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## *V - Fish and Chips*

Very calmly and with great deliberation, James Sheppard reached out and interrupted the call. He made sure Zig Zag saw the finger the entire way towards the disconnect-button, in fact. He was smiling, but at the same time his eyes clearly said he wouldn't have any kind of arguments out of her about it. The phonecall was over. He had decided it was over. At least, by moving slowly, he had given the skunk time to explain that she was about to be disconnected.

"It's dinner-time," he said, matter-of-factly. "And you are off work, whether you like to admit it or not. Work will have to wait until tomorrow."

Zig Zag didn't protest. There was no point in arguing with that tone of voice. Besides, James was right. Even after all these years, she still tended to be married to her work. The thought made her sigh. She was married to James...and no one else. While she loved her job, James was completely right. Family had to come first.

She put on a smile and looked at her husband with an apologetic shrug. "You're right. I'm sorry. So...what's for dinner today?"

"Steamed trout and vegetables. Just the way you like it."

"Alex is going to hate you..." Zig Zag grinned.

"She'll just have to learn to eat fish if she intends to live in this household," James said, sternly. "When she moves away from home she can avoid fish if she wants. Until then...too bad."

Zig Zag nodded. She agreed with James on that. It wasn't like they had fish very often. It wasn't easy getting anything decent in Ohio. It wasn't exactly seafood country, and the prices had gone up drastically the last ten years anyway. Depending on the trout James had bought, she expected it had cost him somewhere between a hundred and a hundred and fifty dollars. And that was only because he had connections. If it was salt-water seafood...

Well...

Fortunately, she and James could afford that sort of thing, but they only indulged once or twice a year nowadays. It was absurdly expensive, and whenever they ate that kind of thing, they'd make sure it would be on evenings where Alexandra wasn't home. Neither of them felt like having that kind of experience ruined by her mopey face at the prospect of eating something that had lived in water.

In fact, they only had plaice or some other form of saltwater fish when none of their children were at home. Alexandra positively hated it. Gabriel didn't mind seafood but he wasn't particularly keen on it. Douglas would eat literally anything put in front of him with equal glee and in all likelihood he didn't really manage to *taste* most of it before it hit the bottom of his stomach.

As Zig Zag had pointed out more than once, there was no point in wasting good fish on such ingrates. It was always said rather theatrically, when the children heard, but with a glint in her eye.

She got to her feet and flicked back her hair. As James had said, it was time to eat and frankly, she was hungry. She looked at the notes she had hastily scribbled during the telephone call, then shook her head and headed for the kitchen. Food and quality family time definitely had priority over budgets. No question whatsoever. She passed a mirror on the way and looked at herself for a moment. She was past her first youth but, like many mixed-species furs, she aged both slowly and gracefully. It was obvious she wasn't twenty five years old anymore. It did show...but in that way that she had come to appreciate as the 'slightly older femme's allure'. When she was young, she had radiated pure, raw, unadulterated sex-appeal. Everything about her had screamed sex, and she knew it. She had played on it. She'd made a damned good living because of it, in fact.

Now, she oozed sensuality, to the point where the mothers of her children's classmates would nearly have a leash on their husbands and teenage sons at school events. She was as trim as she'd ever been. In fact, she felt pretty good about still fitting the same size clothes as she had when she had first met James...and that was three childbirths ago.

Not bad. Not bad at all, in fact.

She nodded to herself and smiled at her reflection, flicking a stray lock of hair back out of the way and entered the kitchen where the scent of James' steamed trout in white wine met her...as did the sad expression on Alexandra's face.

She smiled slightly. Her children had turned out very well indeed, and she could forgive Alexandra her aversion to fish. She had never been picky and readily ate what was put before her on the table. Fish simply didn't sit well with her.

"Smile, dear. One day your face will get stuck in that grimace and your stripes will be forever crooked..." she said and winked at her daughter.

For a moment, the fifteen year old looked like she would panic. Her stripes were her greatest pride and joy. She had the looks of a coyote but the tail of a skunk and the stripes of a tiger. For some reason, all three kids had turned out that way, although only Alexandra was black and white. The boys both had their father's colors. Zig Zag had been worried before Alexandra started school, whether she would be teased by the other children. She had been...and she had reacted by taking pride in that which others jeered her for. It totally took the fun out of teasing her. By the time Gabriel started in school, Zig Zag hadn't been worried anymore. When Douglas had started, she'd barely thought about it.

