxes for Toni's name.

"Let's go."

They climbed the stairs and stood at the door of apartment 15. Dylan looked at Jackson, who said, "Were just making inquires, okay?"

Dylan knocked and heard a shout from inside. "Just a minute!"

The door was open and Dylan came face to face with Toni Bianchi . Their eyes met and Dylan knew instantly that Toni knew exactly who she was. Looking Toni up and down, she felt that familiar anger and jealousy twisting in her stomach. The woman stood around 5 foot 6 and had been handsome but it looked as though the drinking and drugs had taken their toll. Her short blonde hair was wet; she had obviously just come out the shower.

"You're ... Dylan ..." Toni stammered.

The TV star stood to her full height, looking down on Toni and said, "Yes, Dylan Morgan, and this is my security consultant, Jackson Hunter."

"You're engaged to Em." Dylan hated hearing Toni use a pet name for her fiancé.

"I'm engaged to Emily, yes." Dylan said correcting the name.

"I don't know if you're aware but Emily is being stalked by someone."

"Yeah I read that. I hope she and the baby are okay?"

At the mention of Molly, Jackson saw Dylan's face become like stone, her knuckles turned white, she was squeezing them so hard.

"My family is perfectly fine," Dylan said staking her claim.

Jackson decided it was time for her to step in. "The police have some suspicions about a man who Emily knew when you were both together, we wondered if we could come in and ask a few questions to see if you can help us?"

"Sure, anything to help Emily. Uh ... come in. Excuse the mess, I'm just getting ready for work." Toni went around the small basic apartment, lifting up clothes and magazines.

"Why don't you take a seat and I'll throw on some jeans and a t-shirt, I just got out of the shower."

Dylan remained standing but Jackson sat and said, "Thanks, you go ahead, we'll wait."

Five minutes later, Toni appeared fully dressed. She took a seat across from Jackson; Dylan remained standing keeping her intimidating position.

Jackson thought she would start and set the tone for the questioning.

"We've been looking into Emily's past, trying to find anyone that has shown an interest in her. I believe the police came to see you and you told them about a guy named Drew. Could you tell us about him? I know you already told the police, but maybe there's something they could have missed."

"Sure. I'll do anything I can to help Emily." Toni looked up to meet Dylan's eyes then quickly looked back to Jackson. The huge TV star looked angry and ready to rip her apart at any moment.

Dylan watched on while Jackson questioned her.

Anything to help Emily! What a fucking liar! Yeah you really wanted to help her when you cheated on her, hit her and tried to force yourself on her when she was pregnant with my baby! Dylan watched Toni meet her murderous stare then quickly look away.

Yeah. That's right, look away coward. You haven't got the guts to stand up to someone like me, only smaller pregnant women! Dylan thought angrily.

"So he started to be more than a nuisance then?" Jackson asked.

"Yeah, Emily came to the restaurant a lot to visit me between shifts, stuff like that. When it started off, he was just over familiar, then he would touch her whenever he could. Emily told me she'd seen him a few times around her college campus, just watching her. I was angry as you can imagine, some lowlife bothering my girlfriend, I didn't want anything or anyone to hurt Em."

Dylan snorted, unable to hold her tongue any longer. "That's fucking rich coming from you!"

Jackson said, "This isn't helping Dylan, we're here to get information, not pass judgement on the past."

Toni stood gathering her courage. "No. It's okay. Ms. Morgan's been desperate to let me have it since I opened the door, so let's have it."

"Big talk for a coward who beats her girlfriend."

Oh brother! Here we go! thought Jackson.

"I admit I didn't treat Emily very well, I had anger problems from my childhood that led me into drinking and drug problems."

"Oh boo hoo. Mommy and Daddy weren't very nice to you so you thought, 'I know, sleeping around and beating up my girlfriend will make me feel better!'"

"It wasn't like that, I ..."

Toni stepped back as Dylan went aggressively nose to nose with her.

"You're scum, Bianchi. Do you remember trying to force yourself on her while she was pregnant with Molly? You don't how many times I've wanted to come over here and kick your ass, but I've been talked out of it."

