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The Moretti's - A Different Family Dynamic

Chapter 119

Wednesday Late Afternoon, Evening, & Night – New York City & Columbus Place – 5 March 2003

“Apollonia,” said Colin, “the car service will pick you up at 3:00 PM. I ordered a Lincoln Town car. Will you be travelling alone or with anyone, because I need to know as soon as humanly possible so I can change the vehicle if I need?”

“I’ll let you know,” replied Apollonia, “for now a Town Car will suffice.”

Apollonia hadn’t seen Sonny all day. She did not ask Colin about him or his whereabouts.

Pricilla Smith was given her instructions, private cell phone numbers, and cautioned that if anyone but her used them she would suffer the consequences. Apollonia had Colin arrange for the car service to take her to MacArthur Airport in Farmingdale to the Moretti’s private jet contractor. Before she left, Pricilla spent quiet time with Ming at her house only to return and burst into tears when she said good-bye to Apollonia. Both women knew that the young girl would perform to their liking and after she graduated high school, she’d be back providing her body for their use.

Viviano called her several times to ask about his wife and one time to advise her that Moretti Construction was one of the three final bidders on the contract to revitalize the roadways around the Throgs Neck Bridge. He also requested to speak at length with Colin about the number of couples waiting for introductions to the Moretti family. Apollonia could hear the anger in his voice, but did not react. Instead, she whispered that any time he wanted, she was available to him. Viviano Rossi didn’t answer her. He ended the conversation by closing his cell phone thus cutting off communication with Apollonia.

Apollonia sought out Ming. She found her in her office working on some Chinese writing. As she knew from previous times, Apollonia waited until her lover was at a stopping point before interrupting. Ming knew her lover was standing behind her, but continued to work until she knew she made her point because Apollonia was becoming frustrated. How did she know? Simple, the quiet shuffling of Apollonia’s feet on the hardwood floor grew with intensity and speed as the time passed. Ming, placed the brush on the small bowl she used to keep them off the table, turned, and said, “You need something, Appy?”

“Jesus Christ, Ming,” moaned Apollonia, “you still mad at me?”

"Your sister is stubborn," said Ming, "that much I know because she even refused my help getting her home. But, whatever you tried to tell her to assuage her fear did not work. And, you're wondering why I'm still angry with you."

"There is no way she is going to forgive me, Ming," cried Apollonia, "and the faster you realize it, the quicker we can move forward. Take me at my word. I promise nothing will happen to her."

Ming Zhen shrugged her shoulders, "Only way is to prove it to me, Appy. Now, is there something you want?"

"Yes," she cooed, "come with me to the city. I have a meeting at the attorney's office. Then we can find someplace, dark, quiet, and romantic to have dinner. Just you and me." Apollonia batted her eyelashes, pursed her lips, and lifted her hands asking her lover to come into her arms.

"It's the middle of the week," said Ming. "I have to review the boy's homework. See that they are up to date or beyond in their school assignments. As much as I'd love to go with you, my parental needs require me to deny your request. I'll be here waiting your return."

"Ok, punish me Ming," whined Apollonia. "I understand completely why you are doing this to me. But, remember, I hold the key to your remaining in this house on Columbus Place. One word and you and your sons will be living in some shithole studio apartment in Chinatown."

Ming Zhen stood, walked over to her lover, and before she could react, punched Apollonia Moretti in her solar plexus which forced all the air from her lungs and doubled her over in pain. Ming waited a moment before she grabbed Apollonia by the hair and tossed her across the room like a rag doll. She watched Apollonia crash into the wall and slide down into a heap on the floor. Apollonia Moretti tried to move but her lack of breath kept her on the floor. She looked up in time to see Ming give a roundhouse open handed slap to her face which forced her to fall onto her right side. Ming knelt next to Apollonia, grabbed the collar of her shirt, and pulled her to a sitting position.

"When are you going to learn, Moretti," growled Ming, "that you have a snowball's chance in hell to overpower me in a fight. Remember who taught you. Remember who willingly takes a second position to you, but who knows you're nothing more than a novice in the realm of the martial arts. I told you this morning that I would not tolerate one iota of bullshit when it comes to Raffaella. I don't fuckin' care about Moretti history or whatever. You fuckin' lay one finger on your sister in anger and I'll personally rip your heart out through your fuckin' asshole."

"Wha-a-a-a," moaned Apollonia.

"Next," continued Ming, "don't you ever threaten me with your ability to run me off of Columbus Place. I will not tolerate your insolence. It is time for me to put our relationship into perspective. I am here because I'm in love with you. I am not your submissive bitch. I'll play the part, but you fuck with my children and I'll break every fuckin' bone in your body and then piss on you for the fun of it. I'm more than willing and able to pick myself up and move back to Chinatown. You seem to forget how much money you willingly gave to me. I want to hear an answer from you Moretti."

Her breath finally coming naturally, Apollonia looked at her lover, and wondered what it was going to take to repair their relationship. Of course, she knew that repairing and maintaining her relationship with her sister was paramount to Ming. But, pissing her off enough to use physical force to make her point was something that happened only once before and that was in the second year of their relationship when they attended college together. Apollonia Moretti felt the fear that others felt when she made her point through physical means. She was for the first time in years afraid of someone else. Afraid of what she has wrought on herself because of herself.

"What do you want Ming?" asked Apollonia.

"I want to hear you Moretti," said Ming.

Apollonia heard her lover use just her last name which was tantamount to calling her nothing, a low life, a useless individual. Again, Apollonia asked, "What do you want Ming?"

"I want to hear you Moretti," said Ming, "I want to hear you tell me what I want to hear."

"I love you Ming," said Apollonia frustrated by her lover's inexplicit request for information.

"This is your entire fault Moretti," said Ming. "You're on your ass wondering again how you lost and why I did it to you. You brought this all on by yourself. You attain the height of power within your family and you immediately let it go to your head. You look down on everyone and you make it plainly obvious to all. You spit, piss, and shit on people without thinking about how they can truly help and nurture you. For a highly intelligent woman, you have fallen into the trap every senior executive, school principal, or military officer falls into – ego, self-importance, and self-aggrandizement. Again, I want to hear you Moretti."

