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The Moretti's - A Different Family Dynamic

Chapter 165

Sunday Late Afternoon/Evening/Night – Columbus Place - 16 March 2003

Nathan pulled the Lincoln Town Car up to the gate a few minutes before five PM. The second shift guard nodded to Nathan, pushed the button to open the gate, and waved the Town Car into the compound. He turned the vehicle into Apollonia's driveway and pulled it close to the rear door. Nathan opened the passenger side door for his employer and her sister. Raffaella stepped to the door but did not enter her sister's house. Nathan closed the passenger door and faced his employer.

"Thank you Nathan," said Apollonia. "I should not need your services this evening. I expect that I will have you return late in the morning probably closer to noon time. Be careful and please do not make any stupid mistakes. Tuesday is a big day. You'll be legal. Don't fuck it up. Lastly, if you're headed to see your friend, remember what I said about not getting yourself in too deep. You're free to go."

"Thank you Miss Moretti," said Nathan. "I understand and you know that I will not do anything to jeopardize my employment with you. You are more than good to me. If I may say so, I feel like I'm becoming part of your family. My cell phone will be on and if you need me, you know I'll drop everything for you."

Apollonia's eyes twinkled as she said, "If you're doing her standing, just don't drop her on her ass. Now, get out of here."

Nathan smiled, nodded at her joke, turned, and entered the Town Car to leave the compound.

Apollonia turned, faced her sister, and said, "In the house cunt."

"Yes mistress," replied Raffaella. Her mind turned over the possibilities of what she thought her new duties would be when it came to serving her sister. She had been thinking about Viv and how much she wanted to just be held by him. Her heart pounded in her chest as she pined for her husband.

The sisters entered the house to find it empty. Apollonia went to the breakfast area and said to Raffaella, "Make some coffee. I'm going upstairs to change. You can get undressed. You'll have no need for clothing while inside."

When she returned to the breakfast room, Apollonia was wearing a pair of denims, a tee shirt, and sneakers. Her pert breasts hung free as she did not put on a bra because she preferred the feeling of her breasts hanging, if you could call it that, free. Her nipples were plainly evident as was the shape of her breasts behind the cotton of the t-shirt. The smell of the brewing coffee whet her appetite for something more, but she decided to wait for dinner.

Raffaella, totally nude except for her heels, brought her sister's favorite mug and placed it on the table. Before she could move back to the kitchen area she was stopped. "Please mistress," said Raffaella as she moved her legs apart to allow her sister finish pushing a dildo into her cunt. Apollonia had hidden the sex toy from Raffaella's view when she returned from changing. Her opening was not expecting the silicone cock and it took a bit of pressure to get it to slide into her vagina.

Once it was fully inserted, Apollonia said, "Hold it in. Do not let it fall out of your hole."

"Please mistress," whined Raffaella, "How can I serve you when I have to keep my thighs closed to keep the dildo inside me?"

"You serve me anyway you can," said Apollonia. "I really don't give a shit how you keep it in, but you will or suffer the consequences."

Apollonia picked up her mug, dismissing her sister, and her first call was to Ming.

"This is Ming.

"My love. How sweet it is to hear your voice. I'm home. Dinner here tonight. Are you alone?"

"Clairvoyant are we. Lian and Shen are with Carmen and Alessa across the street."

"Come to me. I want to hold you. We're going to have a guest tonight."

"Who?"

"Alessandro."

"Really. And, what am I to do with my sons?"

"Raffaella will babysit for them. I will not take no for an answer."

"Be there shortly."

Apollonia ended the call and felt her panties dampen at the expectation of just seeing the love of her life enter her house. The more time she spent with Ming, the more she came to realize that having a man to fuck her was good, but her heart was forever tied to the beautiful Oriental woman name Ming Zheng. Apollonia picked up the landline phone and dialed her sister's house.

"Rossi residence. This is Colin."

"Really," said Apollonia showing her surprise and her anger. "You have the fuckin' nerve to use your male give name when you're a fuckin' cock sucking sissy bitch?"

"Sorry Appy," said Colina, "I didn't check the caller ID. I apologize. I see you are home."

"I am. I want you to think about dinner. We'll be three adults, four children, one cuckold sissy, one useless cunt, and one useless male. Naturally, the useless cunt will help you and then eat with the useless man sitting on the floor in the corner of the kitchen."

"What time do you want dinner?"

"Let's say seven."

"Doesn't give me much time," said Colina. "I'll have to come over now with the children if dinner is to be served by seven."

"Bring the children and then go to Mario's and drag his ass here."

"Yes Apollonia."

Raffaella was standing in front of the sink trying with all her physical strength to keep the dildo insider her vagina, when she heard, "The children are coming over. I've decided to allow you to wear clothing. Get dressed, go across the street, and get some comfortable clothing. In fact, I want you to wear a simple outfit. A skirt and a loose top. Sneakers are fine. But, I do not want you to have any undergarments on. Now go."

"Yes mistress," said Raffaella. She picked up her clothing, went to the hall, dressed, and departed the house. She had a difficult time walking with the ten inch dildo her sister had inserted in to vagina.

Ming and Raffaella met at the backdoor.

"Ming," said Raffy.

"Raffy, how is Viviano?" asked Ming.

"Um, I'd rather let Appy tell you. I have to get across the street, change clothes, and return."

Ming blocked her exit. She could see that Raffaella was not comfortable standing. She noticed that she was not closing her legs in a normal fashion. For Raffaella, she knew she was no match for the diminutive Asian woman, but the dildo was becoming more and more uncomfortable. "What is going on Raffaella?"

"Please Ming," whined Raffaella. "If I am one second late according to Apollonia's internal clock, she'll go ape shit on me."

"What is wrong with you? You jumpy and not standing very comfortably? Have you succumbed to her?"

"Yes. Please let me go. Please!!!"

"What the fuck is wrong with you?" queried Ming.

"Oh god," moaned Raffaella, "my sister inserted a large dildo into my vagina. I'm not allowed to let it come out. I have to hold it in and continue to serve her. Please, Ming!!! I don't have much time!!!"

Ming stepped aside. She wondered how two sisters could be at opposite ends of the universe when it came to helping and loving one another. Shaking her head as she walked down the hall, Ming entered the kitchen to find Apollonia sitting quietly at her breakfast table drinking her ever present mug of hot black coffee.

"Apollonia," said Ming.

Apollonia stood, came around the counter, and took her lover into her arms. Ming raised her head and allowed her lover to kiss her. In her head she counted to ten, broke the kiss, and demanded, "What the fuck is wrong with you?"

The embrace was broken in two shakes of a lamb's tail. Apollonia saw her lover was not kidding or mincing words. "I don't understand what has gotten under your skin, but I see we need to talk about it."

"We do Moretti, we do," said Ming using Apollonia's surname to show her anger. "I'll wager that the children will walk through the backdoor momentarily and we will have to table the discussion. I demand that you think about what I am about to tell you. Then, when we are together later this evening we will talk about it. "I want to know why you have taken Raffaella's life away from her. She is your sister!!! Fuckin' blood!!! You forced a dildo into her vagina and you commanded her to keep it there. What kind of fucked up thing is that to do? You think long and hard about our relationship and tell me what I want to hear. You don't, I'll return all the money you gave me and the boys, and I will go so far away from you that you will never find me."

Stunned, Apollonia stood wide-eyed, open mouthed, and frightened that the love-of-her-life would do as she said. She was between a rock and a hard spot in more ways than one. Raffaella was her sister, but not supportive of her reign as head of the Moretti family. Carmen was a bastard that had designs on becoming a seven year old whore. Alessa was her half-sister, but she was broken psychologically from the sexual abuse heaped upon her by her Texas nuclear family and others. To put the cherry on the sundae, tonight Alessandro was coming over to spend time and hopefully fuck the both of them. 'FUCK!!!' thought Apollonia.

"I don't know what has got your tits in a wringer," said Apollonia, "but you knew that my sister was going to accept becoming my indentured servant. She had no choice in the matter. It was accepting her position or allowing me to take her life and not suffering any consequences for doing so. There is nothing to discuss, Ming."

Ming nodded knowing that Apollonia was right, but to shove a dildo up her cunt and make her hold it there for dear life was insane. Also, to be held hostage to your sister's insanity was ludicrous. The Zheng family were nowhere near as crazy as the Moretti family, but they at least never allowed an internecine feud to break down the relationships between individual family members. What Ming wanted was more than she would receive from her lover, but she would try to ameliorate the ever widening and deepening differences between the sisters.

