

Witches' Manor

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Joseph Roelands

****WARNING****

Dear reader,

This novel is originally written in Dutch; 'Heksenburcht'.
It was never intended to appear in the English version.
But as the author was asked for a translation, he made one himself.
This translation has not been edited professionally.
So please enjoy the story, and don't mind the typos.

J.R.

Author: Joseph Roelands
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1 paradise

Friday, June 5th

The three girls are making a hellish racket in the large jacuzzi on this balcony. Erica has tried to warn her daughter a few times already, but well, with my two involved that is a lost cause. I have to admit, one of those two is my wife. She just loves acting just as crazy and fanatic as the two 14-years-old friends.

'Have you heard something more from Lucio or the other two?' my loyal secretary asks. I tell her that the three of them will finally come back from Egypt on Monday. I am happy, Luna and I decided to leave it all to them and withdraw from all that publicity ourselves. Our names are being mentioned, every now and then, in magazine articles which my grandfather sends me on a regular basis, the focus however remains on the prince, his sister and her newlywed bride. He also wrote that we can expect a large compensation from the Egyptian government. They are over the moon with the discoveries we've made and have been very generous with their rewards.

Luna sits down with us, dripping in her bikini and gives me a wet kiss. *'I'm looking forward, spending some more time with your mother,'* she says, immediately adding that our company of the past week, certainly has not been any less welcome or entertaining. Erica laughs. They flew back to Rome with us and stayed at our place for a week. Which gave her the opportunity to show us all she bought for the new apartment herself. It truly has become more homely and warmer than when we spent one night here, some four weeks ago. It has not been completely finished, but I am sure it will all be perfect in the end.

They'll fly back on Sunday and at the airport we will switch them for my mother who, after our wedding in Cairo, first flew back home to Rotterdam with my father. We were able to chat a bit on the wedding itself of course, but not nearly in enough detail, in the eyes of my nosy mother, so she decided to come over for a week. There are enough rooms here to accommodate her, even though she will have to share a bathroom with Nefret, located in between their two bedrooms. Erica and her daughter are doing that as well now and that works just fine.

The two girls have really grown fond of each other, and our Egyptian foster daughter even made plans to visit the Netherlands for a week, before the end of the summer. Erica fetched the white wine inside to fill up the glasses of Luna and me.

My love has her phone in her hand already again, with which she is constantly chatting with our three friends in Cairo. She of course does not mind that the two have a lot of time with the prince. Though she does not hide the fact that she thinks it to be overdue for our prince to spend time with his other two brides and give them some needed and longed for attention. Elena and Nailah regularly then tease her with naughty remarks or raunchy pictures.

My assistant has figured out by now, that I am in a special 5-way relationship and is most of all very happy how this has positively changed me personally. Especially my relationship with her and her daughter has greatly improved, just as it has with my mother. My father also is very happy for me, admitting though that he sometimes does miss his old Juliette, who was just as business tough as he. He always was proud when his daughter fought hard as our shipping company's lawyer. But does realize, I am far happier now than I was back then.

'Did you tell her already?' my Luna teasingly asks, knowing very well that this is not the case. I stick out my tongue and say I will get to that. Erica, who doesn't know it is about her, witnesses this teasing from my young wife for a few days already and always has to smile. She did ask me twice already, what it is. I then just shake my head and do not answer her question. This time she does not ask anything, apart from if we know what we want for dinner this evening. She spoiled us a few times already with excellent home cooked meals.

Erica, however, is on a holiday too, so I propose to go to a restaurant with the five of us. Luna immediately agrees and says the girls will be given the choice, as long as it is not fast food. She walks over to ask them. Of course, the two first pull her back into the jacuzzi again. Erica and I watch the playing trio, sitting side by side. When they are wild like this, there is barely any difference between my 23-year-old love, her nine-years younger foster daughter and her friend. Erica says her daughter will miss all of us, including me. When they flew to Cairo the girl had been a bit nervous because I was always so strict. She loved to join her mother on this unexpected trip to this warm country.

Erica did tell her beforehand, that a few things had changed with me in the weeks prior to their flight, but she never expected me to be this friendly and kind. The past few days, she has repeated this at least a hundred times. Also, with Luna and especially with our little Nefret, she can get along really well. Still, the honesty of Erica's daughter has made me think a lot. In fact, I have already made my decision. The new Juliette, or Julia, as I have come to call myself lately, thanks to Luna, doesn't want to be a lawyer anymore in the hard world of my father's shipping company.

