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The Moretti's - A Different Family Dynamic

Chapter 4

Monday, 10 February 2003 – Thursday, 13 February 2003

Colin Cathcart, 28, all five foot seven inches of him stood on the Life Cycle treadmill in the Software by Design corporate gym breathing hard after finishing a sixty minute workout. He weighed just 130 pounds and his height of five feet five inches put him in the thin to skinny category of men. Instead of going out to a restaurant or eating in the corporate dining room, Colin went to the gym to run. He didn't lift weights. He ran. The endorphin high was what he was looking for. On the weekends he would run the streets of the Five Towns not caring about where he went, but for how long he ran. He started running on the high school cross country team, continued it through his undergraduate years at Yale University, and had to stop for a year when he tore a ligament in his right knee.

Returning to his office after a shower his afternoons would fly by because the lingering flush of the endorphins in his system. He always scheduled important financial meetings for the afternoon because most of the participants were usually fighting post lunch sleepiness while he was at his intellectual best. Many a deal was closed to the favor of the company because of this subtle body clock tactic. The train ride home from Penn Station in midtown Manhattan to the Lawrence station via the Long Island Railroad was a time he could relax and think about taking his wife into his arms upon entering the house. The most important part of day was his daily phone call home to see how his wife was doing and to tell her how much he loved her. He didn't have the heart to tell her that she really didn't have to get up as early as he did, but he knew she liked to please him by kissing him good-bye in the morning.

As he was reviewing the previous month's sales numbers, his private phone rang. Only a handful of people had this number and he could count them on one hand. His first thought was Apollonia, but that wouldn't be like her to call him on the private number. She would call through the switchboard so she could have a pleasant chat with his Administrative Assistant. He wondered who would be calling him at three-thirty in the afternoon. He turned and picked up the phone that was located on the credenza behind his desk.

"Hello, this is Colin."

"Colin, how are you?"

He heard the voice of his older sister come through the phone. He immediately sat straight in his chair figuring she was the bearer of bad news. Much to his amazement he began to sweat at the thought of something happening to his parents, her husband, or God forbid, her children. "Lizzie, to what do I owe this afternoon interruption?"

Elizabeth Goldsmith knew her brother's work habits and replied, "Jesus Christ, Colin, you are just a workaholic. Can't take a minute or two out for your older sister?"

Colin rolled his eyes as he chuckled inside at her attempt to instill Jewish guilt in him for not taking a moment to talk to her. "Ok, ok. I do love you sis. What may or can I do for you?"

"I know it is on short notice, but do you think you could stay in the city this evening and meet me for a quick bite. Your choice of restaurant."

"Is there something wrong Lizzie? Who died?"

"Oh, my God, Colin!!! No one died, well hopefully the rabbit will soon for you and Apollonia, but that is not the reason. Please just have a quick dinner with me. It will be just you and me. If you want, I'll call Apollonia and..."

"No!!! I'll call her and explain that my crazy converted sister wants to have a private tete-a-tete with her brother over some innocuous thing that must be decided today. God, you can be a pain-in-the-ass. What time and where?"

"Five thirty at the Brasserie on Fifty-Second Street and Park Avenue. Don't be late."

"You are a piece of work, Lizzie. Pick the place you say to me and what do you do? Decide not only the time, but also the place. Ok, five thirty at the Brasserie. I know where it is located. Bye. Love you."

"Love you too."

The phone line went dead and he returned the phone to its cradle. He mind began to weave stories of horror, intrigue, and death. He forced himself to stop thinking about what was so important to his sister that he had to say in Manhattan to meet her instead of her talking to him on the phone. He called Apollonia. She was understanding and made no effort to dissuade him from meeting with his sister. The rest of the afternoon dragged by instead of flying because of the mind fuck his sister left him with by not giving him a hint at what she wanted to talk to him about. All he could do was try to figure out what she wanted.

Colin arrived a few minutes after the appointed time to find his sister waiting in the vestibule. At 32, Elizabeth Goldsmith still had her svelte body notwithstanding giving birth to two wonderful children. She worked as a physical therapist, so she had the time and wherewithal to exercise and keep herself in excellent physical shape. Lizzie always dressed casually, but Colin saw that this evening she was wearing a nice print dress that showed off her well-toned legs and her nice 32b breasts. She saw him approach and when he was in front of her she offered her cheek for a brotherly kiss. She returned the favor although he did not offer his cheek for her to kiss.