The backdoor opened and slammed shut. Lian and Shen ran down the hall and into the kitchen. Carmen and Alessa followed at a leisurely pace for two youngsters. Ming heard her children, turned and knelt down knowing they would be upon her like white on rice.

"Mommy!!!" cried the boys. They ran to her, wrapped their arms around her shoulders, and kissed her on the cheek.

Ming hugged them and kissed them back. She stood and said, "Into the family room. Sit on the couch and wait. Someone will be in shortly to turn on the television. No go you two."

Carmen approached her aunt not knowing what she would say or do. Alessa stood quietly just behind Carmen. The two girls waited patiently, but the fear was palpable and plainly visible.

Ming turned to Apollonia, "Aren't you going to greet the girls? Are you that much of a cunt?" Ming saw the dirty look. She responded by standing eyeball-to-eyeball with her lover and whispered, "I don't know what your problem is Apollonia Moretti. I do know that no matter what happened between Carmen and her step-mother, you'd better get over it or I will wrap your cunt around your ears. Remember Moretti, I have on more than one occasion made you tap out. I am truly tired of your bullshit."

There was silence for longer than either woman wanted. Neither of them was going to back down. Both of them knew that if one did not bend, the relationship would be torn asunder. Apollonia Moretti and Ming Zheng would

no longer be a couple. A loving unit that finally broke under the strain of two strong willed women. The break would never have an opportunity to be fixed if it happened. Both women knew that to be the truth.

The backdoor opened and slammed shut not once but twice. Colina followed by Mario entered the kitchen. Two seconds later Raffaella entered the kitchen dressed per her sister's instructions. She stopped short when she saw her sister and her lover eyeball-to-eyeball not moving or speaking. Raffaella and Colina without verbally expressing their fear of the situation made equally strategic decisions.

"Girls," said Raffaella, "come with me into the family room. I'll get you situated and turn the television on." Raffaella went to Carmen and Alessa and with a bit of force guided them to the family room. She did not look back as they made their way across the room.

"Mario," said Colina, "sit at the breakfast table."

Mario, who in his previous life would have never listened to a sissy, did as he was told by the cuckold that was married to his insane daughter.

Colina made her way to her wife and her wife's lover. She made no bones about standing close to both of them. If she was going to end the Mexican standoff, she was going to have to get herself between the non-verbal combatants. The air in the room was growing thicker with the silence. Neither woman was budging. What confused Colina was the cause of the impasse. '*Time to intervene*,' she thought. Colina put a hand on each woman's shoulder and said, "Ok ladies, back into your corner. The bell has rung and the round is over."

Ming and Apollonia turned their heads and said nothing. They both stared at the sissy standing trying to ameliorate their impasse.

"That is a start," said Colina. "Each of you moved so I know you're hearing me. I do not know what precipitated this battle of wills, but would both of you take a deep breath and step back from the brink. You both know that this will not end amicably. Then you'll both go to your rooms and cry your eyes out because each of you will have surrendered to yourself and not to the other. Apollonia. Ming. Take one step backwards."

Each felt Colina push on their shoulder. They tried and failed because each of them knew that the cocksucker was correct. As much as she was who she was, Colina was no dope. Too smart for her own good. Apollonia stepped first. Then Ming. They still did not speak.

"Good," said Colina. "I need to make dinner and you two need to take this into the great room. Go. Sit on one of the loveseats. Hold each other. Talk quietly and resolve your impasse."

Before they accepted his request, the gatehouse phone rang. Colina sighed and went to answer it. He heard the guard announce a guest, his name, and without asking his wife allowed Alessandro to enter the compound. He returned to the two stubborn women and said, "Alessandro is driving up the street. I suggest you table your animosity and welcome him into the house. I know he'll go to the front door. If I answer it, I will have no problem kissing him hello and the without hesitation going down on him."

His statement about blowing Alessandro broke Apollonia out of her angry stupor, "No you fuckin' won't Colina. You stay here and make dinner. Ming and I will answer the door."

Colina wanted to burst out laughing, but knew better than to do it. He smiled, more to herself than to the two irate lovers, stepped back, and turned into the kitchen to begin preparing dinner.

Like nothing happened, Apollonia wrapped her arm around Ming's shoulders and guided her to the great room. Once they were in the room near the double front doors, Apollonia whispered, "I will do what you want. Just assure me that you will never leave me."

"As long as your sister has nothing to worry about," said Ming, "I will never leave you. Hurt her physically, emotionally, or psychologically and I will leave never to return."

The sigh took all of her strength out of her body. Apollonia could feel her legs beginning to weaken. She turned her face to Ming's and said, "Tell me you love me."

"I love you Apollonia Moretti," said Ming. "But, I will not allow you to hurt your sister. When Alessandro is in the house you are to go to Raffaella and tell her to remove the dildo. You make her keep it inside her vagina and I will take Shen and Lian and leave the compound. All I need are our passports and the cash I have put aside for just such an emergency." She looked at Apollonia and said, "Do not fuck with me. I've had all day to think about what is happening to you, to your immediate family, to your extended family, and us."

"I promise," was all Apollonia said thankful that all Ming wanted was to see her love and not hate her sister.

Both women watched Alessandro walk up the front walk to the porch after parking his car between Mario's and Apollonia's house. Before he could ring the bell, Apollonia opened the door and invited him in. He was not fully recovered from his encounter with Vatican Black Ops team, but he was more than happy to see Apollonia and Ming.

"Ladies," he said, "pardon my stupidity, but, who do I kiss hello first?"

For the women, it broke their silent animosity over the insanity of Apollonia's treatment of her sister. They both chuckled and together they placed a kiss on Alessandro's cheeks. It was Apollonia who let her hand slip to his crotch to feel his cock. She was not disappointed.

"Tonight you are going to enjoy a ménage-a-trios", said Apollonia. "Tonight this wonderful cock is going to fuck two hot lesbians. Each of us will make it a night you'll never forget."

Alessandro was frozen. His eyes moved from Apollonia to Ming and back to Apollonia. He was taken with both of them, but he wanted more than anything to be alone with Apollonia. He wanted the opportunity to make slow passionate love to her. He knew the ménage-a-trios' would be a fuck fest and nothing more. "I'm impressed and very thankful that you want me to enjoy an evening of ribald sex with both of you, but. . ."

"But what?" interjected Apollonia as she released her hold on his hardening Italian cock.

"I was hoping to have a night with you Apollonia," he said hesitantly. "I drove here fantasizing about spending the night alone with you. Talking and getting to know you more than I do. Holding you and feeling your body against mine. I did not expect to have two beautiful women to enjoy tonight. If I have offended you both, then I'll return to the city."

Ming and Apollonia exchanged glances. Both women knew that Ming had told Apollonia to take him to bed and fuck him silly. It was Ming's idea, but tonight it had to be different. Tonight had to be a shared experience or they both knew Apollonia would not have him join her in bed.

"I'm sorry Alessandro," said Ming. "Tonight you fuck both of us. As many times as you can. I know you want to make love only with Apollonia, but not tonight. If you cannot or do not want to partake in our ménage-a-trios', then," with a laugh, "you can always sleep with Colina." Ming smiled inside with surprise that she easily said to the man that he had a choice. Two hot women or one faggot sissy cuckold.

His gaze went to the floor. He thought long and hard about what the two beautiful women wanted. He knew he would be nothing more than a human dildo for them to use as they saw fit. His cock twitched at the thought, but he did not want to subvert his masculinity to them. The last time he was with Apollonia she made him do things that he'd never done before with a woman much less with a man. But, she did get him to have sex with her sissy husband. He faced his dilemma with fear and aplomb. He closed his eyes, opened them, looked up, and said, "I'm game for anything."

"Great," chortled Apollonia, "Let's head into the kitchen and see what is being made for dinner."

The three walked across the great room and around Apollonia's art to the hallway that led to the kitchen. When they entered the room, Colina was busy preparing two large portions of salmon while Raffaella was peeling very large shrimp. On the cutting board were heads of broccoli and green beans. A large glass covered dish contained a rice pilaf that was ready to be placed into the microwave. In a large glass salad bowl were greens, tomatoes, scallions, roasted red peppers, and bacon bits.

"Salmon, shrimp, and other fixings for dinner," said Colina as she turned to face her wife. She saw Alessandro, smiled, and said, "Welcome."

"Thank you Colina," said Alessandro. "It is nice to be here again."

Apollonia put her hand between his shoulder blades and pushed as she said, "Go give Colina a kiss. I'm sure she'd like it and I won't consider you a faggot."