I think my father knows this for a while already. As the only heir of the company, I do not need to actually work there myself anyway. My mother never did as well, hence her husband taking over management from her father. Even my grandfather always had one or two partners for the actual work, as he used to call it. My mother always has lived her life without any worry or care. At least, that is how I looked at it before and I could not understand it as well as I do now. Father does have a partner as well anyway, only three years older than I am. This man is perfectly suitable to take over in a few years' time.

Briefly I think of Patrick, the man who I was engaged to before he suddenly fell ill and died. We always hoped, he and I would take over the company together. Things are very different now. I have found my love here in Rome and after all events of recent weeks, I am planning on doing completely different things with my life. I don't have to keep working for the income anyway. A major part of it always has come from shares. That smaller percentage from my salary, I really do not need to live comfortably. Furthermore, I have quite some additional sources of income lately, when I think of what awaits us from Egypt and what I managed to win with poker during the last few weeks.

No, I am sure. I will tell my father I will quit my job at the shipping company. I don't fear that conversation at all.

I will also have to tell Erica. This is what I find much harder. Which is what Luna keeps teasing me with. Because she is already convinced, that what I have arranged for Erica, will be received very well by my secretary. Still, it remains a talk that I dread.

Erica looks at me for a while already, saying nothing while drinking her wine. Okay, here goes nothing. I ask if she wants to join me inside. I want to show her something on my laptop, which is better done out of the sunlight. She walks along.

I see Luna looking at me from the hot tub, giving me a wink. My love knows I will now finally do it and she will be there for me. I feel her energy warm me up, giving me strength, as I kiss my ring.

I have a complete order in my head, of what to say first and so on. As often happens in these types of conversations, things go different than I imagined beforehand. On my laptop is a picture of my apartment in Amsterdam. When we sit down, I ask her if Lieve, her daughter, is still planning to enroll in that school in Amsterdam next year. Whether she will then also live there, as travelling from the town of Pernis would take a long time each day.

Erica nods her head and looks at the picture. Then she looks at me and asks if I want to offer her daughter to stay with me? Luckily, Luna is much better at these sorts of conversations. We have practiced a few possible scenario's, during the last two days. So, I smile and tell her she is almost right. I click on the image. A ground plan appears. Inside the large bedroom her name is written and in one of the two guestrooms, the name of Lieve.

She pulls up her eyebrows and looks at me again. I tell her, that I want her to keep working for me, from this apartment in which she can live (as part of her salary) over the next few years, as long as Lieve and she would like to do so. With the condition that Luna and I can come over and stay there too, when we visit the Netherlands.

Erica still says nothing and patiently awaits my next words. I explain that I will remain here, live in Rome, probably for years to come and that I trust no one but her, to keep taking care in the background, of all my affairs in the Netherlands. As my personal assistant, who, just like myself, will no longer be working for the shipping company.

She puts down her glass and with a surprised voice asks me if I really want to quit. I nod my head and tell her about my thoughts. How I do not want to run the company without Patrick by my side. My father's partner can do a much better job than I can. Just like my granddad and mother, I will be connected with the company anyway, by name and stocks. But I want, again, just as my mother did, start doing my own things. I would love her to come along.

Another click shows her the draft contract I made for her. She reads it carefully. Every now and then I see a tremble. She shakes her head a few times and I see her eyes glisten of upcoming tears. I wrap my arm around her.

I whisper that she did so much for me over the last years, especially also over the last month, that she deserves it all. Also, because I do not want to lose her, as I can't explain to anybody, nor do I want to, what I am doing and why things are as they are. I only want her. And if she would ever decide to choose a different path, I want her, and no one else, to train her successor.

'*What about Luna?*' she asks carefully. After all, she took care of Luna's contract herself, not even that long ago. She will quit as well of course, together with the two of us. I think she is even still within a probation period, so that will be not a problem at all. Now that Luna is my wife, everything that is mine, is hers as well, so she won't be needing that salary from the company.

Then Erica asks me why I let her live in my apartment too. I answer that I wanted to keep that apartment anyway, just not living there anymore, for a few years at least. I remember well how she told me about the fight she had with her landlord last year. She smiles and admits that I did not seem to be at all interested back then. That is something I really feel ashamed for, I try to convince her. I am now different than I was then. I have been there for her much less than she has always been there for me.

But that will change, from this day forward. Yes, I want her to work for me but also see her as my wise friend. It is about her happiness in life as well. And that of her daughter. Erica whispers that since our meeting in Cairo, Lieve can't stop talking about how much I changed. She likes me so much better this way. Apart from her love for Luna and Nefret of course. I nod. I know it has always been nobody else's fault except mine, all these years.