Apollonia Moretti burst into tears. For the first time in years, someone other than her mother or father took her to task about how she was living her life. The truth always hurts and it always hurts most when it comes from the one you love. Ming Zheng hit her square in the solar plexus again without really physically doing so. Apollonia Moretti lost her breath because she saw the truth in Ming's statements. There was no reason on the face of the Earth for her to hurt her sister the way she did this morning. Her eyes were red and bloodshot. Snot ran down from her nose. Through bloodshot and bleary eyes, she looked at her lover, raised her arms, and with her body begged Ming to embrace her to tell her everything would be okay.

Ming Zheng did not give into the woman she loved. Instead, she held her position and said, "I want to hear you Moretti."

Apollonia knew she lost and had no choice but to capitulate to her lover's demand, "I am sorry for threatening my sister with death. I am sorry for telling her I would make her children orphans. As Jesus looks down on me, I swear I will never hurt my sister physically or emotionally ever again as long as we both live. Is that what you want to hear?"

"One last question Moretti," said Ming. "Who protects Raffaella Moretti and her children?"

Apollonia Moretti took a deep breath, exhaled, and said, "Ming Zheng protects Raffaella Moretti and her children."

Ming Zhen placed her right hand under Apollonia's chin, picked her face up because she was now above her, and said, "Don't you ever forget it Moretti."

No sooner than the words came out of her mouth she leaned forward and kissed her lover. Apollonia Moretti relaxed as the two women slid to the floor kissing and embracing. Ming Zhen took control of their liaison by placing her body on top of and between Apollonia's separated legs. She pressed her hips into the space between Apollonia's thighs and made like she was fucking her for all it was worth. Apollonia opened her body and let her lover pound her as if she had a cock embedded into her. They kissed, exchanged spit, and pressed their breasts against one another. As if a stopwatch had reached its end, both women pressed their mons against the other's, and orgasmed in unison. What always amazed both women was the ability for them to attain an orgasm and reach nirvana without direct clitoral stimulation.

Five minutes after their bodies calmed down Ming lifted her shoulders and upper body, looked into her lover's eyes, and said, "Go home, shower, and change. Give me some time and I'll do the same. A romantic dinner with you is what I'd love more than anything."

"What about the Shen and Lian?" asked Apollonia.

"Tell Colin he's babysitting," answered Ming, "and making dinner."

Ming arrived at her lover's house dressed for the evening. She wore a halter top black merino wool mini dress with a brocade attached mandarin collar. The hem was curved to her hips and covered just enough to make a person wonder if she was wearing panties. On her feet was a pair of black five inch lambskin stilettos. The smoothness of her legs precluded the need for her to wear stockings. She did not pull her dark black hair behind her head. Instead she let it fall around her face onto her shoulders. Hanging on her right shoulder was a simple black leather handbag. Ming wore almost no makeup. A small amount of a complimentary foundation, some color on her cheeks, mascara on her eyelashes, and a small amount of color on her lips complimented her already beautiful facial structure.

Colin Cathcart turned to see Ming standing behind him and lost his breath. Beautiful women made him weak in the knees. His sissy clit twitched out of jealousy because he was not as beautiful as the woman who stood opposite him. Colin fell back against the counter in front of the sink and said, "Oh my, you are just so beautiful. Are you and Apollonia headed out tonight?"

Ming frowned, "She didn't tell you that you were responsible for Shen and Lian tonight? She didn't tell you we're headed to the city for a bit of legal business and then a quiet romantic dinner?"

Colin screwed up his mouth, moved his lips while keeping his teeth clinched together, and replied, "I guess she must have forgotten in her rush to go upstairs and change. I'm sure she would have told me before you two left. Either way, I'll be at your house when the boys come home. Is there anything special you want me to do or make them for dinner?"

"Two things Colin," said Ming, "Homework and a good wholesome dinner. Let them play for awhile and then promptly to bed by eight. Oh, yes, one more thing; don't dress like some transvestite slut."

Colin flinched but did not respond to her crass remark about he's forced to dress most of the time. "If they ask where you are?" said Colin.

"Nothing to hide Colin," said Ming. "I'm in the city with Aunt Apollonia."

Colin nodded knows the question was a stupid one. Instead of offering more of a conversation, he smiled, and returned to his work preparing food for storage in the freezer. Ming understood he wasn't being curt or dismissive. She turned and walked towards the hall that led to the great room. She decided to wait downstairs for her lover and took a seat on the couch that faced the staircase that she knew Apollonia would use to descend into the room. She looked around at the paintings and sculptures and knew her lover had not been as productive as she needed to be. It was time for her to have a heart-to-heart with Apollonia about her attention to detail when it came to her artwork even though the Moretti family business was taking most of her time. If she was going to become an internationally known artist, she had to work at her craft.

As Colin did when he saw her, Ming held her breath when she saw the love-of-her-life step down the staircase and walk towards her. She was and will always be the most beautiful creature God created. The mold had to have been thrown away because if there was another beauty like Apollonia Moretti walking the face of this Earth, time would definitely end if they occupied the same space and time. Apollonia was wearing what had to be a custom made lace and silk dress. From afar it looked as if she had nothing on underneath, but the thin silk sheaf that surrounded her body did as it was designed. The color was a soft turquoise that enhanced the color of her eyes. Woven into the lace were strands of eighteen carat gold like the gold flecks that dotted the turquoise of her eyes. The hemline was longer than one would expect for Apollonia Moretti but if the dress was shorter it would take away from how it covered and accentuated the curves of her body. On her legs was a pair of pale ecru thigh high stockings. On

her feet was a pair of six inch ecru lambskin heels. As she strode to where Ming sat, Ming realized that she was totally naked underneath her dress.

Apollonia offered her hand to Ming. She pulled her to her feet and embraced her. There kiss was short and sweet. Neither woman wanted to ruin their makeup. They had time for that later. Each one smiled and they both knew that the previous tête-à-tête was behind them. As they stood, quietly looking into one another's eyes, Colin interrupted to tell them the car service would be pulling in front of the house momentarily.

The driver of the Lincoln Town Car was another new chauffeur. He introduced himself as Nathan Childress. Apollonia and Ming had to look up to see his face. Nathan stood seven foot two-and-a-half inches and had the frame and weight of an outside linebacker. His bald head glistened in the late winter sun. His handshake was purposely soft. When the women asked him why, he explained that he shook a man's hand when he was eleven years old and broke several bones. From that day forward, he made sure that he never squeezed anyone's hand when greeting them. Apollonia and Ming looked at each other, smiled coquettishly, and quietly entered the rear of the sedan for their trip to the city.