"Yes! I remember!" Toni shouted, sinking back into her chair, head in hands. "I remember cause that's when I knew I had to get help and I left. I know what I did and I have to live with the guilt. I've been working through it with my shrink ever since, and I've found solace in my faith. I know that Emily was too good for me and the best thing I've ever had, but I'm clean now and I've worked on my anger issues and rebuilt my life. I have a new girlfriend and I'm trying my best to be a decent partner. That's all I can do. I'm sorry for what I did, and I'll help you in any way I can."

Jackson saw Dylan take another step towards Toni and jumped up between them.

"This is not helping, Dylan. We need to find out all we can to protect Emily."

Dylan took a deep breath, gulping down her rage. "Fine. Question her, but I swear to you Bianchi, if I find out you have anything to do with this, I will hunt you down and make you wish you'd never been born!" Dylan turned and moodily went to stand by the window, her back to Jackson and Toni.

"Ms. Hunter, you don't believe I have anything to do with this? I'm just trying to live a quiet life with my girlfriend and keep clean, ask my counselor if you don't believe me!"

"Calm down, Toni. We have no evidence that you have anything to do with it and we're not investigating you. So what happened next? Did you warn him off?"

"Yeah I did, and got him fired from the restaurant. As far as I know he moved to a different part of town after that, and we didn't hear from him again."

"Could he hold a grudge against Emily, do you think?"

"I don't know. Maybe. I guess he wouldn't have known where to find her before she

started appearing in the magazines and stuff, when she got with Dylan."

"Hmm. Do you think he could be violent?"

"He always struck me as just a creepy guy around women; I really don't know if he would hurt anyone, I mean he was scared of me when I confronted him about it. So I don't know."

"Well I have nothing further. Take my card and if you think of anything else, just call me on this number."

Toni took the card from her.

Jackson turned to Dylan who was still looking out of the window. "Do you have anything else Dylan? Or should we go?"

Dylan turned and threw an icy glare at Toni. "Nothing. I've said all I needed to say."

"Thank you for your help, Toni," Jackson said as she and Dylan made their way to the door.

Toni who remained seated said, "Dylan? Will you tell Emily that I hope her new life will be a happier one?"

The TV star stopped but said nothing, then continued on her way out the door followed by Jackson.

The pair returned home a few hours later, after staking out Drew Simpsons house. There had been no sign of him, so they had eventually given up. Dylan had been silent most of that time, lost in her own thoughts. When they got back to the apartment, Dylan hadn't wanted to talk about it and went straight to work out in her gym. Jackson filled Rosie and Emily in on what they had learned. Emily was concerned about how angry and stressed Dylan obviously was, but thought it best to let her partner work her frustrations out on the punching bag.

Rosie had reluctantly accepted a ride home from Jackson, wanting to leave the couple to their privacy after a trying day.

Emily had a difficult time putting Molly to bed, as Dylan hadn't come to read her a story like she did every night. Emily knew Dylan hadn't done this on purpose, but had just been

so wrapped up in her workout that she lost track of time. When she eventually did get Molly to sleep, Emily decided on an early night. She sat up in bed reading, hoping that Dylan might want to talk when she eventually came to bed.

Two and a half hours later an exhausted, sweaty Dylan came into the bedroom. Chest heaving and body buzzing with energy, she sought release in the love and reassurance that only her fiancé could provide. Dylan saw that Emily had dozed off reading, so she went to the wardrobe and got what she needed then stalked towards the bed.

Emily awoke, hearing the sounds in their bedroom. She looked up to see Dylan standing, looking at her from the side of the bed, saying nothing but communicating everything with her eyes. Her eyes said I need you, I want you, I need to connect, to know you're mine and only mine, and I'm scared. Emily's body instantly reacted to the hungry looking Dylan, who had just pulled off her t-shirt and was standing only in her shorts. Dylan's muscles looked pumped, taut and utterly erotic as the sweat from her workout ran down her hard shoulders, chest and the hard washboard stomach that Emily so adored. Emily could almost swear she could feel the testosterone pouring off Dylan's body as she waited for her fiancé to beckon her to the bed.

Emily pulled off her silk nightgown and watched as Dylan's eyes raked over her body, she felt her nipples harden under the needy gaze of her partner.