'Did she sign already?' my wife asks, drippingly walking in with the two friends following directly behind her.

'Sign what?' Lieve curiously asks and Erica asks her to join us and sit between us, behind the laptop. She tells her daughter that she will quit working for the shipping company. The girl looks in shock and asks if I fired her. We both start laughing, put her mind at ease and tell her that I offered her a job, working for me personally, as I will be leaving the shipping company as well. She still looks confused. Her mother calmly explains that Luna and I will be living in Rome, and that I therefore can no longer work for the company anymore.

But I still need an assistant in the Netherlands, who will take care of things there for me and I asked her to do just that.

'She will fire me at the shipping company too!' Luna smiles, while she sticks her tongue out to me. Nefret laughs, even though she could not completely follow everything. She always likes her 'older sister' to tease me.

Then I show Lieve the floor plan of the Amsterdam house. She doesn't immediately recognize it, though she does see the two names of her mother and herself in the drawing. Erica nods her head and says that they will be moving out of their current rental place of that 'asshole'. Her daughter chuckles, when she hears her mother use that word and asks where they will be going to. When she finds out they'll be moving into my Amsterdam apartment, close to her new school, her eyes light up. She stands up to give me a long hug, pressing her wet body against me and says that she thinks the new Julia to be the kindest woman on the planet, apart from her own mother. Erica laughs and cries at the same time and now also gets a hug and a kiss from her daughter.

'And to celebrate, we will all go out for dinner tonight,' Luna says, and the girls enthusiastically yell that they have already chosen where we will be going, but that is a surprise. I'm fine with everything and while the three are going to take a shower and get dressed, I discuss with Erica what she should do, after she arrives in the office on Monday. In any case resign for all three of us and take care of all the paperwork around that. Of course, I will inform my father, although, knowing my mother, it will not come as a surprise for him.

Then clear out both our offices and have all the personal stuff send to my home in Amsterdam. She was working for nobody else but me anyway, so there will be no issue with how fast we can wrap up our activities there. We'll be able to leave immediately. After that, she can take her time to get all contractual and financial issues sorted. Access to all my accounts at banks and insurance companies and so on. Also register as a new inhabitant of the city of Amsterdam, moving into my house. Everything else that she thinks she is going to be needing, to take care of everything, as my representative in the Netherlands.

I also ask her not to try and save money, where the moving part is concerned. Just make sure you already live in my apartment and are settled in Amsterdam, before cancelling your current rental contract.

So, that lovely landlord can't do anything negative to her and it can all be taken care of remotely. If needed, she can also hire the services of a lawyer, which I will pay for, if he will give her a hard time. Before we get dressed for dinner as well, she has one more question. Because she doubts whether I will have enough tasks for her, without my own job at the shipping company myself.

I tell her not to worry about that. I know it will never be 40 hours. Probably, even during the busier periods, not even twenty hours and most weeks less than ten. Still, I will hire her fulltime nonetheless, as a compensation for the strange hours and weekends that I will call upon her services and for the fact she takes care of my house for me 24/7 as well. She radiates and says I know all too well that her living there is more in her advantage than it is in mine but will not complain about that and gives me a kiss as a sign she accepts my proposal.

For the first time, in all of these years that she works for me, that kiss feels like one of a close friend. There is so much less distance between us now, that I even feel comfortable stroking her hair and telling her how happy I am that she will continue to take care of us. She sighs and says she loves to do it and is very grateful that I did not forget about her, when I decided to leave the company. She would not have dared to expect that a month ago, if I would ever leave. Just as her daughter is, she too is very happy with the new Julia and thanks my sweet Luna for achieving this.

While we get up and walk upstairs, to the bedrooms to get dressed for dinner, she asks whether the rent for my apartment will be higher than what she pays for her house now. Briefly, I look at her in anger, but then notice her smile, as she of course did understand that I do not expect any money for it. I sigh that I should not let her daughter and her around Luna too much. I have my hands full enough as it is, with a foster daughter who loves being taught by my wife how to tease me.

'We love Luna,' she says out loud, as my love just comes walking out of the bathroom. Erica gives me a wink before she walks into her room. 'Who doesn't?' my darling answers, as she kisses me and pushes me backwards into our room. I turn her around to give her a loud smack on her naked butt.

'Julia!!' I hear Nefret shout, who heard in the hallway that her foster parents were 'at it' again, followed by the careful laughter from Lieve.