He fell more than stepped forward. He saw everyone's eyes on him and knew he was in the spotlight. All he wanted to do was make the best of a bad situation. In his head, he remembered the tryst he had with Colina. Before that afternoon, he had never once thought about having anal sex with another male. His mind flipped when he remembered how tight and velvety smooth Colina's rectum felt around his more than ample cock. Alessandro caught himself and took control of his forward movement. He stopped for a moment, turned his head, and looked at Apollonia. He saw the smile on her face. He intuitively knew she was testing him.

Colina turned, faced Alessandro, and stood waiting for him to approach. The man closed the gap between the sissy and himself. He put his hands on Colina's biceps, leaned forward, and tried to place a chaste kiss on her right cheek. To his ultimate surprise, Colina, showing more strength than he expected, pulled him close, moved her face, and caught Alessandro directly on his lips. The next thing the Italian stud knew his body was encased in Colina's arms, their lips were together, and his mouth opened to accept the sissy's tongue in what was now a deep French kiss.

"YEAH!!!" cried Apollonia. "No harm, no foul."

Colina heard her wife scream joyously at the sight of Alessandro kissing her. She did not prolong the man's agony. She broke the kiss, smiled, licked her lipstick painted lips, and said, "Any time big boy." What the sissy, he just kissed, said did not cause a negative reaction, but Alessandro knew an invitation when he heard one.

"Ok boys and girls," chortled Apollonia, "let's head into the family room and let the cooks finish the meal." She turned to her hated father and said, "You can come because I had better see the chastity device surrounding your now useless Moretti cock."

Mario stood and like a little lamb followed his hated daughter into the family room. He saw the children and said, "In front of the children?"

As Apollonia and Ming sat on the small couch together, she replied, "Well aren't you a pedophile? Wouldn't that just make you feel all hot and bothered? Just think, you can show them what happens to men who use children for their sexual pleasure."

Mario stood, squared his shoulders, and replied, "It was just situations like this that started the whole pedophilic desire that overtook both Lucia and myself. The history of the family is filled with pederasty as part of a boy becoming a Moretti man. That was not looked upon as pedophilic on its face. If you want to embarrass me, then do it in front of adults, the family meeting on Thursday, but not in front of my grandchild, my child, and your lover's children."

"Point well made," said Apollonia. She turned to Ming and said, "Please take your boys into the great room. I need to make sure he has secured his genitals as I have demanded. There is no need for Shen and Lian to witness his abuse."

Ming did not respond. She took each boy by his hand and guided him into the great room.

"Take your pants off," said Apollonia.

"The girls," said Mario.

"I want Carmen and Alessa to see what happens to men like you," stated Apollonia. "If you do not comply, I will emasculate you. I will with due speed go into the kitchen, retrieve a carving knife, and I will remove your genitals without any second thoughts. Then I will watch you writhe on the floor in pain and I may just let you bleed to death."

The smile on his face scared Apollonia for a split second. She saw he was not afraid of her threat.

"Go ahead," said Mario. "Then I will not have to face the prospect of living in a nine by six cell having my ass pounded by some six foot six nigger. Death would be preferable. At least I can rot in the ground next to the love of my life."

Alessandro was getting a bit antsy. He was not used to Apollonia's constant verbal berating of her father. The man, as much as he was a certified pedophile, was still her father. He decided to step into the fray. "Apollonia, why don't you just take him into the Colina's room and check him there. I'm sure it would be best for all those here. I don't see why the children have to witness his debasement."

Apollonia stared hard at the man she hoped would give her a fucking like no other tonight. She did not smile nor did she rant and rave at him. With total control, she turned to Carmen and said, "Carmen, tell Mr. Bruno how many times you've had your grandfather's cock in your hand to masturbate him to an orgasm."

Carmen froze in her seat for a moment and knew she needed to answer her aunt. "I was taught on my seventh birthday to take my father's and my grandfather's penis into my hand and masturbate them."

"Tell Alessandro your birthday," commanded Apollonia.

"December 10, 1996," replied Carmen. "I turned seven this past December."

"So," said Apollonia getting more frustrated with her niece, "How many times?"

Carmen counted on her fingers. "Four times aunt Apollonia."

Apollonia turned her attention to Alessandro and said, "When you learn the complete history of the Moretti family, you will be allowed to question my actions. You have started to learn, but you had better understand that as a suitor, you have no standing to question my authority. Your car is parked on the street between Mario's and my house. You may take you leave, but rest assured, you'll never have anything to do with me in the future."

"I will more than assume that I will face the same treatment from you if I deign to remain in your life," said Alessandro. "I am a man. I am not some animal to be used by you as a play toy. I want to be with you. I want to become part of you. But, I am not going to crawl to you like some bitch. Just tell me that I am here because of my cock and I will think long and hard about staying. If I am here because you are interested in severing all ties with the sissy that you are married to so you can marry me, then I'm all in. I have done things for you that I would have never done for anyone else."

"I wish Viv was here," said Apollonia. "He'd help you understand. I am not going to give up my relationship with Ming. The man I married made a life changing decision, but that does not mean I am not in love with him anymore. I use feminine pronouns with Colina to support her decision to live as a cuckold sissy. You, Alessandro Bruno, have the opportunity to become the man that father's my children, lives with me in my world, and accepts that to be in my world, I am the dominant one."

"Could we discuss this a bit later?" asked Alessandro. "I'm not going to make a snap decision based upon the small bit of insanity that I am witnessing. I asked a simple question to insulate the children. I stand corrected. But, I am not leaving nor am I accepting total domination of my being by you."

Apollonia did not answer verbally or acknowledge with a facial movement his statement. She turned her gaze back to her hated father and ordered, "Show me your chastity encased genitals." She paused for a second and screamed at the top of her lungs, "NOW!!!"

Mario Moretti knew if he hesitated or did not comply with his insane daughter's order, he would succumb to her desire and need to emasculate him. The muscles in his body tightened. Stress ran up his backbone and forced him to think about breathing. His eyes clouded and then refocused. He saw his daughter standing waiting for him to respond. He fought his desire to strike out at her because he knew he did not have the training or the strength to subdue her in a fight. Mario closed his eyes and with shaking hands opened and pulled down his underwear and pants.

Per his youngest daughter's instructions, Mario had replaced the chastity device in and on his cock and balls. He did not immediately pull his clothing back up figuring that if he did his asshole would end up wrapped around his ears.

"I see you listened," said Apollonia. "Pull up your pants. Remember that I control your life. Thursday will define who and what you are. As God is my witness, tomorrow Colina will make the calls. The family heads will meet and I will make my case. Now, go sit in the corner and don't let me hear one peep out of you."

Mario did as he was ordered. There was a chair in the corner along the shared wall with the dining room. He sat, adjusted the chastity device, and let the tears of shame roll down his cheeks. His life would have been entirely different if his wife was still alive. He missed her more than he would ever enunciate to his daughters, especially Apollonia.

Thankfully for all concerned, Colina came into the family room and announced that dinner was ready. Raffaella went into the great room to advise Ming that supper was on the table.

The dining room table was set for dinner per Moretti family tradition. The adults sat at the main dining table and the children sat a smaller table in the corner. Against Apollonia's wishes, Colina set the table for all of the adults. He put Apollonia at the head of the table. To her right, he placed Ming. To her left, he placed Alessandro Bruno. He put himself opposite her at the other end. To his left, he put Mario. To his right, he put Raffaella. Centered in front of each end was a filet of salmon, a bowl of shrimp, the green vegetables, the rice pilaf, the salad, and two bottles of red wine. Colina opted to forego the white wine with fish dining standard.

Apollonia surveyed the table and before she could say anything, Colina piped up, "Not in the corner and not on the floor. They are adults and I will not allow you to force them to eat like dogs. Don't answer. Everyone please bow their heads so I may say Grace."

Grace was said and when it was over, the salmon was passed and dinner began. Raffaella rose to put food on the children's plates and pour juice or water for them to drink. Wine was poured for the adults. The talk was nonexistent due to Apollonia's constant stare and snarl on her face at having her sister and her hated father seated at the dinner table.

Fifteen minutes into dinner Apollonia's cell phone rang. She checked the calling number and saw a 215 area code. She frowned, thought a moment, nodded to herself, and despite her admonitions to never answer a cell phone at the dinner table did so.

"This is Apollonia."

"Miss Moretti," said Dr. Richard Stern, "do you have a moment to speak?"

"Absolutely." She had thought about saying she was at the dinner table, but thought better of it. Apollonia had told the good doctor to call whenever he had information for her.