"Come to me, honey," Emily beckoned her, letting her legs open up, showing her partner what was hers.

Dylan pulled off her shorts leaving her naked with her strap-on standing hard and ready. They didn't always use this in their lovemaking, but Dylan wanted to be deep inside her fiancé both physically and emotionally. As she looked at her partner lying ready and open, her hand unconsciously began stroking her hard appendage. Dylan met her partner's eyes and moved towards her.

She moved herself onto Emily, their eyes never once leaving each other as they continued their silent communication. There would be no words, no extensive foreplay, Dylan needed reassurance and release, and Emily would give it to her. She could so easily read the emotional needs in Dylan's eyes and knew they were truly in each other's soul.

Dylan held her cock at fiancé's entrance waiting for Emily's signal. Emily's head gave a slight nod, as her hand stroked Dylan's cheek lightly.

Dylan's eyes never left Emily's as she thrust inside her.

Emily could tell from the first moment she looked at her partner, that she was wound up and close to the brink. It wouldn't take long for Dylan to reach her release but this wasn't about long passionate lovemaking, it was about giving Dylan what she needed, and Emily

would willingly give it to her.

Dylan moaned as her thrusts became faster. Emily tenderly stroked the TV stars back and shoulders, all the time trying to show all the love she had for her.

Dylan's breathing changed and the thrusts became harder and even faster; Emily knew the older woman's orgasm was seconds away, she took Dylan's head in her hands and said, "Don't close your eyes, give me everything."

This seemed to spiral Dylan closer to the edge as her moans became louder and her hips thrust wildly, until she went over the precipice.

Emily saw it in Dylan's eyes before she heard her passion. Her blue eyes seemed to soften and the whites grow milky as all the love, anxiety, and fear poured out of them.

"Ah, ah, argh!" Dylan roared out her release as if she had been wounded.

After she collapsed, Emily hugged her tightly as she heard Dylan's breathy sobs.

"It's okay, honey. Let it all out. I love you. I love you."

Dylan very rarely cried but it was as if the cork had been popped from all of her bottled up emotions. All the fear, anxiety, stress, everything that she had been carrying on her shoulders since this situation began, flooded out.

Dylan's sobs started to lessen as Emily tenderly stroked her back.. The tears gradually ebbed away and Dylan, who was still inside her partner, raised up on her elbows to look down at her love. Emily stroked away the residual tears that were covering her partner's cheeks.

"How do you know? Know what I need?" Dylan croaked.

"Because you're in my soul and I am in yours. I will always know."

I didn't know what it was to live until I met you. I can't ever lose you, or Molly."

Emily traced a finger along Dylan's lip.

"You never will. We are yours. Forever. Now sit up and we'll talk, okay?"

"Yeah, I think I need to."

Emily lay on Dylan's chest, listening to the heart that beat only for her.

"Tell me about today, honey."

Dylan took a big breath and exhaled. "When I found that message this morning, I lost it. I was so scared. Whoever this is wasn't just warning me they were coming, they were showing me they could get in anywhere. That parking lot is security monitored 24/7, cameras everywhere, and still they got in unseen. Patrick called Jackson this afternoon to say there was nothing on the film, they got in, cut the cameras and went about their business. It's frightening."

Emily said nothing but gave Dylan's chest a kiss of reassurance.

"I had to do something, even if it was, as it turned out to be, a waste of time. We've got nothing on this person, it's like they don't exist, so I had to turn my frustration on the only two targets I had. Toni and Drew.

I know I promised you before I went that I would be calm, I promised Jackson before we went in too. When she opened the door and I saw her I ... Well I had built up this image in my head of who she was, but then I saw her. She was ordinary looking. A bit pathetic really. I take it the alcohol and drugs have messed her up a bit; the energetic ladies' woman you had described, she was not. When I looked at her, all I could see were the pictures in my head of her hurting you, lying and cheating, making you cry, and I wanted to kill her. What made it worse was that she was trying to be so reasonable, saying she would do anything to help you, and she was so sorry she lost you."

Emily raised herself up and looked down at Dylan. "She said that?"