Once in the car, Apollonia saw that the vehicle had a retractable partition installed which was out of the ordinary for a Lincoln Town Car. She requested the glass partition be closed for their privacy. Naturally, she confirmed that Nathan knew where he was headed and that he needed to make good time to the Flat Iron Building. The two women sat close, but not on top of one another. They held hands and talked quietly during the ride in the ever present New York traffic to East 23rd Street and 5th Avenue. Apollonia informed Nathan that she did not know how long they'd be in the building. She decided and he agreed that she would call him when they were through with their dinner sometime later that night. Her only caveat was he'd better be ready on a moment's notice to drive to their location to return them to Columbus Place. Nathan Childress agreed and once the women were in the building, he used his cell phone to call one of his white submissive bitches to force himself upon her and her husband.

The ride up the elevator gave the women a private moment to embrace and kiss before they had to maintain a modicum of decorum. The reception area was manned by a large rather obese black woman who immediately made it a point to let them know that she was the office gatekeeper. Apollonia didn't give an inch. She opened her handbag, pulled out her cell phone, and made it a point to call Howard's private line to tell him she was in the reception area. The gatekeeper answered her phone, nodded, and the two women watched her bravado whistle out of her ears just like the air out of a balloon when the plug was pulled. Apollonia took Ming's hand and the two women walked to the rear of the office where Howard's suite was situated.

His administrative assistant apologized for not having warned the temporary receptionist about the stature of Miss Moretti as a client. She did not offer either of the women a seat. Instead, she pressed the buzzer to announce them and the door to Howard's inner sanctum immediately began to open. Apollonia and Ming graciously handed their coats to the administrative assistant before crossing the threshold into Howard's inner sanctum. Once inside, the door reversed its course and began to close. Once closed the electronic locks slid shut and the white noise generator turned on creating a wave of sound that would mask to those outside the office the conversation taking place.

Apollonia guided Ming to the couch that was centered in the wider area of Howard's triangular shaped office. She noticed that Jon Parks was seated in front of Howard's desk. She smiled and said, "Ok, gentlemen, let's move the meeting to a more comfortable venue. Howard, you don't have to show off your superiority by sitting behind your desk. Just think, both of you can sit across from us and try to look up our dresses."

Howard groaned, stood up, and said, "I'm never going to know what to expect with you Miss Moretti. The one thing I am worried about is the attendance of Ms. Zheng at this meeting. I have to be sure that you understand the possible consequences if she becomes privy to information we discuss at this meeting. Client / Attorney privilege goes out the window because she is a third party. She is not my client and in no way related to you."

Apollonia eyes crinkled, she turned, kissed Ming on the cheek, and said, "She is your client. Didn't you perform legal work for her in both the civil and criminal arenas? Also, we're lovers in the pure sense of the word. Only problem is we're not officially married. Please, Howard, take your worries and shove them up your ass." Apollonia turned to Jon Parks and said, "What do you have for me Jon?"

Jon reached down to his lap, opened the manila folder, and took out several pages of letter sized paper. He handed them to Apollonia and said, "I have found the chink in Melanie Margolis' armor. In fact, I believe with a bit more digging, we can put asunder her desire for higher public office. The information may be so caustic to her present job she may just have to resign in disgrace."

Apollonia leaned back into the couch, looked around at the participants, and read the first page without showing any emotion. Rather than read all the pages, she put them onto her lap and said, "DNA???"

Jon Parks brightened and took the lead, "Yes Apollonia, DNA, otherwise known as deoxyribonucleic acid. It is the building block of every living animal and plant on this planet and most likely the universe."

"Yeah, so?" said Apollonia a bit incredulous that she was brought to the city to hear Jon Parks tell her what she already knew. "You brought me into the city to read and listen to you explain what I already know. You guys told me you had something that would make my day. So???"

Jon waved off Howard. He leaned forward, nodded his head, and replied in a knowledgeable tone, "I asked you here because I found what you are looking for to break Melanie Margolis, Nassau County District Attorney. I have a friend that works downtown at the New York City Crime lab. I called her this morning to see if I could visit her for lunch and other activities. She returned my call and nicely deflated my offer because she was backlogged with DNA work. She is a senior level criminologist who specializes in testing DNA. This made me think about backlogs. If the New York City Crime Lab is backlogged, where do they outsource their overflow? I know the city does that in other departments; then why not the crime lab."

Everyone sat listening and not even intimating they wanted to interrupt Jon. He stood, walked back to Howard's desk, and picked up his travel mug of coffee and Irish whiskey. He returned, sat, and blushed that he had not offered to retrieve drinks for the other participants. The looks on their faces was enough to make him squirm, but he did not make the offer, instead, Howard asked, "Sorry, Miss Moretti. Would you like something to drink?"

Apollonia smirked, "You have to ask?"

It was Howard's turn to blush, "Black coffee. Ms. Zheng?"

"If you have it," replied Ming, "a pot of strong green tea would be nice."

Howard did not rise from his seat. Instead he pulled what appeared to be a walkie-talkie type device from his shirt pocket, keyed it, and asked his administrative assistant to prepare the tea and coffee for his guests. "Something new from a client," he said, "They asked me to test this device because it works without having to turn off the white noise generator. It would have been just as easy to open the door, stick my head out, or use the intercom on my desk. Shouldn't be more than a few minutes, ladies. I apologize."

Jon Parks continued, "DNA testing has taken the forensic community by storm. A microscopic amount of the stuff can put an individual at a crime scene with ninety-nine percent accuracy. Every state plus the federal government uses DNA testing. In fact every country whether they can afford the equipment or not uses DNA testing. What peaked my interest was the term '*backlog*'. If a backlog exists, then private companies must be filling the need. What also made me wonder was something that showed up when I did a Google search. '*DNA error*' was returned third on the search list. Errors – just think what that means..."

No one spoke, so Jon continued, "Ten years ago, labs needed a quarter-size stain of blood or semen to be able to produce a strong match. This process took a minimum of six to eight weeks. Today, labs need only forty human cells to produce a DNA profile. That amount of human cells is invisible to the naked eye. The time line to

produce the profile is down to days as they use a process called "polymerase chain-reaction" or PCR. The sensitivity of this process is extreme to the nth degree..."