"This smells fantastic," Zig Zag said and took a seat. "So...what's everyone else been up to all day?"

Gabriel smiled. "I had a talk with the soccer-coach today. He said I can play goalkeeper for the school next year if I make sure to practice over the summer holidays."

"Sounds to me like you and your dad will spend some time with a ball this summer then?" Zig Zag asked and smiled at James across the table.

He nodded and chuckled. "Would love to. We'll have to get you some proper gloves then. Those you have now are worn out, aren't they?"

"Almost...and I need a new pair of cleats too, actually," Gabriel said and looked hopeful.

Zig Zag smiled and put some fish on Douglas' plate. Being the youngest of the children, at barely nine years of age, he didn't care much for sports. He never had. Instead, he showed a vivid interest in James's line of work. Zig Zag was often puzzled by the fact that her youngest son knew more about how computers worked than *she* did.

A moment later they were eating and chatting across the table, and Zig Zag could feel the stress of her day seeping out of her with every bite of trout.

###

"You're too tall for a fifteen year old, Kale. It's about high damned time you turn sixteen."

"I know, Coach...I've been waiting for it a whole year, too..."

"And you're already too clever by far. Drop and give me twenty, smartass!"

Kale groaned and dropped to the ground, taking twenty push-ups. Then he got back up, removed his helmet and looked around the field. He was already all alone. The Coach had gone back inside while he was doing his push-ups.

That was alright. She didn't have to stay and watch, anyway. If he got an order to take twenty, he took twenty. That simple.

He stank. It had been a hard workout and he wanted a shower badly. Pulling his pads over his shoulders, he wrinkled his nose. After a few weeks of use, those always smelled like something had died in them. The padding got soaked in sweat every time he worked out. So layers and layers of old sweat would add to the stench.

After a while, any football-player's nostrils simply got accustomed to it. It usually happened about five minutes before they gave out. He stuck his helmet inside the pads and grabbed the visor through the neck-opening, allowing him to carry the whole thing in one paw as he headed inside to take a shower.

Most of his teammates were already getting undressed and scrambling for the hot water. It was pointless to try to get under the shower now. He might as well wait until some of them got out of there. He sat down and found his towel in his bag, before pulling his T-shirt over his head and hanging the towel around his neck. Leaning forward, resting his elbows on his knees, he thought about what the Coach had just said.

Too tall to be fifteen. He knew that quite a few furs who met him for the first time thought he was considerably older than he actually was. And he was still growing. He'd

end up well and truly on the other side of six feet by the time he was done if this kept on going. That wasn't a problem with him. Being tall was alright. He smiled crookedly and looked at the showers again. He was by far the tallest on the team. Normally, he'd be playing receiver but he had too strong and too accurate an arm to ignore.

His teammates were still showering so he picked out a bunch of envelopes from the bottom of his bag and started distributing them. The invitations for his birthday party. Normally he'd just tell them to come by, since all of them knew where he lived. There wasn't a fur in his entire high school who didn't know where he lived, in fact. But for once it was necessary to do it in writing, since there would be too many to fit into the apartment, and most of them had no idea where his aunt and uncle lived.

His aunt and uncle.

The thought made him smile. He had always thought of them like that, despite the fact they were not blood-relations. His actual uncle, Timothy, lived in New York after all. His dad was an only child, so no aunts or uncles on that side.

A few furs vacated the showers and he got up, dropping his pants and boxers, before getting under the hot water.

###

"How many will there be, all in all then?" Jean asked.

Frances ran a paw over her hair, thinking about the answer for a moment. "Well, there's his whole team, and his classmates...and a few friends. I'd say sixty furs..."

"That's not a lot. How many are on the football team?" Jean asked, raising an eyebrow.

Charles smiled. "It's just a High school team, Mom. They don't do the 53-fur squad thing that you find in the NFL. A lot of players play several positions. Offense and defense are not the same but they all play special teams too. There are about thirty players and not everyone will be here..."

"I thought he invited everyone though?" Jean said and sat down. "Ohh...you mean there will always be some who can't come?"

Frances nodded and smiled. "Exactly. Plus thirty from the class..."

"But some of those are on the football squad too. Six or seven of the boys, I think," Charles said. "Plus a few friends of his own. Yeah...between fifty and sixty furs..."