"Yeah and that she only treated you so bad because of the alcohol and drugs, oh and some crap about a terrible childhood. You know, it was all 'Poor me, I couldn't help being such a women beating lowlife, Mommy and Daddy were nasty to me.' Pathetic."

"Yes. She did always think her problems were worse than everyone else's."

"I came so close to punching her, but Jackson stopped me. It took everything in me to turn around and let Jackson continue questioning her. I was so near my breaking point, and then we couldn't get that Drew Simpson at home so we left and came back here. I'm sorry I couldn't talk right away and I'm sorry I missed the Smurf's bedtime story. I'll make it up to her, I just ... I don't know, everything that I've been feeling came crashing down on me today after seeing her. I'm just so fucking scared of losing you, it's tearing me up inside. It's like I've been given this taste of happiness, family life, contentment, and it could be taken away from me at any moment. When I was working out on the bag, I just kept seeing Toni's face. I punched and kicked until I was wrung out, and I knew that the

only thing that would soothe me was you. You always know what I need, and you always give it to me. I wasn't too rough, was I?"

Emily stroked her partner's face. "Never. You could never be too rough. Your body and your mind just needed to connect, to know that I was yours, and you did that. Honey, we can't continue like this forever. What if we never find out who this person is? You can't be so close to the edge all the time. Your family needs you, your daughter needs you, and in case you forgot, we're getting married next week. You've done everything you can to protect your family, Dyl. Jackson is the best, trust her to do her job. We need you to just be with us and not always thinking of our problems."

Dylan pulled Emily back down for a kiss. "I'll try, baby girl, but don't expect me ever to compromise on my family's safety. I could never do that, but I will try. I love you both with all my heart."

"We know that, honey. We love you too."

Dylan was emotionally and physically exhausted, and drifted off to sleep with Emily stroking her stomach as she always did.

I'm sorry I brought this fear into your life, thought Emily sadly.

The next morning Dylan headed into work early to try and make up for missing so much yesterday. After Jackson and Emily took Molly to preschool, Rosie came over to finish up a few things and gather her equipment for moving onto the next job.

An initial commission to decorate Molly's room had blossomed into a redecoration of most of the apartment, and a strong friendship between the young decorator and Emily.

Emily had been delighted with the friendship; she'd had no friends, apart from co-workers, since she broke up with Toni. But today the job was over and Emily was going to miss the day-to-day company of the young woman. And, it wasn't as if she wouldn't be seeing Rosie much. After discussing it with Dylan, she had asked her to be a bridesmaid and she was, of course, helping Emily with planning the wedding.

Rosie was packing up her stuff when Emily came into the family room.

"You all set?"

"Yeah just about. I can't thank you enough for giving me a chance. It's done wonders for my business to have a celebrity job in my portfolio."

"No problem. You've done a fantastic job and you fit right in with my family life, which is what is most important to me."

"I know. You're a great couple and Molly's just adorable, so it's been a pleasure."

"Have you got a new job fixed up?"

"I have jobs backed up now after my last celebrity client." Rosie smiled.

"Well just remember to keep January onwards free for the Long Island house."

"Don't worry, I'll be all yours. Well, that's me all done. I guess I'll see you at the next dress fitting?"

"Yes. Come here." Emily opened her arms to give the young woman a hug.

When they pulled away, Emily said, "What are you going to do about Jackson?"

The two women had had a heart to heart about Rosie's feelings for the bodyguard.

"Nothing. My body and my heart are obvious reacting to some sort of latent primal need to mate with a Neanderthal Alpha female! But luckily I have a mind and a brain to overcome these ... these ... urges."

Emily laughed. "Well good luck with that, in my experience your body and your heart know what you need better than your brain, but I'll leave that up to you. Oh! Molly made you a picture to take with you. Hang on, I'll just go and get it. I think ... it's in her room."

After Emily left, Rosie grabbed her bags and was about to leave when Jackson came in, hands in pockets, looking rather uncomfortable.

Rosie sighed. She was hoping to get away without talking to the former soldier who made her act and feel things that she couldn't control.

"Can I help you with something?"

Jackson looked a little lost and unsure of herself.