"I wanted to bring you up to speed on the O'Keefe twins. We just completed the surgery on both girls. We had to wait until this morning to begin after we did our cardiologic and cancer screenings. I hate to report that youngest girl will not survive. Her heart birth defect is beyond repair. There is nothing to work with to reconstruct the chambers of her heart. And, we cannot do a full heart transplant simply because she is too young. If we could have completed the surgery, she would never survive any form of chemotherapy. Her sister has a 60-70 percent chance, but that will take a miracle at best. Her heart has four chambers which we partially repaired and her heart is pumping, but not as strong as we'd like. If she survives the cancer, she will need additional surgeries to repair the chambers and arteries. Miss Moretti, please understand that I am not God, but a simple surgeon that has done what he can to help these girls. Everyone here at the hospital is praying and pulling for them."

"I understand Dr. Stern. How are Brian and his wife taking the news?"

"As best as can be expected under the circumstances."

"Please pass on my heartfelt wishes to them and tell them to call me with any requests for help no matter how inconsequential. I know you'll be doing all you can for both girls. Please call me even if it is in the middle of the night. Again, thank you very much for everything. No matter the cost, the Moretti family will cover it including any future surgeries. A donation will be forthcoming. My love to you family."

"Thank you Miss Moretti," said Dr. Stern. "I will pass your best wishes and concerns to the Mr. and Mrs. O'Keefe. I will be in touch tomorrow. My best to your family as well."

Apollonia ended the call, put the cell phone on the table, and picked up her napkin from her lap to wipe the tears that were beginning to roll down her face. Although she did not want to face the reality that one or both of the O'Keefe girls may die, hearing Dr. Stern say that one will definitely brought to her the truth of the situation.

"Appy," whispered Ming, "the O'Keefe twins?"

Apollonia nodded, but did not answer immediately. She wiped her face a second time then finished her glass of wine in two big gulps. As she poured another glass of wine, she looked at her lover, and said, "The youngest will definitely die. Her heart defects were beyond repair. The other has a slim chance based on Dr. Stern's survival percentage. I'm just. . ."

Ming took her lover's hand and said, "You know in your heart it was not a very good situation. You got the best surgeon in the world to take their case. You did all that you could do for them. If the one survives then you can watch her grow up."

Colina watched for a moment and his curiosity made him ask, "Apollonia what was the phone call was about?"

"Saturday on my way out to visit Viv, I was stopped by a Nassau County Police officer for speeding," she said as she began to recover from the bad news. "Turns out his sergeant knew the Moretti family. They were going to arrest me for doing close to one hundred in a thirty-five mile per hour zone. Long and short, the officer has two very sick daughters. Congenital heart disease coupled with a rare form of childhood leukemia. I made a call."

"Damn," said Colina, "that is why you asked me to contact Dr. Stern in Philadelphia. Is there anything else we can do?"

"Except pray," said Apollonia. "The youngest twin is going to die. The other has a very long road to haul, but Dr. Stern feels she may just make it."

"Then we should all pray and light a candle or two," said Colina.

"We'll see," said Apollonia, "right now I want to finish dinner, go into the great room, and relax with Ming and Alessandro. You, Raffaella, and Mario can clean up and then join us."

Surprised Raffaella said, "Really?!?"

"But of course, Raffy. You and Mario can provide the entertainment and Colina can narrate," said Apollonia.

Raffaella's face turned red in embarrassment. She looked at her plate as she chided herself for being such a fool.

Except for the telephone call from Philadelphia, the entire meal was eaten in silence. The children knew better than to make a ruckus. They ate and instead of asking to leave the table, sat quietly waiting for the adults to finish. The entire dinner was eaten in under sixty minutes. A Moretti Sunday dinner under Mario's watch would start shortly after five and finish no earlier than seven. People were animated and conversational especially the invited guests. The only invited guest was more concerned with his status as a possible lover to Apollonia than making small talk at the dinner table. Once the three preferred adults were finished, the children were taken to the family room and the others went to the breakfast room for desert.

Two insulated coffee carafes, cream, milk, sugar, ersatz sweetener, and plates of Italian pastries were on the counter that divided the two areas of the room. In front of Apollonia's seat was her favorite mug. The dessert was served buffet style with the participants taking what they wanted before sitting in the same seats they sat in while eating dinner.

Raffaella excused herself to check on the children. She returned to a hard cold stare from her sister. "What?" she asked.

"Is it still in you?"

Raffaella blushed and said, "Yes Mistress."

Ming and Apollonia exchanged glances which made Apollonia shrug her shoulders and raise her hands to her shoulder palms up. She smiled and deadpanned, "So I forgot to tell her."

"You forgot like I forgot to wipe my ass after I took a shit this morning," growled Ming. Not in the least troubled by any reaction from Apollonia, Ming looked at Raffaella, and said, "Raffy, to into the bathroom and take it out. You do not have to keep it inside of you."

"Keep what?" asked Alessandro.

"Show him," commanded Apollonia.

"Here?" asked Raffaella.

"Fuckin' yes cunt," growled her sister in response.

"Whoa there ladies," said Alessandro. "Why the vitriol between you two? I mean you're sisters."

"Yes we are," replied Apollonia. "Except, Raffaella is not someone you want to get involved with. Since she was a child she's been able to suck the chrome off of a tailpipe. Her cunt is so big you can drive a Mack truck into it. Also, the last time she took a shower I heard someone talking so I went into the bathroom to investigate. Lo and behold, inside her twat was a Maharishi looking for a way to drive his 1959 Cadillac out of her cunt. You fuck her and there is a strong possibility you'll fall into her vagina and be lost forever."

"ENOUGH!!!" cried Ming. "Alessandro, Apollonia is just fuckin' with you. They've had their problems, but they're going to work them out. Aren't you Appy?"

The glare of daggers sent the message. Apollonia cringed inside. Everyone saw and knew that the diminutive Asian woman was more than Apollonia's lover. She had control and that was impressive.

"Raffaella," said Apollonia, "go into the bathroom and remove the dildo. I'd rather you do it here, but I know my lover will withhold her sexuality from me for being a cunt to you. So, remove it, clean it, and put it in Colina's room for now."

"Yes Mistress," said Raffaella. Relieved that she would be able to remove the dildo lightened her mood and allowed her to easily walk to the main floor powder room.

"A bit of business," said Apollonia. "Colina, prioritize the return calls that need to me made to couples looking for viable sperm to help them procreate. Take the top ten and call them. If they ask what took so long, make up something that will assuage their anger. Then I need you to call the heads of the family and have them here for a meeting on Thursday. If they ask, just say as the head of the family, I am in need of their counsel"

"Yeah, right," chimed in Mario. "You're bringing them here to watch you take my genitals, reduce me to nothing, and then allow them to fuck my old ass to prove that I am not a man or a Moretti anymore."

"What the fuck?" stated Alessandro. "Is this family that fucked up? I come from one of the five families and I've never witnessed such bullshit between family members. Really? A meeting to emasculate him? Why don't you just put a twenty-two to the back of his head and pull the trigger?"

"Thanks for the input Alessandro," said Apollonia, "but we don't just off people like the Sicilian crime families do. So, just keep such thoughts to yourself. Now. . ."

The gatehouse phone rang and one second later Apollonia's cellular phone rang. The gatehouse could wait. She noted the international number code prefacing the incoming number and answered that call first.

"This is Apollonia."

"Pronto," said the voice on the other end. "Uncle Donaldo here. Are you alone?"

"On the phone with you, but people are in my home."

"Ok, I use my English," said Donaldo. "Four men are there?"

Hesitantly, "No," said Apollonia.

"Ok. There are four men on the way to you. Cardinal Francis Montenegro is the cleric in charge. Father Alec O'Donnell is an American assigned to the Vatican. Father Luigi Franco is an Italian assigned to the embassy in New York. Finally, Pasquale Bianchi is a double for the pope."

"A double?" asked Apollonia.

"Yes," said Donaldo, "when the Holy Father travels they bring a double. He is used to make sure the Holy Father is safe when travelling in countries that are unstable."

Apollonia laughed as she said, "The United States unstable. Where is the Pope?"

"The Holy Father is still in his apartment. I know this because one of my men is standing guard. The suite is always protected by a Swiss Guard or two. Be careful," said her uncle, "my sources tell me they are there to do no good."

"Thank you for the intelligence. I will be on my toes," said Apollonia. "Could you do me a favor?"

"Ask and I shall comply," said Donaldo.

"Can you get your man close to the pontiff? Can you have him whisper in his ear that four heads will be on his bed by tomorrow evening? I want you to tell him that if this insanity does not end, I will personally come to the Vatican and rip his holy balls from between his legs."