Jean nodded and took down a few notes. "That's a lot of hamburgers..." she chuckled.

"I don't think he'll go for hamburgers, really. It'd be more like Kale to actually arrange for some really good food..." Charles pointed out.

"Dad's hamburgers qualify as 'good food', Charlie," Frances grinned.

Jean nodded again. "I already went over that with Gabrielle and Yohni. They agreed that it would be better to do something like that, rather than go for big roasts and baked potatoes and so on. We're talking about a football-squad here. They'll likely want second helpings..."

"And thirds...and in a few cases probably fourths..." Charles admitted. "Good point, Mom. Okay. What else do we need to do then?"

Jean went silent for a moment as she checked her list. The food was decided upon and Esteban was taking care of the big tents. Music was easy. They'd set up one of the computers and Kale could arrange a playlist. She smiled. When she was younger, music downloaded from the Internet was largely illegal. Nowadays, no one bought their music in any other way. It was cheaper, these days too. At least comparatively speaking.

One could even lease music. Pay for a download of a number which was playable a certain number of times before the file erased itself.

It had gone a long way towards eliminating piracy.

She looked back at the piece of paper. That didn't leave all that much to be done, really. Just the presents.

"I guess we just need to figure out what to give him," she said and smiled. "Everything else has been taken care of or at least set in motion."

Charles groaned and nodded. "He's so hard to find a present for, though..."

"Yeah, he doesn't *want* anything...he hasn't made a wish-list the last three years. What teenager doesn't wish for all kinds of stuff for his birthday?" Frances agreed.

Jean smiled. "Well, I think he's *easy* to buy presents for," she said and shrugged.

"How do you figure, Mom?" Charles asked.

"He's always happy with what he gets," Jean explained.

Frances chuckled. "I'm telling you, Kale isn't natural. No teenager is supposed to behave like he does. Look at Charlie for comparison."

Charlie grinned widely and prodded his sister's ribs. "HEY! What's up with that?"

Jean smiled and nodded to herself. The party would work out just fine.

###

Kalen picked up his bag and headed towards the bus-stop. He couldn't wait until he could get his own ride. Turning sixteen meant he could get his driver's license. The question was what kind of car to get. It was incredibly expensive to buy gas after all. There were quite a lot of electrical cars out there, and a lot of them looked cool, too. But they were still slower and more sluggish than a car with a gasoline-engine. That wasn't a problem with him, really. He wasn't planning on going joyriding anyway. There were hydrogen cars too but they were horribly expensive. The upside was that the hydrogen cells cost very little, didn't pollute and lasted a long time. If he could choose, he'd like one of those but he knew he was unlikely to get such a ride for years.

Still, there was nothing wrong with dreaming a little.

He smiled a little and turned a corner to head down another hallway. Just two more turns and out the front door and he'd be by the bus-stop.

Sighing, he realized it might not be that easy. Waiting in the hallway was Steve and two of his cronies. From the looks of them, they had been waiting for him.

Kale knew from bitter experience that simply turning around to look for another way wouldn't work. Either they'd chase him, or simply cut him off somewhere along the new route too. Shaking his head, he didn't stop walking, simply heading down the hallway towards the three.

He was stopped by a large paw on his chest.

"Not so fast, golden-boy," Steve growled. "We've got unfinished business and your friends aren't here to help you now."

"No. But I see yours are. What's the matter, Steve? You're so scared of me you think you need to be three against one to beat me up?" Kalen asked, irritably.

"I'm not afraid of anyone!" Steve sneered. "They're just here to hold you so you don't run away while I rearrange your face!"

Kalen shrugged. "You know I won't hit back. You hardly need them to hold my arms then, do you?"

Steve spat in Kale's face and cracked his knuckles. "I need to be sure you don't run away, you fucking coward!"

"Ah...I'm a coward now. Me...the one fur, who's about to be beaten by three furs. I think the only coward here is you, Steve. You don't even have the damned courage to take me on alone...even though you already know I won't fight back."

"Shut up. I've got better things to do with my time than listening to the son of perverts!"

Kalen chuckled. "Amazing, Steve...amazing. You thought that up on your own? I'll bet you still whack off imagining two femmes making out, you hypocrite."

Steve didn't even answer. He just swung his fist.