"Uh ... um ... Emily said you were leaving today?"

"Yes that's right." Rosie felt flustered, she needed to get out, this little boy lost look of Jackson's was making her heart ache.

"Well ... I ..."

"Could you get to the point?"

Jackson walked closer. "I didn't want you to leave without saying goodbye, and talking about that day at my apartment. I didn't mean ..."

"I really don't want to talk about that day, and as for saying goodbye, well ... we've never been friends, in fact you hated me on sight and have hated everything about me, so ..."

Jackson stood head down, saying nothing but nodded.

"I'm going then," Rosie said but she couldn't move and felt her hand lifting to stroke Jackson's face. *Oh god! Get out of here Rosie before you kiss her! I can't be trusted around her.*

When Rosie finally got her legs to obey and went to walk past, Jackson's arm shot out and grabbed her elbow.

"I've never hated you, hippy girl. You have principles; you stand up for what you believe in. You're kind, caring and give up your own time to the service of others. There is no one that is more perfect than you. You are everything."

Jackson then lifted Rosie's hand, kissed it tenderly and left the room.

Rosie was left gobsmacked. *I'm everything. Did she actually say that? Oh Jack!*

"Here it is! She worked on it all day yesterday," Emily said coming into the room with Molly's picture.

"Are you okay, Rosie?" Emily knew something had happened with Jackson. When she saw her go into the family room, she held back hoping the stubborn pair would work something out. Emily was a romantic and hoped she could see her two friends as happy as she was, but by the looks of things, it hadn't gone well.

"I'm fine Em. I'll see you at the final fitting on Friday?"

"Yes. Let's have lunch first and catch up on the week," Emily said as she walked Rosie to the door.

"That would be great." The two women hugged and Rosie left.

Great! Now I have a moody bodyguard to cheer up!

The lone figure sat staring at a close-up photo of Emily, taken by the paparazzi, happy and smiling. They picked up the phone and dialled.

"We move today. I've had enough of watching what's mine play the blushing bride. Pick me up in 20 minutes."

Click.

Emily and Jackson were on their way over to pick up Molly from preschool. Emily had tried to talk to Jackson about Rosie but her bodyguard hadn't been forthcoming.

A familiar picture popped up on her iPhone as it began to ring.

"Hello, goofy."

"Hey, baby girl. How goes your day?"

Dylan sounded so much brighter today. Last night's talk and emotional release had helped the TV star.

"Good. We're on our way over to pick up Molly. How's your day been, honey?"

"Manic. I missed a lot yesterday. That's part of the reason why I'm phoning, baby. I have to work late tonight to catch up, probably most of the week actually. I'm sorry I'm neglecting you and Molls, but I promise we'll do something nice on Sunday. We'll make it a family day."

"It's okay, honey. We understand. So what's the dare this week?"

"Eh ... I don't really think you want to know. You know how you worry. Let's just say it's called car dominos."

Emily sighed. She was getting used to the constant worry that was the lot of being the partner and wife of daredevil, Dylan Morgan.

"Yes, you're probably right. Just promise me you'll be careful, and make sure you eat something."

"Yes, mama Smurf! Don't worry I'm always careful. I've got a family to look after now."

"You just remember that, TV star!"

"It's always on the forefront of my mind. I'll call you before I leave the studio, okay?"

"Alright, honey. I love you."

"Love you, baby girl."

Almost as soon as Emily hung up, her phone rang again. It was Molly's school.

"Ms. Taylor? This is Mrs. Whitmore from Greenfield School. We've been trying to get hold of you on your home and cell numbers."

"I'm sorry Mrs. Whitmore, we're driving over to pick Molly up and I was on another call. Is there a problem?"

Jackson mouthed, 'What's wrong?'

Emily's heart started to pound. "There has been an incident. An unknown man has gained entry into the school under the guise of being a contractor. He got into Molly's class, ordered the teacher to remove the other children at gunpoint, and now has Molly held hostage. The police are here ..."

Emily dropped the phone. "Oh my God! My baby! Jackson! We have to get her back!"

Jackson pulled over at the side of the road, picked up the discarded phone and got the full story from Mrs. Whitmore.