The restaurant, the three picked for tonight is a surprising choice. It is more like a pub/diner, where one can also enjoy some karaoke on the second floor. Which was apparently the reason why they choose this place, as the girls each take the stage at least four times. Our table is not even the loudest one in the room and Erica can't resist to take a deep look at me a few times.

I know exactly why this is and can't blame her for doing that. Less than two months ago, one would have never found me in a place like this and it would have been impossible to lure me in here. Now I am simply enjoying everything about it. However full, rich and luxurious my life always has been, there are clearly many things I have missed out on. That is why I enjoy them now twice as much.

Nefret even manages to make me grab the microphone ones myself and despite kissing the ring, before I step onto the small stage, it is clear that singing is not one of the abilities that I have been blessed with, recently.

Back on my seat and stealing more fries from Luna's plate, I think of all the things that I am able to do and how unrelated it all seems to where I am now. Is it though? When thinking about it, this is also a world which I am getting to know, thanks to my love for Luna. It is the same love that has led to me finding this ring in the past few weeks, granting me the ability to do things that I would have discarded as fantasy, not even that long ago. Although I have given myself a break this week, after the wedding on Saturday, I simply know that I will soon be using all these possibilities again.

Without anybody else noticing, I cut my own finger and show it to Luna. She smiles, licks up the few drops of blood and kisses the wound away. She gives me a wink and knows I just wanted to test if all is still there. She cuts herself now, much deeper than I did. A short glance at the wound from me, is enough to have the bleeding wound completely disappear. My love blows me a kiss and turns her eyes to our Nefret, who is on stage again.

Erica is the only one not persuaded by her daughter and Nefret, to sing a song on stage. Every now and then looks over to me for help. Funny, that my assistant needs to get used to this type of environment even more than I do. When we are finishing the evening with a large ice-cream as desert, the girls deliberate what we will do tomorrow, on their last day here.

Lieve should be the one to choose, our Egyptian girl thinks. All kinds of alternatives are discussed, from the zoo to the Vatican, in the end they decide on shopping. Without having to look to her right, my love sees, just as I do, the worried glance in Erica's eyes. So, Luna says that this is an excellent idea and that she, because they are our special guests, will of course pay for everything. Protests will not be successful. Not even from Erica, she emphasizes, who briefly looks at me gratefully, before giving Luna a kiss on her cheek.

Then, the two teenagers climb onto the stage one last time together for a false duet, after which they bow deeply, to receive the cheers and applause from the other tables. Some even wave at us when we leave the room and walk back downstairs a few minutes later.

In the taxi home, Luna lies against me from one side and Nefret from the other. On the seat across from us, Lieve takes the same position with her mother. Erica looks over at me and gives me a smiling wink. I know she totally enjoys watching how happy her Lieve is, here with us. I decide I will invite them over, at least twice a year, to stay with us for a few days or weeks.

At home, the girls go upstairs to watch a movie together in Nefret's room. It is Erica's and my turn to claim the hot tub for a few hours and enjoy the evening. Luna, who has been in the water more than enough today, takes a chair and sits next to the hot tub, while spoiling us with snacks and wine. Erica and I talk Dutch, but my gorgeous Italian does not mind at all. She is chatting on her phone with Elena.

Erica thinks I must be getting tired of this. She does however feel the need to emphasize one more time, how happy she is with her renewed boss. I fully understand what she means. She always has given herself fully, in providing for me. Knowing me better than anybody. I told her more than I told my mother or any of my own friends. Still there was always distance. She never was able to come really close to me and that was not at all her fault.

When she joined us in the jacuzzi for the first time, three days ago now, after Luna invited her, I saw her for the first time in different clothes than her usual stylish office wear. I am ashamed to have never looked at her as a woman, quiet a beautiful woman even! The next day she joined breakfast dressed in a pair of jeans. We decided there and then to burn all her office suits in some sort of ritual soon.

I wrap my arm around her and say that she, in turn, will probably get sick and tired of me saying this all the time too. But I am really truly sorry that I have not given more to her and her Lieve. I simply didn't see it. Now I feel very guilty about that lack of insight. We cannot get that decade back. From now on in however, I see her more as my best friend, who will be spoiled rotten by me, and who coincidentally also happens to work for me. She takes my hand, which is resting on her shoulder and briefly kisses it. My mother always told her that it really is inside of me and that one day it would come out. She was right.