Apollonia interrupted, "Again Jon, how does that affect my need to get something on Melanie Margolis?"

"Please give me a moment, Miss Moretti," said Jon. "Let me continue and I'm sorry for the long-winded explanation, but when I arrive at the end, I know beyond a shadow of a doubt you'll be pleased." He did not wait, "It seemed that the initial numbers of DNA errors audited and numerically compiled in labs across the country were caused by a simple act of human error. A technician is standing next to open evidence bags, prepared slides, or processed test tubes never thought about the area or ambient air around him or her. A co-worker enters the DNA testing space, talks to the technician, and unbeknownst to either of them, spittle contaminates the sample. If all you need is forty human cells, then wouldn't a small droplet of spit be more than enough to contaminate the sample. With the PCR tests used today, DNA is extracted, mixed with special chemicals, and put into a computerized machine that makes thousands of copies of the DNA. The test used is called '*short tandem repeats*' or STR. It measures DNA at thirteen sites along the strand. The results are fed into a computer and the STR test can predict a DNA match that has only one in a quadrillion - a million-billion - chance of being the same as the randomly select person. Just think what a person can do with that equipment."

"There are four types of errors and problems that crime lab auditors uncover when testing the credentials of a laboratory. First is a simple mix up of the DNA samples, which is the most common form of DNA error. Second is sample contamination; such as a lab tech touches the sample. Third is a time lapse error where the DNA degrades over time or it is not properly stored when transported from the crime scene. Fourth and lastly is bad data analysis. It takes more than software to understand the probabilities and statistics of DNA testing and matching knowledge is very often lacking in a lab whether it be a government or private facility," Jon sat back and allowed the participants to chew on what he just told them.

Thankfully, they were interrupted by Howard's administrative assistant. He went to his desk, pushed the button to release the electronic locks, and allow the hidden motors to open the door. His assistant entered with a tray that contained a carafe of coffee, a tea pot, and two mugs. She placed them on the coffee table in front of the couch, bowed slightly from her waist, and backed out of the office. Howard pushed the button to close and lock the door. Apollonia and Ming helped themselves.

Ming spoke, "I'm sorry to burst your bubble Mr. Parks, but an education in DNA testing still does not answer the question – what do you have to help Miss Moretti with her requirements to stop the criminal action against Mario Moretti?"

The late afternoon sun filtered through the windows and blinds forming bands of light that divided the vertical space into light and dark bands. Within the span of the light rays, small particles of dust floated, rose, and sunk to the floor. Jon Parks saw the turmoil or dance of the dust caused by the air flow in the room and realized he had a way to make his point.

"Apollonia, please look across and around the office," said Jon, "and tell me what you see."

"I don't understand," she said and then she turned her head, smiled, and continued; "there are bands of light."

"Yes," said Jon his eyes twinkling, "and what do you see in those bands?"

"Dust," said Apollonia.

"Yes dust," said Jon. "Dust, dust that can contaminate a DNA sample. Dust is everywhere including the crime lab. That is one point, but Miss Moretti, please think about the one word that made me salivate the moment I heard it come from the mouth of my friend."

Apollonia looked at her lover, frowned, turned to Jon, and said, "Error???"

"You had a fifty percent chance of getting it, Miss Moretti," said Jon. "Backlog. The New York City Crime Lab has an enormous backlog which is affecting the cases in the judiciary. Please, Apollonia think."

Apollonia sipped her hot black coffee, furrowed her brow, and her face took on the look of someone trying to figure out how to untie the Gordian Knot. Howard and Jon intently watched the beautiful Italian woman knowing that she should be able to figure out where they were trying to take her. Neither of them cared about the length of time it would consume for her to come to the only viable conclusion. Apollonia sipped her coffee and concentrated. In her mind, she thought about the DNA errors and the single word backlog. Backlog meant that they had more work than they could handle. So, if Moretti Construction had a backlog that was causing them to be late on deliverables, what would Mario and Viviano do? Bingo!!! The bulb lit up and Apollonia sat back, finished her mug, and smiled from ear-to-ear.

"Fuck me," she said. "Fuck me and the horse I rode in on!!! The city has a backlog. That means the city is or has used outside contractors to fulfill their requirements by performing the DNA testing in some cases. I'm going to guess. Tell me that Melanie Margolis' family owns and runs DNA laboratories that are used by the city, state, and federal government to help them with their backlog of DNA testing and other work."

Jon Parks stood, stretched out his arms, and chortled, "BINGO!!! He sat down and could not contain his glee, "Melanie Margolis and her family owns sixteen DNA processing laboratories across the United States. She has the ability to alter DNA evidence and nobody would question the veracity of the results. That is why she has never lost a case. And, that is how you're going to end her career."

Howard Cohen spoke, "With Jon's information, I have started a search on the ownership of the sixteen laboratories and the real estate where they lease or outright own the space. By this time tomorrow, we will know the percentage of stock ownership by members of the Margolis family. We already know in which cities the laboratories are located. The difficult part is how we ascertain whether or not Ms. Margolis abused her ownership by using the labs to create false positives, thus giving her the ammunition to convict an innocent man or woman. I know that she may have put many a guilty perpetrator behind bars, but even if one innocent person is rotting in prison because of her desire to be perfect she should suffer the consequences."

"Who is doing the search?" asked Apollonia.

"John Whittingham," replied Howard. "He wouldn't allow me to give it to anyone else."

The look from Apollonia's eyes scared Howard Cohen. The change was immediate and her voice took on a tenor of controlled anger, "I almost shot that useless asshole's cock off. Navy Seal or not, I need to know I can trust that son-of-bitch."

"You have my word, Apollonia," said Howard. "You have to believe that he is more scared of you than he is of having a forty-five pressed to his temple by a sociopath bent on killing him for just breathing."

Ming interjected, "I do have a question. If there has been a rash of DNA errors at laboratories and they know the causality, then what have they done to protect the science and will it have an effect on Apollonia's end game."

"The labs have instituted a clean-room environment," replied Jon. "Every sample is stored separately. When it is opened for testing it is opened in a sealed environment. The lab technician works by putting his hand into rubber gloves and works within a sealed glass space. The samples never leave the environment. The computer and all ancillary equipment are within the clean-room space including the specially designed printer."