Donaldo chuckled and said, "It will be my pleasure to deliver the message personally to the old codger."

"You have access to the holy man himself?"

"I do because of your father and now you. I have a few men in the Swiss Guards. The Vatican is filled with Moretti spies. I am sorry I did not notify you sooner. Please tell me they are not there yet."

"They are," said Apollonia, "but not yet on the property. Your call came just seconds after the gatehouse phone rang. They'll be allowed in, but we will have the upper hand. Ciao."

"Ciao," said her uncle.

Apollonia ended the call with her uncle, stood, and without saying anything picked up the gatehouse phone which had stopped ringing. She pressed the call button and waited.

"Gatehouse," said the guard on duty.

"This is Apollonia."

"Miss Moretti," said the guard, "there is a Cadillac limousine at the front gate. The driver expressed his passenger's interest in visiting with you this evening."

Feigning stupidity pertaining to her guests, she asked, "How many passengers?"

"Hold on I'll ask," said the guard. "Miss Moretti, the driver said besides himself there are three individuals in the passenger section of the limo. Because the windows are tinted, I cannot see into the rear of the vehicle."

"Ask for names or they do not gain entrance," said Apollonia.

When the gatehouse guard spoke again his voice was a bit shaky, "Miss Moretti, the driver simply said, 'The Vatican'."

"Have them exit the car and frisk them," said Apollonia. "I don't give a rat's ass if the pope is in the vehicle. Frisk them and if they're armed, take their weapons. If they won't relinquish them, do not let them enter. Call me so I can arrange additional protection and come down to the gatehouse to speak to them personally."

Apollonia hung the phone up, turned to Colina and said, "Get the children across the street to Raffaella's and Viviano's. Lock the doors. Check the windows. Do not return here until you hear from me. Make haste. We have unexpected guests."

Colina did not respond as she knew something must be brewing. The key expression was the command to *'lock the doors'* as no entrance doors were ever locked. She went to the family room and gathered up the children. Together they found their coats, put them on, and without any additional prodding made their way across the street. Colina turned his head to look down the street and saw the headlights of a vehicle stopped at the gate. She thought she saw human forms, but could not really discern if they were men or women. When Colina entered the house, she locked the screen door and the backdoor.

Ming, Alessandro, and Mario did not say a word. They sat waiting for the guardhouse phone to ring a second time. They waited ten minutes before the phone rang.

"Speak to me," said Apollonia.

"May God forgive me," said the guard. "Miss Moretti, you have a very special guest. I did as you requested. They are unarmed except for their crosses."

"Allow them to enter," said Apollonia. "Direct them to my house. Tell them to park in front and not in the driveway."

"Yes Miss Moretti," said the guard.

Apollonia stood, smirked, and said, "We have guests from the Vatican. Shall we go into the great room to greet them?"

As they walked down the hallway to the great room, Apollonia whispered to Ming, "Upstairs top drawer of my second bureau and in the night table bathroom side of the bed are two loaded Sig semiautomatics. Get them. I have no expectation about anything going easily."

Ming knew exactly which staircase to take. She went into Apollonia's room, found the two Sig Sauer P229's, and returned to the great room. She handed the one to Apollonia. As if both women were one, they pulled back the slide and checked there was a round in the chamber. Ming slid the semiautomatic into the waistband of her denims. Apollonia held hers by her side.

"Mario sit in the loveseat that faces the front doors. Raffaella sit next to him," commanded Apollonia. "Alessandro please stand by the couch that faces the driveway and do not make any stupid moves. The guard said they are unarmed, but I don't trust them at all. Thankfully I answered by cell phone first. Otherwise, we would not have the upper hand and most definitely be in a world of hurt."

Ten minutes after the front gate guard allowed the black limousine to enter the compound it pulled up in front of Apollonia's house. The cleric driving was smart enough to go around the circle and park the car facing the only exit from the compound. The driver exited and opened the rear passenger door. Three men exited. One seemed to be quite elderly. The second was in his late sixties and the third was in his late thirties. They stood on either side of the elderly man as they made their way down the front walk to the porch and the front doors. The driver remained behind the steering wheel in the vehicle.

Before the men exited the vehicle, Apollonia knew the one strategic error the driver made as he drove down Columbus Place. It should not have taken ten minutes to drive from the gatehouse to the front of her house even if the car made a counter-clockwise move to have it face the exit. The only reason the drive took that amount of time was to take the hidden weapons from their cache and put them on. She watched the limousine park and the three men exit the vehicle after the driver opened the passenger side door as any good chauffeur would.

Apollonia knew the three men could see into the house, but their view would be obscured by the etching in the glass of the double front doors. They did not know that if they looked at a specific angle they could see into the house with close to one-hundred percent clarity. As much as she hated the man, she could not fault her father for having the glassmaker etch the glass as he had so a knowledgeable person could see into the house with perfect clarity. Apollonia's right hand held grip of her semiautomatic as she hid it behind her right leg. She could see that the elderly man was frail and needed the help of the other two. But, the youngest of the men was not truly aiding the eldest.

The doorbell rang.

Apollonia turned to Ming, "The youngest, Father O'Donnell, is armed. I assumed correctly that they had hidden their weapons in the limo. He is right handed. That is why he is to our left. I don't want him entering the house armed nor do I want him physically able to do damage. I want you to open the door and step aside with it. No inhibition on my part to do what is necessary. I am going to put one into each of his knees. He should collapse on the porch. If he goes for his gun, I'll put one between his eyes. After he is down, take the man to our right into the house, put him on his knees, and press the working end of the Sig into his temple. He is Cardinal Montenegro. The old man in the middle is not the pope, but an imposter."

Ming nodded.

The doorbell rang a second time.

Apollonia looked at Ming and signaled her with her eyes. Ming went to the front doors. She opened the door on the left and as it opened cleared her body from Apollonia's line of sight. The youngest man saw Apollonia's gun rise, but was not quick enough to pull his from his shoulder holster. Two shots rang out. One each of the two shot hit the younger man directly in the center of his knees. He collapsed onto the porch screaming and writhing in pain. Ming knew she would have to open the right hand door and did so. She put the working end of the Sig to the other man's temple, pushed him into the house, and then to his knees. He did not move nor did he say a word.

The elderly man stood wavering on the porch. A wet spot formed on the front of his pants. He raised his hand palms out signaling surrender. Apollonia stepped to him and said, "Pasquale Bianchi, the pope's travel double. Pissed your pants because you know you've just entered hell on earth."

Pasquale Bianchi did not say a word to the young woman who just shot a priest without provocation.

"Alessandro," said Apollonia, "disarm Father O'Donnell and drag him into the house. And, I mean drag."

Alessandro without question did as he was asked. He pulled a Beretta 9mm semiautomatic from the man's shoulder holster and took a moment to pat him down for other weapons. On his right ankle he found a Smith & Wesson Tactical Tanto Boot Knife Hostage Rescue Team in a custom made sheath. When he was sure the man was unarmed, he literally kicked and pushed the still agonizing man into the great room to the side directly across the width

of the front doors from the kneeling man. He nodded to Apollonia and stood by the injured cleric. He held the Beretta semiautomatic pointed to the priest's head, but not pressing against it.

Apollonia did not put her Sig into the waistband of her denims. She held the gun up and pointed at the elderly man. She stepped forward, put the gun to his forehead, and said, "Step into my house and know that I know who you are."

The fake pope entered Apollonia's house.

"The driver," said Apollonia. "Is he part of the Embassy staff?"

The elderly man nodded in the affirmative.

Apollonia said, "One move and the beautiful Oriental woman will first shoot you and then the Cardinal."

The elderly man did not move. His response was nothing more than a pleading whisper, "I understand. Please do not hurt me. I did not want to come to America."

Apollonia exited her house not even considering the outside temperature was still in the low thirty degree range. She went directly to the vehicle, walked around the back to the driver's side, and placed the working end of the Sig against the glass of the driver's side door. She growled, "Father Luigi Franco, both hands on the steering wheel. Then use your left to open the window. One false move and you're a dead man."

The driver did as he was ordered. The window was fully automatic so after he pressed the button, he put his hand back onto the steering wheel.

"What are you carrying?" demanded Apollonia.

In a strong Italian accent the man said, "I am not armed. I am simply the embassy driver."

The Sig barrel pressed against the man's temple. His fright was palpable. "Bullshit!!! One last time Father Franco. Lie to me and your brains will be spread across the passenger seat of the vehicle. What are you carrying?"

"A 9mm Beretta and a Smith & Wesson tactical knife. Just like the man you shot," answered the driver.