###

It was half past five when Yohni pulled the car into a parking space at the doctor's clinic. She had closed the shop down an hour early to go. Gabrielle had jumped in a cab to go talk to the principal of the High school. Yohni did not envy the fur having to deal with an enraged Gabrielle. That was generally an unpleasant experience.

She stopped the engine and got out. The doctor's clinic had called and Gabrielle had answered the phone. Then she had come down to the shop to explain what had happened, and Yohni had immediately ushered the last two customers out, telling them an emergency had taken place and she needed to close down early. Gabrielle had wanted to go pick up Kale, but Yohni had said it would be better if she did it, so Gabrielle could talk to the principal. She was simply better suited for it.

Sighing, Yohni headed up to the clinic's front door. It was a pretty nondescript building. Apart from the sign on the front, one might easily have taken it for just another, small office building. It was also the closest doctor's clinic to the school. Normally it would be closed for the day by that time of the afternoon, but the staff had long since learned that accidents happened at schools. They often had to stay an extra half hour or hour because someone had been hurt.

Removing her jacket once inside, Yohni headed up the stairs and into the clinic. Kalen was seated on a chair inside. He looked like he'd been taken through a meat grinder and Yohni gasped, hurrying over to him.

"It is okay, Mom..." the equine said, although his speech was a little slurred. He tried to smile but his bottom lip was cracked and seeped a little.

"Like Hell it is!" Yohni burst out. "Who did this to you?!"

Normally, Kalen wouldn't snitch. He would shrug it off or say he'd rather not talk about it but first of all, it was difficult to avoid telling his mothers the truth, and secondly, this time something had happened which made it pointless to deny it.

"Steve," he said and shrugged. "And two friends of his."

Yohni nodded. "That idiot wolf again, then. What about his friends? What are their names?"

"Not sure, really. I don't talk to that crowd normally. Hank and Brandon, I think...I can recognize them when I see them. I might remember wrong."

The doctor, a dachshund, came into the room, smiling a sad little smile. "Mrs. Ryder..." he said and extended a paw, "Good to see you although I'm sorry for the circumstances."

Yohni shook the doctor's paw with a grateful smile of her own. She had taken Gabrielle's last name when they got legally married. "Thank you for taking care of Kale. Can you tell me how bad it is because...from looking at him..."

"It looks a lot worse than it is," the doctor said. "They beat him up. He's got some pretty large bruises, but they stopped short of doing any real damage. Kale was smart about it..."

Yohni looked at Kale and raised an eyebrow. "What did you do?"

"I turned my head into one of the blows, Mom..." was the answer. Kale tried to smile again. "It hurt like Hell, but Steve hurt his paw on my skull because of it. So they kicked me instead and I let myself fall to the floor, pretending to pass out."

Yohni nodded. "Okay...alright. Good thinking there...especially on falling to the floor and pretending to be out cold," Yohni said and ran a paw comfortingly over Kale's hair. "But dammit, you look like someone's taken a hatchet to you..."

Kale chuckled weakly. "Feel like it too, Mom..."

Yohni nodded and turned back to look at the doctor. "My wife is talking to the principal about this. She's going to demand that those who did this are expelled. The school board will need your report on Kale's injuries."

The doctor smiled reassuringly and nodded. "Already anticipating that. I'll be writing it up first thing in the morning."

Yohni nodded and looked at Kalen with a sigh. "Why does he do it? Is he one of those religious types?"

"They wouldn't last very long this close to the Castro, I think..." Kalen said and shrugged, getting to his feet. "Steve is just a creep. It's not religion. It's not even homophobia. He's just a bully, Mom."

"He doesn't have a reason for all this?" Yohni asked.

Kalen shook his head, picking up his bag. "He'll just think up a reason to pick on someone. Better he picks on me than some little kid, I think. I can take it..."

"Kale...that's an admirable if somewhat macho attitude, but the point is that no one should be picked on..." the doctor said and smiled crookedly, "I'll write up the report tomorrow."

A moment later, Yohni and Kalen were heading back to the car to go home.

###

Gabrielle was in no mood for nonsense and if she could lay her paws on whoever had hit her son, she would probably be due a lengthy spell in prison. Knocking on the door, she took a couple of very deep breaths, steeling herself and trying to regain some self control. Hitting someone wasn't going to accomplish anything at the moment. Still, she was furious.