"Then how could Melanie Margolis change the results?" asked Ming. Apollonia did not stop her from questioning the men. Her questions proved to be insightful and incisive.

"That is what we have to ascertain," replied Jon Parks. "I have several ideas, but the only way we'll be able to test any theory is to do it in a working environment. We don't have that environment."

Apollonia Moretti poured a half-mug of black coffee and downed it in three gulps. She looked at Howard and then Jon, "That is simple. Either purchase a lab that is down on its luck or build one. You have authorization to spend whatever you need. Just make it happen and fast."

Both men sat mouths agog. Building a laboratory from scratch could cost the Moretti family several millions of dollars, but if Apollonia Moretti authorized the expenditure then a lab would be purchased or built. The ability to test scenarios would provide the different methodologies that could be used to compromise a DNA test.

Apollonia stood, offered Ming her hand, and said, "One last thing Howard. Texas?"

"Everything has been finalized," he replied. "There is no trace of Umberto, Teresa, Adolfo, or Adelina Moretti. For all intent, none of them ever existed. You are on the title of all real estate, bank accounts, and off-shore properties. Is there anything else?"

"No," replied Apollonia. "Yes!!! Goldsmith."

"Two things relating to Dr. Goldsmith," replied Howard. "I received a call from an ADA in the Manhattan District Attorney's Office this morning. The Grand Jury returned a true bill against Dr. Goldsmith for the murder of Jessica Silverstein. The ADA intimated that the DA would accept an offer of guilty with a sentence of twenty years to life without the possibility of parole."

"What did you say?" asked Apollonia. She showed absolutely no emotion when the discussion turned to her brother-in-law and his troubles.

"I didn't say a thing in response," he continued, "I knew we'd have to talk first."

"Tell them to pound sand. I'll make the necessary phone calls and get a judge that will make the trial a very difficult one for the prosecution. One thing to think about is a change in venue and I want you to stall. Throw everything and anything at the DA to make him waste time responding to your challenges. The result will be one Dr. Goldsmith with egg on his face, a long drawn out preliminary and trial, but he'll be a free man in the end," said Apollonia.

Mr. Cohen understood what she was saying needed to be done by his firm to force an acquittal of Dr. Goldsmith. Before she could ask, Howard offered up, "I know you're wondering about the second incident. I'm waiting for a phone call. When I know the situation is under control, I will call you as we agreed. As of now, nothing and that is a good sign."

Apollonia did not say anything in response to his information concerning the death of her sister-in-law. Instead she did something totally out of character. She released Ming's hand, stepped over to Howard, and embraced him. She whispered, "Don't let me down. I don't want to find a new attorney because you've sunk to the bottom somewhere in the Atlantic. I trust you." She pulled away just enough to place a kiss on each of his cheeks.

Howard Cohen did not say a word in response. He stepped to his desk and pressed the button that would open the door to his office. Jon Parks offered his hand to Apollonia and was instead greeted with a kiss. The two men watched the two women exit the office. Each of them wondered what it would be like to be in bed with either or both of them. When the door finally shut, each man expended his breath happy that the meeting went well and that their employer had the brains and the finances to make their job that much easier. They went back to Howard's desk to begin planning the acquisition or building of a state-of-the-art DNA laboratory.

Before the two women left the atrium of the Flat Iron Building, Apollonia Moretti made a phone call to procure two seats at one of New York's premier restaurants. She politely stepped away from Ming as she spoke to the proprietor. Seven minutes later, after a rather pointed conversation, Apollonia had secured two seats at Masa, an elegantly designed Japanese restaurant on Columbus Circle in the Time Warner Center.

"I made dinner reservations, but it will not be as romantic as I would like," said Apollonia.

"Okay," replied Ming. "Just don't be taking me to a hotdog stand outside Madison Square Garden."

"Damn," chuckled Apollonia, "if you've never eaten a hotdog from a New York City rolling cart, you've never eaten. Let's go."

Outside, Apollonia waved down a yellow cab. She told the driver their destination and made a point to let him know that she would have his hack license if he thought he could take them for a joy ride. The Indian man behind the wheel pleaded stupidity, but he knew when he was dealing with a full-bred, home grown New Yorker. He repeated the destination – 10 Columbus Circle, Time Warner Center – and made his way uptown knowing he had to cross to the west side to get to Columbus Circle.

The ride took twenty minutes in the late afternoon traffic. Apollonia paid the driver and gave him a handsome tip. She was still reacting to the results of the meeting with Howard Cohen and Jon Parks. The two women entered the building and made their way to the door of the restaurant. The owner waited for them and guided them to one of the twenty-six seats he provided for his unparalleled omakase experience.

Once seated, Ming said, "It is impossible to get seats here. This is the top Japanese restaurant in New York City. How did you do it?"

Apollonia winked and said, "I mentioned the name of a person in Japan who does business with the family and the owner. Suddenly, a table opened up and what is more important we are seated earlier than is usual for this place. I hope you'll enjoy sushi, sashimi, and sake."

"Hmmm," said Ming, "I wonder if the sushi will be as tasty as your Italian fish, Miss Moretti."

"You're bad," replied Apollonia. "The meal will be created by the owner. We only have to choose the drinks or we can leave that up to him if we want. In Japan it is called an omakase experience. After we're done, the omakase experience I want to enjoy is your Oriental charms."

The room was elegant yet simple. The décor drew from the Japanese sensibility of shibui and umami. Shibui is simplicity devoid of unnecessary elements and the honest preservation of materials. Umami is the basic essence or flavor inherent in each ingredient used in the food, its preparation, and presentation. The room is constructed to give the diners the feeling they are one with nature. The sushi preparation counter is carved from a single slab of Japanese cypress Hinoki wood. The backdrop to the sushi preparation performance stage is a pond with a bamboo garden and floral arrangements according to the season. Customers enjoy five carefully composed appetizers, followed by a sushi entrée that features fifteen to twenty types of exotic seafood. The seafood is flown in from Japan daily. The dessert course completes the meal. Each ingredient is given its own spotlight to revel its original essence. The connection that got Apollonia seated was simple. The flights used to bring the seafood in from Japan are wholly owned by the company the Morettis use to fly around the world.