"Slowly hand me the 9mm grip end first. Then the S&W knife. I have no reason to shoot you, but you make one stupid move and I will kill you where you sit," said Apollonia.

The driver nodded his head and moved with extreme caution. He took the Beretta from its holster, turned so he held it by the muzzle, and presented it to the woman who held a gun to his head. When he had relinquished the weapon he reached down and took the tactical knife from its scabbard on his right ankle. He held the weapon by two fingers and presented it handle first to assure the woman that he was not a threat.

"Smart man," said Apollonia. "But I don't trust you. Before Father Franco could react, she pumped a bullet into each of his thighs. By the sound, she knew the .40 caliber S&W round shattered his femurs. The driver was not fully trained and the extreme pain caused him to black out. Satisfied she had everything under control, Apollonia returned to her house.

"Holy fuckin' fake father," said Apollonia as she laid her right hand on his back between his shoulder blades. The gun pressed against his spine as she pushed him towards the conversation pit. When she had him positioned at the couch that faced away from the driveway, she said, "Sit."

The elderly man who was posing as the head of the Catholic Church sat. He looked up at the woman holding the gun and said, "Did you kill the driver?"

"No. But, I will suspect that if you're not forthright with me, he will bleed out," replied Apollonia.

Cardinal Montenegro clearly frightened asked from where he knelt, "Bleed out?"

"Die from exsanguination," replied Apollonia.

"And Father O'Donnell?" asked the man really in charge.

"He'll never walk again," said Apollonia. "He'll have to suck cock from a wheelchair and to fuck a boy's ass he'll have to be laying on his back."

"And me?" asked the Cardinal.

"You're lucky I haven't shot you yet," said Apollonia. "What I want from you is the truth about this apparent failure of an operation. Answer my questions and your head will not be packed in dry ice and sent to the asshole who approved and sent you."

"You know I am not going to answer you, Miss Moretti," said the Cardinal. "My death will not stop the men of the church to right the wrong you have done. There are innocent people starving in the Vatican as we sit here."

"That is the pope's doing," replied Apollonia. "The man sitting across from where you kneel is also responsible. He will get his just rewards according to Moretti law. Stand and sit next to the old man who I know is an imposter. Make one false move and I will not just kill you. I will torture you so bad the Spanish Inquisition will look like a New Year's Eve Party."

Cardinal Montenegro slowly rose to his feet and with stiff legs made his way to the couch where the imposter sat. He put his hands on his thighs and did not move. He saw the look in Apollonia's eyes and said, "I am not armed. I am a man of God."

"You're a fuckin' pedophile," retorted Apollonia. "Just like all of the men of the church. You fuck nuns in name of God. You rape little boys and girls in the name of God."

With her Sig Sauer at her side, Apollonia approached the Cardinal. She stood in front of him, stared down, and asked, "Who put together this asinine attempt?"

Cardinal Montenegro did not respond. He held her gaze. Inside he knew the men of the church had failed again. He was ready to die for what he believed in. His head would rest next to the others in the catacombs of the Vatican as a testament to those who came after that to a man they gave their lives to protect the church. The Cardinal shrugged his shoulders in total disdain and showed a lack of fear for his situation. Inside, his muscles were tense and the stress coursed up and down his spine. He used all of his abilities to keep himself from pissing and shitting in his pants.

To make her point, Apollonia raised her semiautomatic, placed it against the forehead of the elderly man, and said to the Cardinal, "Is his life worth anything to you?"

The senior cleric watched as the beautiful Italian woman moved her finger from the side of the weapon and placed it on the trigger.

He opened his mouth to speak.

Her movement was quick. The Cardinal was surprised. The working end of the Sig Sauer entered his oral cavity before he could close his mouth. Apollonia said aloud to no one in particular, "The old fuck sitting next to the Cardinal is an imposter." Apollonia stared into the Cardinal's eyes and said, "I am going to remove the pistol from your mouth. You are going to tell me everything or as I said, I will torture you. One lie and I will skin you alive."

Cardinal Francis Montenegro nodded and the moment the semiautomatic was removed from his mouth, he made the sign of the cross and silently prayed. He looked up at the woman who just scared the living shit out of him. The new head of the family he knew truly controlled the Vatican and the church was a cool, calm, and collected murderer. He accepted the assignment in the hopes he could make amends and return to the Vatican with a deal in hand. Now, he knew that his return would consist of nothing more than his head in a cooler filled with dry ice. Forty-five years of service to the church ended by a mad woman who took pleasure in ruining the good works of his church. His fear would not let him stand up because he was scared of dying. He knew the bullshit of a life after death was nothing more than a psychological ploy to calm the masses.

"Please do not kill me, Miss Moretti," said the Cardinal. "I am just a messenger."

Mario growled, "A fuckin' messenger of death." He looked at Apollonia and said, "Had me fooled. I thought to the old fuck was the pope. He is an outstanding double."

The old man posing as the Holy Father groaned and began to beg, "Please!!! Cardinal Montenegro knows I just follow orders. When the pope travels, I go also. Sometimes I replace him to assure that he is safe. I really don't know why I am here. Cardinal Montenegro knows as does the priest on the floor by the door. Please!!! Spare me!!!"

Ignoring the elderly man's pleas, Apollonia pulled out her cellular phone and pressed the speed dial for Nathan. When he answered she said, "Sorry Nathan, but we have an emergency." She did not have to say anything else.

Apollonia's attention returned to the men that were sent a second time to try and end the lives of the people who controlled the Moretti family and break the century old alliance. The elderly man was a pawn. The priest laying on the floor was charged with the assassination. The driver was partially trained embassy worker who was moving through the ranks on his way into the Vatican Special Operations Group. The Cardinal was not a soldier, but the leader of the assassination team.

The elderly man looked at anyone in the room that was part of the Moretti family and pleaded with his eyes. Apollonia saw his fear. She sat next to him and asked, "If you are not a priest, then what?"

"I am a shoemaker. I, my family make the slippers that the pope wears," he said as he made the sign of the cross. "Please don't hurt me."

"Answer my questions truthfully and I won't," said Apollonia. "How old are you?"

"Eighty-four."

"Near the age of the asshole that is the pope," said Apollonia. "Are you married? Do you have a family?"

Again he made the sign of the cross. "I am a widower. I have six children. Four sons and two daughters."

"Are they married?" asked Apollonia.

"Yes," replied Pasquale.

"Grandchildren?" asked Apollonia.

"I have eighteen grandchildren and six great-grandchildren," answered the shoemaker.

Apollonia put her left hand on the elderly man's face, caressed it to calm him before she said to the Cardinal, "Montenegro every answer you give me that is not the truth, I will have one of Pasquale's family killed. I will start with the youngest. I am expecting a phone call from Italy in the next fifteen minutes. If you give me everything I need to know before I receive that phone call, I will make sure the two injured men are cared for before they're summarily dumped in front of the Vatican Embassy."

Cardinal Montenegro did not respond. His face was filled with shock. He could not begin to respond to the insanity of taking retribution on the family of the man whose sole purpose was to produce the slippers the Holy Father wore and protect the pope by standing-in for him when called upon.

By the front door, Father O'Donnell who was shot in both of his knees began to regain a bit of his strength. He looked from his prone position at the people gathered in the great room. He did not have a weapon, but saw that there were items of art that could be used as a weapon against the people he came to subdue or kill. Alec began to use his arms to pull his body closer to the object he wanted to tumble and use to possibly render Apollonia Moretti unconscious. He used his training to endure the pain as he used the strength of his arms to slowly slide forward. His attention was focused on one of Apollonia's smaller chiseled pieces. If he could get there, he knew he had a fighting chance.

Ming and Alessandro both saw that the injured priest had moved from his original spot. The blood streaks on the hardwood floor were plainly obvious. They were less than a foot long, but were enough evidence to prove the cleric had not given up or surrendered. Ming put her finger to her lips. Alessandro nodded and frowned. Ming pointed to the cleric, who was trying to hide his movement by remaining still, and mouthed, "I'll take care of him. Watch Apollonia's back."

Father O'Donnell raised his head, moved his right arm, and felt the barrel of Ming's Sig Sauer pressed against the nape of his neck. *'How did she get behind me,'* he thought. He froze.

Ming did not lean over him. She went to one knee by his side and whispered, "I think you're done trying to complete your task. The feel of the gun recoiling in my hand will be more than enough to send waves of sexual pleasure to my brain. As your life expires, I will have an orgasm. My lover would not be mad that I ruined her beautiful hardwood floor. Twenty-four hours after your head has arrived at the Vatican, there will be no sign that you were ever here."