"We're five minutes away. Tell the police we'll be there."

Emily was in shock, shaking with tears streaming down her face. Jackson pulled her into her arms.

"We're going to get her back. I promise. This is what I do. I won't let you down."

"Please Jackson. Please get my baby back!"

Jackson pulled the jeep back onto the road and began to break all speed limits to get to the school as fast as possible.

Jackson's jeep screeched to a halt as near as she could get to the school. It was surrounded by crowds, police and TV crews. Emily was numb and Jackson had to physically drag her over to the hub of police officers at the school gates.

Emily watched as a team of armed police got suited and geared up, readying to storm the building.

She pulled at Jackson's arm frantically. "Jackson, don't let them go in with guns blazing please! You know what can happen! Molly will get hurt, please!"

Jackson steadied Emily, her hands grasping Emily's shoulders. "Listen, were going to talk to the cops in charge. Whatever happens, I'll get her out."

"I need Dylan, Jackson."

"Here, call her while I talk to Patrick. I can see him over there."

Emily merely nodded and began to dial. In the meantime Patrick had come over to speak to them.

"Hunter. Glad your here."

"What's the situation?"

"It's Drew Simpson. He's got the classroom barricaded. Our negotiator has been in contact with him. He's demanded to see Emily and have safe passage away with her. We're at the end of the line with it. We're just about to send the armed task force in."

"Patrick you know what a risk that is. A little girl's life is at stake."

"What other options do we have?"

"Let me go in. I'm trained for this. It's less of a risk sending one person in."

"You know I can't authorize that Hunter. Whatever you have been, you're a civilian now. I can't send in a civilian."

Emily had finished her phone call to Dylan and had joined Patrick and Jackson.

"Look, all his attention will be out front on you guys, I can go in the back of the building. Give me 30 minutes. Come on, this is Molly we're talking about."

"Patrick please ... Let Jackson try. Please ..." Emily broke down in tears.

The cop looked torn between his duty and friendship. "I could lose my badge over this!"

"Thanks," said Jackson, taking off her silver suit jacket.

"I'll need a radio and a vest."

"Of course. Anything else I can do for you?"

"Watch Emily for me. She's going to be unprotected until Dylan gets here."

"Of course I will. Dylan is going to be like a raging bull when she gets here."

"Hopefully I'll have Molly out by then." Jackson then turned to Emily.

"Stay beside this police van, okay? Do not move from here."

Emily's tear stained face grew angry. "What does it matter? It's been Drew all along. My daughter is in danger because he wants me! But he's in there, so I think I'll be safe."

Suddenly she became like stone.

"Patrick, if Jackson can't get her out, you are not going in with your guns. He wants me? He can have me. I'll exchange myself for her."

Jackson hugged the small blonde. "It won't come to that. I'm going to get her. Stay here and wait for Dylan, okay?"

Emily nodded, but she knew she would die for her daughter if that's what it took.

Dylan ran every red light and nearly had several collisions on her way to Molly's school. When Emily called, she had never felt such fear. It was even worse than the night Emily had the intruder, because this time someone had a gun pointed at her daughter's head.

Her stomach had roiled as she grabbed onto her desk to steady herself.

Lynn had said that Pauley should drive her but Dylan simply ignored her, grabbing her keys and running out to her car.

"Get out of my fucking way!" Dylan screamed at the other drivers.

She was frustrated. Even breaking the speed limit, it would take her 20 minutes to get there.

I knew I shouldn't have listened to everyone and let my guard down. I need to protect my family.

Jackson shimmied her way through a window at the back of the school. Gun drawn she stalked her way through the eerily empty halls.

She had spoken to the principal and caretaker, and had a rough idea of where she should head. As she got closer to the classroom, she heard the tears of Molly calling out for her moms and it broke her heart.

Across town, Rosie watched the siege live on the bar TV. Tears ran down her cheeks as the cameras panned onto Emily being held back by the police.

Her occasional date, Jess, sat at the bar watching Rosie's reaction. She could be found propping up the bar most of the time Rosie was working. She loved the beautiful bartender but couldn't so far get Rosie to take their friendship to the next level.