The dinner was exceptional in all aspects. The two women ate slowly and savored the tastes of the seafood presented to them by the world renowned owner of the restaurant. The sushi delivered by the owner was fresh and every piece was something neither of the women had ever eaten before. As the dishes were presented, the owner gave them a complete history of the fish and how it was prepared. The presentation of the sushi on the plate made both women afraid to eat, because they did not want to ruin the beauty of the artwork. They left the choice of drink to him and were pleasantly surprised when he brought a bottle of white wine and cold Saki for them to enjoy with the food. Dessert was simple, but elegant. Two scoops of vanilla ice cream and two fried bananas. During the meal,

several noted New Yorkers entered the establishment, but it was Apollonia Moretti that held sway over the customers. Ming Zheng was truly amazed that people knew who her lover was and how they reacted to her presence.

"Am I reading this all wrong," said Ming. "Are these hoity-toity New Yorkers actually bowing to your presence?"

Apollonia tried to deflect the question, but thought better of doing that, "I guess that I'm a known quantity in this city. I know Mario and Lucia, when she was alive, could not eat in peace in some restaurants. I believe that is why we stay so close to Columbus Place. The restaurants in the Five Towns know us and respect our privacy. Here, in the city, we're celebrities and we need to reluctantly accommodate our fans some of whom we should not even acknowledge with a simple nod of the head. Believe me, I wish I could reverse the specter of our family's popularity so we could live our lives in peace."

"Are you ready to go?" asked Ming.

"If you are, I am," said Apollonia.

It took Nathan Childress thirty minutes to get to Columbus Circle. When his cell phone rang he was in the middle of screwing a fifty-five year old matron while her third husband knelt behind him and sucked his balls. He decided to wait to answer the ringing cell phone because he was moments away from filling the middle-aged woman's vagina with his seed. He pulled up to the building, jumped out, and opened the rear passenger door for his clients. Once they were inside, he pulled away from the curb and headed towards the Midtown Tunnel and Columbus Place.

Apollonia tapped on the glass partition. Nathan lowered it and heard her say, "What the fuck took you so long to come to pick us up?"

"Ah, well, um..." he mumbled. He didn't know whether the truth should be told.

Apollonia spewed her venom, "You fuckin' nigger. I bet you were fuckin' some cunt and decided your orgasm was more important than picking up your client. Do you fuckin' know who I am? Tell me you were asleep, but I know what you were doing because I can smell it on you. You were fuckin' some bitch. Well???"

Nathan Childress did not react to his passenger's use of the word nigger. He knew he was caught. His boss told him before he left to pick up Miss Moretti that she was the most important client of the company. He was told to respond, 'How high?' if she told him to jump. Now, he had to admit he was fuckin' a matronly white woman instead of sitting somewhere waiting for her call. Apollonia and Ming saw him squirm in his seat which confirmed Apollonia's somewhat educated stab at his whereabouts.

"Excuse me Miss Moretti," said Nathan as kept his eyes on the road, "I don't know what to say, except, I apologize for taking thirty minutes to arrive to pick you up. I have no excuse."

"No excuse," harrumphed Apollonia. "How old are you, Nathan?"

"Thirty-two, Miss Moretti," he replied.

"Tell me about Nathan," she said. "I'm curious about you."

"I don't know what you want to know, ma'am," he said. "I'm the fifth of five children. I have two older brothers and two older sisters. I was born in Tupelo, Mississippi, educated in the Marine Corps, and asked to accept an honorable discharge when an undercover black operation went bad. I'm single and live alone in a small apartment on the second floor of a house in Amityville. I really have trouble holding a job because believe it or not, I have a rather short temper. I wanted to retire from the Corps at the age of fifty-one after serving thirty years. Now, I'm lucky to hold down a job driving a livery or cab."

"Tell me the truth Nathan," said Apollonia, 'where were you?"

The car was warm but not sweltering. Sweat formed on Nathan's shaved head. He rubbed his head for a moment and answered, "I was with a middle-aged couple. I was, ah, ah..."

Apollonia burst out laughing, "You were fuckin' the woman while her cuckold husband watched?"

"Not exactly," he replied. "I was fuckin' her, but he was behind me suckin' on my big black balls."

"Listen Nathan," laughed Apollonia, "if you can truly control your anger and always tell me the truth, I can help you get a better employment situation considering your service to this nation in the Marine Corps."

"Are you serious?" he asked.

"Yes," said Apollonia. "I want you to remember this evening and this conversation. I will call your employer and get the information I need to do a complete background check and contact you. Don't worry about your boss. This won't be the first time I've taken someone from his employ and it won't be the last. The one imperative I have to tell you – don't make me regret offering you a position even if it means you're still driving this or any vehicle for me."

"No Miss Moretti," said Nathan, "I promise you won't ever regret taking me under your wing. Thank you."

Without asking, Nathan closed the glass partition. Apollonia and Ming saw him tap, no pound the steering wheel in gratitude to his finding something better to do with his life. He kept his eyes on the road as the two women quietly made out in the back of the car. Forty minutes later he pulled up to the gate guarding the entrance to Columbus Place and with much aplomb as he could muster, broke into their kissing to tell them they had arrived home. Nathan watched as the gate swung open allowing him to guide the town car to Apollonia's driveway. He exited the vehicle and opened the passenger door closest to the house. Ming and then Apollonia exited the vehicle.

Nathan towered over the women. Apollonia reached into her handbag for her wallet. She retrieved five one-hundred dollar bills and placed them in Nathan's hand as she said, "Take care of yourself Nathan Childress. I am going to perform an in-depth background check and if you come back clean, I am going to designate you as my permanent driver. You'll start by continuing to work as an employee of the car company but only drive for me or who I designate. Your ability to maintain silence, keep your size inconsequential in relation to the passengers, and when needed provide a level of security will only build your foundation of trust and to grow to become a direct employee of the Moretti family. Untruthfulness and failure are not tolerated."

Apollonia and Ming saw a small tear form in his right eye and roll down his cheek. The big galoot had a soft spot and she hoped he also had the stamina and strength to toss around a few bodies when needed. He said, "Thank you very much Miss Moretti. I promise you won't be wrong by offering me a start to prove myself to you. I may seem soft, but when I need to protect someone or myself, I know how to handle myself. Thank you and I await your call."

He offered his hand which Apollonia took and shook just once. He smiled, turned, and returned to his seat behind the wheel. He left Columbus Place a very happy man.