Father O'Donnell collapsed to the floor. He tried to keep his voice soft and calm, but failed as he said, "So fuckin' kill me. You don't have the balls to look me in the eye as you take my life. That is why you are behind me, cunt!!!"

Apollonia turned, saw that Father O'Donnell had moved, and just nodded to her lover. Alessandro, Raffaella, and Mario knew what was about to happen.

Ming rose, moved in front of the prone priest, knelt, and said, "Look between my legs at my cunt. Then look at me. Look directly into my eyes."

Father O'Donnell raised his head. Amazingly, he did as she said. He looked between her legs and then up to her face. Then their eyes met. The last thing he saw was the smile on Ming's face and the muzzle flash that ended his life.

Cardinal Montenegro screamed as he witnessed the back of Father O'Donnell's head explode from the point blank shot that ended his life. He jumped to his feet, but before he could make his way to the dead cleric, Apollonia cold cocked him with the butt end of her Sig's grip. Unconscious at impact, the cleric fell backwards onto the couch. He tumbled sideways towards the man who was posing as the pope. Pasquale could not move fast enough due to his age. Cardinal Montenegro's head landed in his lap as if he was going to suck the old man's cock.

Apollonia smiled at the sight and said, "Appropriate except the cock is too old for the pedophile." She turned to Alessandro, "Put the weapons on the coffee table. Take the asshole that is my father with you and carry the driver into the house. Both his femurs should be shattered so he will not be able to walk. Put him on the floor against the sofa opposite where Cardinal Montenegro is lying unconscious."

Everyone chuckled at Apollonia's sick joke. Alessandro and Mario exited the house. They opened the limousine door, wrestled the driver out of the vehicle, and carried him into the house a lot more carefully than Apollonia would have liked. They deposited Father Franco onto the floor in front of the couch opposite where the Cardinal lay.

They put his useless legs in front of him and underneath the coffee table. Mario returned to the loveseat where to his amazement Raffaella took his right hand into her left. Alessandro decided to pick up the Berretta and place his body in front of the closed double doors facing the conversation pit.

"FUCK!!!" screamed Apollonia. She turned to Raffaella and said, "Get a pitcher of water or something large enough to wake the fuckin' asshole Cardinal." She paused, thought about berating her sister, and decided against it.

Raffaella released her father's hand and made her way to the kitchen. She returned with a small pitcher of water and two towels. She looked to her sister for instructions. When she saw her nod, she poured a good portion of the water onto the Cardinal's face. It was enough to revive him.

Spitting and sputtering the Cardinal came to, but was still somewhat unaware of where he was and what had happened to him. He felt the towel hit his face. As he sat up, he dried his face, regained his awareness of the situation, and said, "I will give you what you want. I will answer truthfully. Just don't kill me or the others."

"Look in front of you," said Apollonia. "See the asshole sitting across from you? The next person to die because of your intransigent stupidity will be him. It will not be something pleasant to watch."

Cardinal Montenegro dropped the towel as he stared at the priest seated on the floor with his legs out in front of him and his back against the front of the leather couch. He saw the pain on his face and asked, "What else did you do to him?"

"Nothing yet. But, if you continue to lie to me, I will remove pieces of him so he suffers as each of his extremities are removed from his torso."

"Jesus," said the Cardinal, "you wouldn't."

Apollonia smiled, departed the great room, and those in the know heard the backdoor open and slam shut. When she returned, Apollonia held an extremely large pair of metal snips. She picked up Father Franco's left hand, opened the snips, placed them at the first interphalangeal joint of pinky finger on his left hand, and snipped off the tip of the finger.

Father Franco screamed so loud the astronauts on the International Space Station stopped working for a minute to figure out where ear piercing scream emanated from. He grabbed his hand after Apollonia released it. Father Franco began to moan and sway slightly where he sat. Somewhere inside he gained some strength and stared hard into the eyes of the Cardinal. He turned his head towards the door and saw that Father O'Donnell was dead.

"ENOUGH!!!" cried the Cardinal. "You are one sick individual." He tossed the towel lying next to him to the injured priest.

Just as she was about to respond, Apollonia's cell phone rang. She pulled it from her back pocket, and answered the international phone call.

"Pronto," said Apollonia. "Uncle Donaldo. Have you made contact?"

"But of course," he said. "The Holy Father denies any knowledge of the activities at your home. What would you like me to do?"

"Pasquale Bianchi has a large family," said Apollonia. "I want you to gather them up and bring them to a safe place. A place like a large warehouse. I want you to segregate them by age. Tie them so they cannot move. Then untie the youngest unless the youngest is an infant. If so, then take the infant from the parent. I want you to take a picture and send it to me."

Uncle Donaldo made the sign of the cross as he knew what his cousin from America was up to. If she wished him to take the life of an innocent child, he would. He'd seen more than enough cruelty foisted upon the masses by the men of the church. "I will do as you ask. But, I am going to have my men leave me alone when I do what I know you want me to do. The child is an innocent, but if it will open the mouth of the asshole that is not speaking the truth, then so be it."

"We will do what we have to," said Apollonia. "How much time to accomplish the gathering of the family?"

"Thankfully, they are all within a kilometer of the Vatican," said Donaldo. "Thirty minutes and I will have them at one of the empty Moretti warehouses."

"Good," said Apollonia. "Ciao."

"Ciao," said Donaldo and ended the call.

"Cardinal Montenegro," said Apollonia, "you heard the conversation I had with my family contact in Italy. In thirty minutes, the entire Bianchi family will be together in a warehouse somewhere in Rome. You need to give me everything I need to end this insanity. Father Franco will not lose another part of his body, because a Bianchi will die with each lie or nonresponse you give to my questions."

"What do you want to know?" asked the Cardinal. He continued to hide his fright, but the possibility that this insane woman would kill a child truly frightened him to his core. The rationalization he brought to his mind was when he had sex with a child, he left the child alive – not dead.

"I want to know who put this asinine operation together," growled Apollonia.

Montenegro did not hesitate when he said, "Cardinal Philippe DeJesus made the decision."

"Based upon what information?" asked Apollonia.

"Based upon the receipt of sixteen heads," responded the Cardinal. "Based upon the cessation of all deliveries to the Vatican. It was decided to take another shot at ending the schism between the church and the Moretti family. The College of Cardinals and the Holy Father wants Mario Moretti to return to the head the family."

"What you want is easy access to boys and girls," growled Apollonia. "Mario will gladly supply innocents for the priests, bishops, cardinals, and the pope to sexually abuse, rape, and murder. Who else made the decision?"

"If I tell you," said Cardinal Montenegro, "will you allow them to live or will you take your pound of retribution by killing them? To what end Miss Moretti? Your family owns all of the physical assets of the church. We have nothing without your backing. Allow me to call the Vatican. Allow me to tell Cardinal DeJesus what has happened and what will potentially happen. He will listen to me."

"And if he doesn't?"

"Then I will personally give you his whereabouts and you can do with him as you please," said the Cardinal. "What is paramount is the protection of Pasquale's family. They have nothing to do with what has occurred since you stopped the monetary support and the cessation of all deliveries into and out of the Vatican."

"Excuse me," interrupted Alessandro. "Apollonia, he's lying. A single Cardinal could not have made such an important decision. One man did not put together this charade. He is protecting others."

Surprised at his interruption and comment, Apollonia asked, "What are you basing it on?"

"A lifetime in the Bruno family and the Catholic Church," replied Alessandro. "I did not serve my country, but I learned from watching, reacting to, and reading about the workings of a Sicilian crime family. All you have to do is to look at his face and into his eyes. He is not telling the truth." Alessandro moved slightly so he could look directly into the Cardinal's eyes and asked, "How many Cardinals did it take to make the decision? Did you present it to the Pope?"

"I think he's got you Cardinal by the proverbial balls," said Apollonia accepting what Alessandro posited as to who was involved in the decision to attempt to alter the relationship between the Moretti family and the church. To make her point about needing the truth, she moved to Father Franco, put the barrel of the Sig Sauer to his head, and said, "Lift your hand. If you don't, I will kill you where you sit."

The towel encased hand moved slowly upwards. His eyes begged that he not lose another part of his hand. The feel of her hand on his made him flinch. The removal of the towel added to his misery and he cried out in pain. When he felt the sharp edges of the metal snips surround the second interphalangeal joint on his already injured pinky, he cried out, "TELL HER!!! IF YOU DON'T I WILL!!!"

Apollonia looked at the Cardinal for a split second. She returned her gaze to the finger and said, "I want the names of everyone involved. I will give you a three count or he loses another part of his finger. One. Two." Apollonia looked at the Cardinal. She saw nothing on his face or in his eyes. She knew he was going to see if she would remove another part of Father Franco's finger. While he stared back at her, she said, "Three."