It was a nice neighborhood. The kind of place where families would live and where kids could play safely in the street. The house she was standing in front of was not one of the largest, but it was nicely kept. Gabrielle knew it was painted at least every second year, and the garden was very well kept. It even had a white picket fence.

There was no immediate answer and she knocked on the door again. She was about to get angry again when she realized there was a doorbell there too. She pushed it.

A moment later, she heard footsteps behind the door. Again, she took a deep breath.

"Calm and relaxed, but offended, Gabby...remember that," she whispered to herself, just in time for the door to open.

The principal, Mr. Diazi, probably the smallest and most tired-looking rabbit Gabrielle had ever met, nodded in greeting.

"Mrs. Ryder. I take it this isn't a social call...?" he asked.

He even sounded tired. Gabrielle could well imagine that being the principal of a high school could be taxing on anyone, but Mr. Diazi managed to look like the whole world was constantly conspiring to sap him of his strength.

Gabrielle shook her head. "I'm afraid it's not. My wife is picking up my son at the doctors clinic near the school as we speak, after they called us. He's been beaten to a pulp, Mr. Diazi."

"I'm terribly sorry to hear that, Mrs. Ryder. Please...come on in," the rabbit said and stepped aside, letting Gabrielle enter. "I assume this...attack...happened on school grounds since you're here?"

"That's correct. And I'm pretty sure I'll have a message on my cell-phone in a few moments telling me who did this, but I think we both have a pretty good theory," the equine said and stepped inside, taking off her jacket.

Mr. Diazi nodded. "Probably, but we can't do anything on theories and suspicions. We need some kind of evidence before the School board will do anything."

"Well, I'll make sure Kalen tells me who did this to him."

"I hope you succeed, but often kids won't tell."

Gabrielle nodded. "I know. But he will in this case. What I want to know from you, Mr. Diazi, is what you will do if you get evidence in paw."

Mr. Diazi headed to the kitchen door, asking his wife to make some coffee, before he returned to the living room. He beckoned for Gabrielle to sit down, before taking a seat in a comfortable chair. Gabrielle noted that the lapine looked even more tired than usual.

"I will suspend the kid who did it. If the beating is severe enough...which I can't say until I have a report from the doctor who treated Kalen...we're looking at a possible expulsion," he said. Judging from the look on his face, he already knew it was the wrong answer.

Gabrielle frowned deeply. "We both know it's that wolf, Steve, who did this. You've suspended him how many times by now? He's had to stay down a year once, even. It doesn't make a difference to him. He doesn't consider it a punishment to be suspended."

The rabbit shrugged and ran a paw over his face. "Possibly not, but that's the way the school rules work, Mrs. Ryder. Besides, if he doesn't consider a suspension a threat, then why would threatening to expel him be any more effective?"

"I don't really care if it's an effective deterrent or not anymore. I care about my boy being able to go to school without threat of being attacked in the hallways. He's a good kid. He is consistently among the best in his class," Gabrielle said. She was getting irritable, and she wasn't going to hide it. This was exactly what she had expected would happen. "The school counselor says he's several years ahead of his classmates in terms of emotional development, he's the Quarterback of the football team and he's damned well helped take that school to the state playoffs this year, Mr. Diazi. I think the least he can expect is to be allowed to go to school without wondering if he'll come home with his teeth in his mouth or in a brown bag!"

"Any child should be able to do that, irrespective of accomplishments," Mr. Diazi said and shrugged. "I promise you, I will talk to the school board about this. But there is just no way I can make any kind of promise. I'm not the only one to make the decision."

Gabrielle nodded. She was about to answer when Mr. Diazi's wife came in with the coffee. She took that opportunity to take a deep breath and regain her self-control. Maybe a cup of coffee would help.

"Okay," she said and sighed. "Tell me what your options are then..."

###

Dina looked at the papers on the table. She was shuffling around her small apartment on her own, trying to get over a touch of cold. She'd been caught without a jacket when it started raining a few days ago, and she'd been soaked through by the time she got home. It wasn't a bad cold, but it was annoying and it was making her nose run.

Besides, few things made her feel as thoroughly sick as a cold. Even though it wasn't a serious thing, she always felt awful when her nose clogged and her throat got raw. It was painful to swallow anything, yet she had to drink lots of hot fluids.