Ming and Apollonia found Colin seated in the family room watching a movie on one of the on demand channels. From the sound of things, the boys were upstairs sound asleep. Colin was laid back legs akimbo watching some old Arnold Schwarzenegger movie. Before he could react to their entry into the family room, Apollonia was next to him on the couch with her hand wrapped around his gonads. The pressure began to build and the only show of pain was the tears forming in his eyes. He knew better than to yell and wake up Ming's sons.

"Do you always sit around like some fuckin' slut, Colina?" asked Apollonia. "What if the one of Ming's sons woke up and wandered down here and saw you splayed out on the couch showing off your sissy anatomy?"

Colin Cathcart knew he was in no position to argue with Apollonia. He saw the look in her eyes and immediately presented a submissive posture to try and assuage her desire to cause him pain. Ming stood behind her lover and shook her head wondering why he stayed with Apollonia. She also knew that her lover was just pulling Colin's chain because she could. Apollonia did not release his gonads, but she did lessen the pressure.

"I didn't think you'd sneak in on me," he said. "You know that I'm very proper when I'm around Shen and Lian. All I can say is, I'm sorry for letting my hair down. It won't happen again."

"Where is Sonny?" asked Apollonia.

"Sonny?" replied Colin. "He is still on the floor of my room wrapped in the duvet. I do not know if he fed himself or just remained prostrate on the floor since yesterday." Colin saw the look in his wife's face, "Don't look at me that way, Appy. I have tried since you put us together at the townhouse yesterday to speak with him. To make him see that he can live a fruitful life even though he tries to hide the fact that he is not sleeping when I talk to him. I truly believe he'd rather be dead."

Apollonia Moretti released her sissy husband's gonads, stood, and said, "I want you to go to him. Kneel down next to him and tell him in no uncertain terms that if he isn't up and around by the time I return in the morning, I will make his desires come true. Ming and I are headed upstairs. I am sleeping here tonight. You do as I say or I will replace your nose with your cock and balls. Don't fuckin' say a word, just get the fuck up, and leave."

Apollonia took her lover's hand and guided her towards her room. She did not wait to make sure Colin departed as ordered. Her desire to be naked, kissing, and fondling her lover was so overpowering she felt her juices begin to flow from her pussy. If she was wearing panties, they'd be soaked.

Ming sensed Apollonia's needs and unlike the dominant controlling personality she used to control Apollonia that morning, she allowed the strikingly beautiful Italian woman to rip off her one-of-a-kind Mandarin collared dress. Ming fell back onto her bed, opened her legs, and pulled the crotch of her panties to one side. Apollonia didn't wait. She literally dove between the spread legs of her lover and in one fell swoop licked from her anus to her clitoris. Ming Zheng knew she was in for a night of pleasure that would not stop until the wee hours of the morning. She did not need to take hold of Apollonia's head because their years of lovemaking especially after a fight always proceeded in the same manner. Apollonia would ravish Ming and sometime later Ming doing the same to Apollonia.

Apollonia would spend hours between Ming's legs. Sucking, fingering, licking, and drinking her sexual fluids. Ming would lay open and available, moaning, and using her voice to egg on her lover. Orgasms were many and uncontrollably all-consuming and body shaking. No part of Ming's anatomy was off limits. Apollonia would suck on her nipples. Suck on her clitoris. Force her tongue into the beautiful Chinese woman's anus and tongue fuck her. Ming loved when Apollonia would lay on top of her, kiss her, suck her tongue, and lick her ears. Sometime during their lovemaking the two lovers would situate their bodies so their vaginas were pressed together and each of them would move opposite the other which always resulted in a mind blowing orgasm. No matter where they made love as long as they were not outside, the room always took on the smell of sex, sex, and more sex. Each woman knew they would awaken in the morning, entangled, covered in dried vaginal fluids, and totally sated. Make-up sex was always the best for both of them.

When Ming finally had the chance to slip between her lover's legs, her nose reveled in her smell, and the taste of her love juices swirled around her mouth, over her taste buds, and lovingly slid down her throat. Apollonia Moretti did as her lover did hours before. She lay, open legged, and available to Ming. Even though she had orgasmed multiple times giving head to Ming, the feel of her fingers, lips, and tongue on her clitoris sent her over the top in a New York minute. It came to the point where she knew both of them had to relax and get some sleep.

Apollonia pulled her lover up her body, kissed her, and said, "To my side. Cuddle with me and let me feel you breathe as you sleep and dream dreams borne of our lovemaking."

Ming rolled to her side, pressed her backside into Apollonia's stomach, she felt her lover's hand surround her by the hip, and slip between her legs to cup her sex. In a matter of minutes, the two lovers fell into a deep sexually satisfied sleep.

Raffaella and Viviano Rossi spent exactly no time together when he returned home from work. Dinner for the children was brought in from the local Italian delicatessen even though Colin had offered to come over and feed the children. Raffaella made it through feeding the young ones before she sent them to their room without giving them a decent explanation as to why they could not watch their daily allotment of television. She retired to her bed, made herself comfortable, and decided to stare at the television rather than read one of the three books that lay on her night table. She ignored Viviano when he came into their room after work to shower and change. He went through his nightly routine with his wife in the room instead of downstairs fawning over and caring for the children.

"How are you?" he asked after exiting the bathroom dressed in his pajamas.

"As if you don't know," was her snide answer.

Viviano Rossi took a deep breath to keep from pummeling his wife about her head and shoulders. He made it quite obvious to Raffaella he was trying to control his anger. "I don't know what's gotten into you, but what I told you this morning was and will always be the truth..."

"Sure," said Raffaella, "and I have a bridge to sell you in Brooklyn."

Viviano threw his hands up in frustration, "I don't know why you're persisting. How many times prior to last night could I have had sex with your sister? How many times did I come to you at any of the gatherings and whisper that I wanted to fuck your sister? All I've ever done is love you unconditionally Raffaella. What more do you want from me?"

Raffaella tossed her husband a look that could kill a charging bull elephant. The room never felt as thick with anger and retribution as it did at that moment. "What I want from you is the fuckin' truth..."