Father Franco screamed. Everyone in the room heard the sound of the metal snips separating the joint. Blood poured from the injury. Two pieces of the priest's fingers lay on the floor next to his injured left leg. He did not have the strength to warp the towel around his hand, so Apollonia did it as a show of kindness. She pushed his hand to his shoulder so it was above his heart. In theory, it would lessen the flow of blood from the amputation injury. Apollonia was surprised to hear nothing come from the Cardinal's mouth.

"Well Montenegro," said Apollonia, "do I take the rest of his pinky?"

Father Franco regained some of his strength and said, "The old bastard will not respond. His charge is to die for the church at all costs. I know you know that is why Cardinals wear red. As a sign of a willingness to give their blood in death for the church. I want to live. I'm not one of the old guard." He stopped, coughed, and drew several hard breaths. His breathing was becoming labored. He was beginning to suffer from the loss of blood. Father Franco took a deep breath, let it out, and said as his lungs gurgled with filling blood, "I'm not a pedophile priest. Save my life and I will tell you everything. Save me and I will dedicate my life to the Moretti family. Please Miss Moretti!!!"

"One question Father Franco," said Apollonia. "You have in depth knowledge of the inner workings of how this was decided and by whom?"

With eyes closed and nodding in the affirmative, Father Franco groaned in pain, "Yes."

Cardinal Montenegro stood and screamed, "TRAITOR!!! HOW DARE YOU!!!"

Apollonia needed him alive. She stood, stepped over to the Cardinal, and punched him in his solar plexus. The air left his lungs before he could react. The old man fell back onto the couch, holding his stomach, and gasping for air. He was not going anywhere, nor was he going to be a physical problem.

"Alessandro," said Apollonia, "in the garage on the back wall you will find plastic wire ties. They are several lengths. Get ones long enough to secure the Cardinal's arms and legs."

"Father Franco," said Apollonia, "do not mislead me or I will torture you for the fun of it."

Shaking his head in response to her statement and in as much to try and clear his head, Father Franco took a deep breath, coughed, and groaned in pain. He said, "Seven cardinals made the decision to move on you. I will give you their names. They are all work and reside at the Vatican." The words took their toll on the priest. His head fell forward as he tried to contain his pain and accept that he would turn against the men of the church. All to save his life.

"Ming, a pad and paper," said Apollonia impressed with Father Franco's determination. Sad thing for the man, he was going to die anyway. She had no thoughts of allowing him to live.

Ming left and returned from the kitchen with a small pad and a pencil. She handed it to Apollonia.

Father Franco did not need physical prodding to get him to answer, but not to reveal the names of the church hierarchy involved with the attempt. Another deep breath, a pause, and then with an internal fortitude, he said, "The seven men are: Cardinal Francis Montenegro, Cardinal Philippe DeJesus, Cardinal Antonio Perrucci, Cardinal Christian Zizza, Cardinal Luigi Cundari, Cardinal Samuele Spagnolo, and Cardinal Giancarlo Testa."

"What about the Black Operations Group?" asked Apollonia.

"They do not make decisions concerning operations. They perform them," said Father Franco. "Depending upon the lead time, they practice but if ordered to go, they go." Father Franco's head fell to his chest. He was losing his battle to remain conscious.

Alessandro had returned and placed the plastic ties on Cardinal Montenegro's wrists and ankles. He looked at Apollonia and said, "Meds?"

"Go across the street," said Apollonia. "Tell Colina to call Uncle Gino and an ambulance."

"Will he know which ambulance company to call?" asked Alessandro.

"Yes," said Apollonia. And with emphasis, said, "SHE knows what to do and who to call."

Cardinal Montenegro had regained his ability to breathe and speak. He thought, but did not know definitively if Father Franco had given her the names of the men that made the decision. Thankful that his hands were bound in front of his body and not behind, he said aloud, "Miss Moretti, do I need to. . ."

Apollonia turned and stepped in front of the Cardinal. She placed the barrel of the Sig Sauer directly between his eyes and said, "I'm not going to kill you here. I am going to gather the seven Cardinals together in a room. I am going to strip you naked, tie to poles, and I am going to torture each and every one of you. Sitting in the middle will be the Holy Father. The only way your pain and suffering will end is when the old bastard puts his lips on my ass and begs for your lives. Or, I just may kill you for the hell of it."

Pasquale Bianchi finally gained enough strength to croak, "A-a-and me?"

The gun was pulled from the Cardinal's head. Apollonia put it in the waistband of her denims. She moved to her right and stood in front of the elderly man. She leaned over and whispered in his ear, "You are going to return to Italy alive and well. You will resume your livelihood making shoes for the Holy Father. You will keep your ears and eyes open. You will report anything and everything you hear and see to my Uncle Donaldo. You and your family are safe as long as you do as I say. I promise that if I find you have lied to me, I will start with your youngest great grandchild. It will take the loss of only one to get you to see that I am serious and comply. You do as I ask and the Moretti family will protect yours."

The elderly man reached with shaking hands for hers, took them, and said, "Anything you want Miss Moretti. I am just an elderly man who had the bad luck to look very much like the Holy Father. I am but a shoemaker. I live a humble life. My family works hard and we are lucky to eat three meals a day. I will do as you ask." He pulled her right hand to his mouth and kissed the back of it. He looked up at her, closed his eyes, and said, "Please know that I speak the truth."

Apollonia turned to her sister and said, "Raffaella, take Pasquale into the family room. Make him comfortable and feed him if he is hungry. Stay with him."

Raffaella did not respond. She stood and helped the elderly man stand. She supported him as they walked together into the back of Apollonia's house and into the family room.

Alessandro returned from the Rossi house and said, "Colina is making the calls. What can I do?"

"Nothing for now," said Apollonia, "you've done enough. Why don't you go into the family room and sit with Raffaella and Pasquale. In fact, take Mario with you."

Mario did not need to be told to move to the family room. He stood, made his way out of the conversation pit, and together with Alessandro walked to the back of the house. It was then Apollonia realized she needed to help the priest until such time as his life is ended. She called to Alessandro and said, "Have Raffaella give you a bucket of ice and some clean towels. We need to stanch the bleeding until the ambulance gets here."

Making sure he was still willing to give up everything before he was dispatched to his idea of heaven, Apollonia knelt next to Father Franco, and asked, "Was it worth it? Did the fact the sixteen men came here and only sixteen heads returned to the Vatican have any impact on the men who run the church?" She looked down, picked up the two pieces of his pinkies, and said in a boldfaced lie, "I will put these on ice. No telling what they can do with microsurgery today, but as God is my witness, you fuck with me and I will make you suffer."

Working through the pain, Father Franco said, "I am through with the church. My family wanted me to become a priest. What I have learned about the inner workings of the church is enough to make one walk away very fast from the institution. Please just help me. I don't know if I am going to make it. I feel cold."

Apollonia watched as Father Franco began to gasp for breath as his lungs continued to fill with blood. His body was not strong enough to sustain life due to the loss of blood. She could tell he was giving to her everything so he could enter the Kingdom of God with a clear conscience. Her hand went to his face and she felt how clammy his skin was becoming. Apollonia knelt, leaned in, and said in a soothing voice, "Let go Father. You have done a great service for the Moretti family. We will return you to Italy where you will rest in the catacombs of the Vatican for eternity. You will be revered for what you have done tonight. Go in peace."

Father Franco turned his head slightly so he could look into Apollonia's eyes. He tried to smile, but his breathing would not let him. His eyes were beginning to lose their luster. He breathlessly said two words, "Thank you" and then he closed his eyes and expired.

Apollonia stood, turned to the Cardinal and said, "Just so you know, I was going to end his life anyway. Now, you have two deaths on your conscience. I can make it easy for you. Just say you're not man enough to face the truth of who and what you are and I will take your life with a minimum of pain. I don't know how you are doing it, but I know you are scared shitless that I am going to torture you before you die. Or, tomorrow we can fly to Italy. When my contact calls, I will instruct him to gather the other Cardinals together and wait for our arrival. Together we will summon the Pope. Then you, the six other Cardinals, and the Pope will learn what it means to be beholden to the Moretti family."

Before he could answer, Apollonia Moretti used the butt end of the grip to knock the Cardinal unconscious. She turned away from the man not caring if he lived or died. With her shoulders square and a straight spine, Apollonia Moretti walked towards the back of the house to the family room knowing that she may just have to kill seven more men of the church to make the Pope see the error of their ways.