Smiling and overly happy, Lizzie said, "Glad you could make it on such short notice. The Maître 'D said we shouldn't have to wait long for a table. Place seems pretty slow tonight."

Colin replied, "I wouldn't know. I'm usually on the train home to Lawrence now. You ruined my afternoon and I really need to know what is so important." The tinge of anger showed in his voice and his sister didn't react positively or negatively to it.

It didn't take long for them to be seated in a small booth for two along the rear wall of the restaurant. The waiter brought water and the menus. He listed the specials, but Colin told him that all he wanted was some Escargot. Lizzie requested some Steak Tartar and a decent bottle of wine. The waiter politely took their order and said he'd return with the wine in a few minutes.

Colin showed his impatience with his sister, "So???"

Lizzie knew she couldn't hold back any longer. "Colin, are you and Apollonia planning to start a family? You've been married, what, just short of two years and no announcement of an impending child."

Colin was chagrined. "I can't believe you asked me to stay in the city to sit in a restaurant and ask me if I'm trying to start a family. Really, Lizzie, what business is it of yours? You become some sort of Jewish, oh, I don't know what you'd call it, but yes we're trying to start a family."

Lizzie sat back against the back of the booth, eyed her brother, and bluntly asked, "Colin, are you having problems? Is she, ah, infertile?? Or, are you the problem?"

He blushed and sputtered his response, "Lizzie, you're my older sister not my sexual therapist. I can't believe your aggressiveness about this topic. There are some things that are private and I'd like to keep it that way."

"I think you need to talk to someone. Especially if the problem is yours. It would be much better if you could complete the deal as soon as humanly possible..."

"And you don't think I'm trying??? God. Lizzie!!! I'd give my right arm to come home and find out that Apollonia is with child. Did mom and dad put you up to this? I so sounds like them..."

Lizzie reacted when he brought their mother and father into the conversation. "No, Colin, they did not. This is all my doing. I'm heartbroken for you two. I see how she is with my children and her sister's children. She's just begging to become a mother. I can see it in her face and eyes. I think you better get your shit together and give her what she needs."

They were interrupted when the waiter returned with their meals and the wine. They ceased speaking while he was opening the bottle and filling Colin's glass with a small amount so he could taste the wine. Not being a wine connoisseur, Colin didn't even try to act like he knew what he was doing so he just asked the waiter to pour a glass for each of them. The waiter politely did so and removed himself from the table. Lizzie could see that her brother was not happy with her, but her knowledge of things he knew nothing about made her press him about his attempts to impregnate his wife.

When they finished eating and after Colin paid the bill, Colin's loathing about his sister's meddling was all over his face. He showed his anger by standing and walking away from her. Lizzie sighed and knew that he was in for the surprise of his life if he didn't complete the task of impregnating his wife. She nodded knowingly as he walked out of the restaurant. She wanted to tell him what she thought she knew, but thought better of it. Lizzie thought to herself that her brother's intransience about seeking her support would only backfire and his life as he knew it would come to an end. She took a tissue out of her purse and dabbed her eyes for she knew he was in a lot of trouble.

When she exited the restaurant she pulled her cellular phone from her purse and dialed. The phone was answered after the second ring which did not surprise Lizzie. The individual at the other end was waiting for this call. Elizabeth Goldsmith just began to speak, "Colin has no idea. He is blinded by his work and his obstinacy about anyone trying to tell him or counsel him about his life."

She listened as she walked downtown on Park Avenue. "No, I did not!!! I tried to be gentle with him. He was so arrogant with me about trying to use Jewish guilt on him as if I learned it when I converted."

Lizzie listened again and finalized the conversation, "I'll try to talk to him again, but I don't think anything I say will penetrate his thick skull. He's too smart for his own good. He may just get what he deserves, but I'll repeat myself, he's blind to what is going on around him or he is just ignoring it. Yes, I love you too. Bye."

Elizabeth Goldsmith headed to Grand Central Station to take one of the last commuter Metro North trains back home to Westchester County. She forced herself to not think about the predicament her brother was blind to. She stifled a tear and used her emotional state to force herself to walk with a determined gait to the train station. The consequences her brother faced were his own doing since he didn't want to confide his problems to his older sister.