"Isn't that who you've been working for Rosie?"

She simply nodded. The TV news continued.

This reporter understands that the family's body guard, ex special forces soldier Jackson Hunter, has persuaded the authorities to let her go into the preschool and rescue the TV stars daughter from the armed gunman.

A picture of Jackson while she was still in the army, dressed in full camo and holding a gun, appeared on the TV.

"Oh God Jack!" she whispered.

Jess heard the name and knew she'd heard it mentioned before. Who was this 'Jack' that had her love so worried?

"Isn't that the soldier that you hated? The one that works for Morgan?"

'*You are everything,*' Rosie remembered the words that had haunted her since this morning.

"I don't hate her! We just don't see eye to eye," Rosie replied angrily.

"Okay! Okay! I'm sorry I said anything." Jess took her drink and stalked off moodily to talk to some of her friends.

I need to get over there! She ripped off her apron, grabbed her coat and walked out of the bar without a backward glance.

"Hey! Where are you going?" the manager hollered after her.

Rosie couldn't hear him. She sent up a silent prayer for them all then added, *Sarah, I know you're looking down on your big sister. Please keep her safe!*

"Shut the hell up, kid! You'll see your Mom when she decides to come in here!"

Drew Simpson had tied the little girl to a chair in the corner away from the door. He nervously kept looking out of the window.

"Mama! Mom! I scared! Come get me!" the hysterical girl screamed.

"Shut the fuck up!!" Drew was panicking; this hadn't gone as his partner had promised. Not used to using a gun, his hand shook as he pointed it at the little girl.

Drew jumped when his cell phone started ringing.

"What's happening? I'm trapped in here with a screaming brat, surrounded by armed police, and there's no sign of me getting Emily! You promised!"

"Just hold it together. I'm getting things ready for our getaway. You will get out, I

promise," his partner said, and then thought, *I just won't promise what state you'll be in when you do.*

"I know I wanted Emily but I don't know if she's worth this," Drew said. The sweat was pouring down his face from the nerves and fear.

"She is worth it. Believe me. I just need a little more time. Emily is persuading the police to let her come in as we speak. Keep their attention on you and we'll both get what we want."

"Okay. Just get me out of here!"

While Drew had been distracted talking on the phone, Jackson had taken position outside the door. Luckily there was a window on the door, so she got a good layout of the room.

She made a quick assessment of Drew. She could see he was in way over his head, he was shaking, nervous, constantly looking out of the window; he wasn't even holding his gun properly.

Probably never even used one before. If I can just get the door open and get him in one clean shot, then Molly will be safe. I just have to choose my moment, Jackson thought.

The Gods seemed to be smiling on Jackson. As Molly's crying become too much for Drew, he raised both hands to cover his ears, taking his gun away from pointing at Molly.

Jackson kicked open the door in one smooth movement. Drew only had time to meet Jackson's eyes with a look of surprise before the soldier shot him in the forehead.

Outside, Emily waited with Patrick. She had never felt such anguish and longed to be in Dylan's arms.

"What's happening? Tell me."

"We can't tell until Hunter radios in."

"Can't you contact her?" Emily asked desperately.

"No. We have to maintain radio silence. No matter what happens, even if I have to leave

this vicinity, stay next to these police officers."

Emily nodded then they all heard shots ring out from the school.

"No! Molly!"

Patrick pulled out his gun and shouted. "Go! Go!" Signaling the armed police to enter the school.

"I'm going in. Don't move, Emily!"

"Oh God! Dylan I need you!"

Dylan's car screeched to a halt. She jumped out and ran at full speed towards the main entrance, taking the police barrier like a hurdle. A wall of police held her back as she got closer. She struggled, pushing and shoving.

"Let me pass! That's my daughter in there! Molly! Molly!" she screamed.

Mark, who had been manning the radio link between Jackson and the police came rushing over.

"Dylan! Calm down, buddy!"

The cops who were restraining her said, "Should we cuff her, detective?"

"No! Leave her with me." Mark grabbed her head. "Dylan! Look at me! Look at me!"

Dylan stopped struggling as much. "Molly's in there! She needs me!"

"Molly's safe, Dylan. Look!"