She had put on an oversized fleece-sweater and some thick socks, and she'd constantly had hot coffee in the thermos the last few days. Hopefully she'd feel better in the morning. Kalen's birthday was coming up too and she at least wanted to be healthy for that. He was a nice guy...and from what she could tell, he was light years ahead of his own age in many ways.

The paperwork demanded her attention again. It was her curriculum for next year. What books she needed to buy before even starting, and a suggested reading-list to help get her set up. There was a timetable too for the first term. What classes she would have when. At least she had all this in very good time. Summer holidays weren't even there yet. She had no doubt that the timetable was useless. It would change at least three times before classes actually started. The list of books, however, was extensive. She'd checked the prices on the Internet. There was no way she could afford all of them, but at least she had a big advantage. She was in place on campus months before classes started. No doubt there would be students who had already completed the courses she would be taking, who were willing to sell some of these books second-hand and at an affordable price. She reminded herself to go check for notices about such as soon as she got better.

Sneezing, Dina picked up a Kleenex and wiped her nose for the tenth time in as many minutes. This was getting old.

There was a knock on the door and she blew her nose yet again, before heading to open it.

"Ohh...hey Cat. I'm sorry but I feel like my mom's old boss is sitting on my chest."

"What kind of fur is he?"

"A rhino," Dina said with a crooked smile.

Catherine winced and nodded. "Well, I did notice you were coughing these past couple of days so I decided to do something about it..."

Dina raised an eyebrow and stepped aside, opening the door fully to let her neighbor in.

Catherine smiled and held up a pot with a lid on it. "Chicken-soup...and I got some croûtons too, if you want it. I know you don't eat much meat but it really helps..."

"You are a godsend, Cat..." Dina said and smiled gratefully.

Catherine headed into the kitchen and placed the pot on the stove. "I'll just reheat it if you'd like some right away," she said. "Where do you keep your bowls?"

"Second cupboard to the right," Dina answered. "Did you get the curriculum too, by the way?"

"Oh God, did I ever..." Catherine groaned. "What do they think we are? Made of money?"

Dina flopped down on her couch. "I guess it's always been the same. We want to be taught but we don't understand how many books we have to buy. It sucks because they cost a small fortune but...there's no helping it, really."

Catherine came into the doorway. The scent of the chicken soup was already spreading in the apartment. "Probably...but I've known several furs who's gone through college and they all say that one in three books, they never needed."

Dina smiled. "Probably true. But if you ask everyone who took our classes last year which books they felt they didn't need afterwards, do you think you'd get the same answer from all of them?"

"Good point," Catherine admitted. "Well, we'll just have to make do. I'm at least going to ask around to find out what teachers are going to come down on us like a ton of bricks if there's a book we don't have."

"Probably a good idea," Dina said and promptly sneezed again. "Awww dammit..."

"Don't worry, my mother's recipe for chicken soup is a certain cure for the common cold," Catherine said with a smile.

Dina nodded and wiped her nose again. "I sure hope so. I have a birthday to attend soon. One of my mother's old friends from Ohio moved here when I was three years old. Her son is turning sixteen and he invited me to his birthday party. I'd really hate to go and sneeze on everyone."

Catherine grinned widely and winked. "Sixteen eh? Isn't he a bit young for you, Dina?"

She ducked out of the way of the pillow her neighbor threw at her. "Shush you," Dina chuckled. "He's a really nice guy. He's been by a couple of times to make sure I've settled in and everything."

"Yeah, yeah...you're gorgeous if you haven't looked in the mirror lately, Dina. He's probably angling for a date," the wolf giggled.

"If he is, he's got a strange way of showing it. We've been talking about how he wants to go to college too."

"What does he want to study then?"

"Religious Studies. He doesn't want to be a preacher. He just thinks it's an interesting topic, and mind you...he's got two mothers. He's not your regular sixteen year old."

Catherine blinked, trying to bend her head around that. "No I'd say he isn't..." she muttered. "Alright. Well, we'll have you all ready to bedazzle the young gentlefur in no time. I think the soup is about ready. Let me go get you a bowl."

"Thanks Cat...you know, before you moved in I was worried about what kind of neighbor I'd get," Dina said.

Catherine grinned and headed into the kitchen. "Oh, I'll turn out to be a regular horror yet, you'll see."

Dina just sneezed in answer and groaned as she wiped her nose on yet another Kleenex.