What he heard was enough to blow the top off of the containment building of a nuclear reactor. "LISTEN YOU SPOILED FUCKIN' ITALIAN CUNT," raged Viviano, "I DID NOT SLEEP WITH YOUR SISTER. YOU'VE HAD MORE SEX WITH HER THAN I DID, CUNT!!! I DON'T NEED YOUR PARANOID BULLSHIT, RAFFY. MAYBE YOU DESERVED WHAT YOU GOT FROM APOLLONIA. ALL I KNOW, WHAT WE TOLD YOU IS THE WHOLE FUCKIN" TRUTH. I DID NOT SLEEP WITH YOUR SISTER!!! FUCK YOU AND I HOPE YOU FUCKIN' ROT!!!"

Viviano stormed out of the room he shared with his wife. The woman he loved and embraced with all his heart. Raffaella sat dumbfounded at his verbal explosion. In all the years they've been married, he never once became physical with her. They've had their share of arguments, but nothing like what just occurred in their bedroom. Raffaella wanted to get out of bed and run after her husband, but the pain she was feeling kept her in their bed. She finally began to feel she had made a terrible mistake accusing Apollonia and then Viviano of sleeping together. Resolution to the issue could only happen when she apologized to both of them and fell on her sword. The thought disgusted her, but she finally came to see that she was wrong in her paranoid assumption.

Viviano walked around the great room twice before he walked down the hall and into the breakfast area. He walked to the oak breakfast table, placed his hands on it, and tried to calm his seething anger. It did not work, so he walked into the family room, sat on the couch, turned on the plasma television, and found nothing to watch on over two-hundred and fifty cable channels. He sat, stared out the doors that led to the backyard, bounced his legs, and

decided to go upstairs to visit his son. Moretti fathers were encouraged to maintain a dominant relationship with their Moretti sons from the day they went through the Rites of Passage until they celebrated their eighteenth birthday.

Raffaella, her hearing more acute than it had ever been heard Viviano come back up the staircase nearest their room. She held her breath hoping he'd come in and get into bed with her. When the door to their room did not open she listened even harder. By the sound of his footsteps and the door that she heard open, Raffaella Rossi took an intake of breath, made the sign of the cross not once but several times, and knew her husband was going to relieve his ever present sexual needs with their son. There was absolutely nothing she could do to stop what was going to happen. She turned off the television, the night table light, slid down under the duvet, pulled her pillow over her head, and cried herself to sleep.

Colin entered his room and found Sonny in the corner under the duvet. He decided it was time to do something more than talk to the big man. The only way he would get a response from Sonny was to inflict a modicum of pain on his body. Colin thought a minute before he acted.

Much to his amazement and surprise, the duvet slid from Sonny's body with a simple pull of the edge nearest his feet. Sonny tried to react, but Colin was prepared, more nimble, and quicker. With his bare right foot, Colin aimed and made contact with Sonny's denim covered modified crotch. The result was painful to Sonny and somewhat satisfying to Colin. Sonny pulled his legs to his chest and shoved both his hands between his thighs to try and assuage the pain. Colin knew how his wife felt when she completed the same action with a man. It was rather satisfying to see Sonny curled up and crying out in pain not because his balls were crushed, but because his surgically altered crotch was not completely healed.

Sonny opened his eyes and through the tears of pain saw Colin standing over him. "What the fuck???" he cried.

Colin made like he was going to kick Sonny again, paused, and said, "Time to face the music Sonny. Apollonia wants you up and about by tomorrow morning. If you're still cuddled up in the corner, she is going to give you what I know you want. You really don't want that now, do you?"

"How the fuck do you know what I want?" chided Sonny. "You fuckin' wanted to become a sissy..."

"Yes, I did," retorted Colin. "And you failed at building a relationship with my wife. You could be upstairs right now fuckin' her. Instead you're down here, protecting your male pussy, because you couldn't satisfy a real woman. Big cock my ass!!!"

Sonny tried to move to strike Colin, but the pain was too much for him. He fell back against the wall and said, "If I weren't in such great pain, I'd fuckin' kick your ass all over this house."

"Yeah, like you'd do that to me," said Colin. He leaned close to Sonny's face and growled, "The last time you got physical with me resulted in the removal of your cock and surgical creation of a vagina. And, more amazingly, the bitch made it possible for you to retain your useless testicles. Or, don't you remember, asshole."

Sonny knew Colin was right and made no effort to respond to the blatant truth. He looked into Colin's eyes and saw he was feigning some of his anger. The pain was almost gone and Sonny moved his hands from between his legs. Colin was surprised to see him make simple movements to stand and offered his hand to help. Sonny accepted Colin's offer. Since arriving at Apollonia's house, Sonny Rossi hadn't stood when someone else was in the room. He leaned against the corner, pulled Colin into his body, and embraced him. Colin was awestruck at Sonny's show of

emotion. He relaxed, pressed his small breasts into Sonny's chest, and pushed his hardening sissy clit against Sonny's crotch. They held the embrace for several minutes which gave Sonny enough time to recover and react.

Colin never knew what hit him. His eyes rolled to the back of his head, his breath was forced from his lungs, and his crotch exploded in pain that could only be compared to a nuclear explosion. Sonny Rossi used the embrace to settle his nerves and force his right knee into the sissy's crotch. The contact was strong and swift. Colin felt his sissy eggs flatten against his pubic bone and his knees weaken before he fell to the floor. Sonny Rossi picked him up by the front of his blouse and struck him in the nose with a closed fist. The sound of cracking bone filled the room. Colin Cathcart could not defend himself from the onslaught of punches, slaps, and kicks to his gonads. Thankfully, he succumbed to the beating when he lost consciousness.

Sonny Rossi stood over the unconscious Colin Cathcart and laughed until he began to cry. It did not occur to the addled Sonny that he had crossed the line a second time. Nothing he could do would stop Colin's wife from taking out her final retribution on his being. He moved into the corner, slid down to the floor, buried his face in his hands, and burst into uncontrollable bouts of crying. Remorse built inside him. Seeing Colin on the floor bruised and battered renewed and empowered his need to make things right, but how could he? Time could not be reversed. Punches and kicks could not be taken away. The bruises would heal as would Colin's broken nose. Sonny cried harder when he realized that it was the second time he had broken Colin's nose and fractured his eye sockets. The frustration grew within and he began to bang his head against the walls on either side of the corner. His head moved faster and faster. He made no effort to soften the blows against his skull. The plaster walls started to give way, but not completely.

Sonny Rossi, crazed, and in the midst of another psychotic break knocked his head against the wall and the underlying studs hard enough to cause his skull to fracture. The force of the blow was enough to cause him to see red and lose consciousness.