Dylan looked across the playground to see Jackson walking towards them with Molly in her arms.

Dylan ran over to meet them. Molly who had been silent since she had witnessed the shooting, started to cry uncontrollably when she saw Dylan and reached out frantically for her.

"Mom! Mom! Bad man! I scared!" Jackson handed Molly over to a relieved Dylan who pulled her daughter tightly to her.

"Thank God! Molls, you're okay now. Mom's here."

Dylan looked at Jackson and said, "Thank you so much, Jackson. I owe you anything you ask for."

Jackson stroked Molly's dark head. "Don't mention it. I wasn't only doing my job you know, I care a lot about you all."

Dylan nodded and reached out to shake Jackson's hand. "You're a true friend. Who was it?"

"Drew Simpson. He wanted Emily in exchange for Molly."

Dylan growled. "The thought of her family so close to danger enraged the TV star, but the sound of her daughter's sobs made her put her anger aside, to be dealt with later."

"I want my Mama!"

"Come on, Molls. You're okay now." Molly hung onto her Mom like a life preserver.

Mark and Patrick joined them; Patrick clapped Jackson on the back.

"You had me worried when I heard those shots."

"He was an amateur. It was no problem."

Dylan knew Emily would be going out of her mind with worry and said, "Where's Emmie? She'll be so worried."

"I told her not to move from the police van. I'll go get her," Patrick said.

A police officer came over and said, "Detective. There's a Rosie Henderson wanting to be let through. Says she's a friend."

"Let her through," Jackson said. Patrick nodded in agreement.

Rosie ran through the crowd of press and onlookers. "Is everyone okay?"

"Yes, we're okay." Rosie hugged Dylan and Molly.

"Thank God! How did you get her out?"

"Jackson went in and got her."

Rosie threw her arms around the bodyguard and whispered in her ear. "I'm so happy you're safe, Jack."

Jackson was surprised at the hug but knew it wouldn't last long, so she drank up the warmth and smell of the young woman while she could.

Rosie realized she was hanging on a bit too long and pulled back.

Patrick came running over. "She's not there. I can't find her."

"What do you mean you can't find her?" Dylan snapped.

"I told her to stay at the van and she's just not there. I've ordered a search."

"Where's my Mama? Want Mama!" Molly sniffled.

Dylan tried not to show her panic in front of Molly. "Rosie? Would you watch her?"

"No problem."

"I'm going to find her, Molls. You stay here with Rosie, okay?"

Dylan handed her over to the young woman and said. "Jackson lets go."

They ran off towards the main throng of vans and police at the front gates. Dylan pushed past people, shouting frantically for her mate.

"Emily! Emily!"

The police checked everywhere, and Dylan and Jackson went around the school building twice and found nothing. She tried calling Emily's cell phone but it went straight to voicemail.

"Jackson, where is she?" Dylan shouted.

"I don't understand it," said Patrick. "She was right there, right up until the shots were fired. I told her not to move and we went into the school to back up Jackson."

Dylan ran her hands through her dark hair frantically. "She can't have just disappeared?!"

She pulled her iPhone back out and dialled. "Come on, baby. Pick up! Voicemail again! She never turns her phone off."

"I've got men questioning everyone to find out if they saw anything."

Dylan's phone beeped in her hand. She opened up her mail and saw a message from

sanctityofgod.com . Her stomach dropped to her toes, and her hand shook as she opened the mail.

Jackson, Patrick, Mark, and the world's media looked on as Dylan fell to her knees and howled.

Jackson grabbed the phone and looked at the mail. She brought her hands to her mouth when she saw a picture of Emily, tied, gagged and unconscious, in the back of a van.

The message below read:

'I've taken back what's mine. My wife will be wiped clean from the stain of your touch.'

Toni

To be continued in Season 2 ...

Thanks for reading. I hope you enjoyed the characters as much as I enjoyed writing them! Please let me know if you would like this story to continue in Season 2!

I would be delighted to hear your comments about this story at jennyframe91@yahoo.com

Also please take a look at my website where you can listen to the soundtrack to 'The Dylan Morgan Show' and find information on my future stories. www.jennys-storybook.com