'And all thanks to your little moon goddess,' she says out loud, so Luna can hear her. My love looks up from her phone and beams proudly: 'And sex goddess,' she adds. Erica starts laughing. The latter is indeed maybe a bigger change in me than my improved social skills. The fact that this gorgeous Italian woman had turned me into a warm-blooded lady, who fully enjoys the admiring glances and sexual attention of many. That was completely different in my 'Patrick-days'.

In that respect I also am more like my mother now. Erica indicated a few times already over the past few days, that my mother and I are similar in many aspects, among which this is one. I do not see my own mother like that at all. So, that will be interesting talks over the next few days. Even though I do feel a bit nervous about that time. Talking about sex with your parents is always a bit weird.

Side by side, Erica and I look over the river to the lights at the other side. Below us, we hear some downstairs neighbors talk, though we are completely private here. This little piece of paradise, close to the center of this vibrant city, my faithful secretary has found for us. A true one in a million find, and despite the fact that we only live here for one week now, this is, more than any other house from the past, my home. Mostly because of Luna of course, but also thanks to the perfect taste of Erica. She gives me another kiss on my cheek and gets up to leave the jacuzzi.

'It is almost midnight and if we will be shopping all day tomorrow, this old lady needs her rest now,' she smiles. Luna helps 'grandma' out of the tub and asks if she should quickly fetch her walker. Erica gives her a kiss as well and rushes inside through the cooling air of the evening. I submerge myself fully into the water and kiss my Pharaoh ring.

It changes into its real appearance, and I enjoy the total silence of my underwater world. I see the legs of Luna climb in and a few seconds later her face comes close to mine. She knows she can do this as well, when she is with me and together, we remain there for many minutes, kissing each other. She is my gorgeous, naked, tempting wife again. No longer the older sister that plays along with our daughter and friend.

She has so many faces. Each of them is true and real. Nothing is fake about her. She simply is all in one. I think of our wedding night. When Elena, Nailah and I were already crawling into bed together, to get at least a little bit of sleep. She went on for hours more with Lucio. He slept in until 13:00 the next day. Luna, however, was happily joining us already again for breakfast at 9 am.

I project the image in her head of how we watch from the other bed, what she did to and with our Lucio. Luna gives me a wink and kisses my neck. Then I follow her up to the surface.

'No need to turn me on even more,' my love whispers as she crawls onto my lap. From the window, above us, to the right, we hear a soft giggle and I see Nefret and Lieve quickly duck, as I look up. Luna's eyes are smiling. She gets up and together we climb out of the hot tub to retreat to the privacy of our own bedroom.

My wet bikini is quickly taken off and I fully enjoy the feeling of her softly sucking lips around one of my nipples. Although we always hold back a little, because of the noises, we know by now exactly what the other one likes. A sweet combination of pleasure and pain, where we don't have to hold back, as we can simply heal each other again if we damage one another a little bit in the heat of the moment.

It makes it far more relaxed to fully enjoy the pain as well. Without worries for marks that are left behind. The orgasms my wife gives me during our plays are incomparable with any sex from the past or the present. Of course, we also enjoy the other three, but the intensity of our own sex is absolutely unique and far better, for both of us.

An impressive number of intense orgasms later, it is already passed 2 am when we finally decide to get some sleep.

Saturday, June 6th

Luna and I are the last to join breakfast and I see Nefret giving a quick wink to Lieve. The latter secretly laughs a little but her mother, who notices it as well, says she deserves a spanking for making fun of us. 'Who knows, she might like that,' Luna throws all intentions of decent upbringing overboard and Lieve blushes. Erica shakes her head with a smile and starts making us some fresh coffee.

I ask if the girls have already decided where we'll go first, when we start our trip. They both nod and show me a list and even a map with the order of shops and the route. They have prepared well.

In the kitchen I hear Erica talking with Maria. Our housekeeper, who my secretary has found herself for us, when buying this house. She comes over three times a week, on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. A friendly lady, one year older than Erica and she lives at the other side of the Tiber-river. She can even see our apartment from her roof, if she would try. She has indicated to Erica a few times already, that she does not need that number of hours each week. But we are very happy with her and don't mind the fact that she is earning a little bit more than the hours she actually needs, so she won't have to get a second job, next to this one.

In return, she doesn't mind at all to come a few extra hours when we need her. Like today, to receive all the parcels that we will send back to the house from our shopping spree. Tomorrow she will also be here for another hour, to change the bedcovers before my mother arrives. She did however have to get used to the fact that we are a household with three women. Not that she is judgmental about it, we do not get that vibe from her, but it is simply not something that she has been in contact with a lot, in her life. Luna and Maria get along really well, and she even has started to teach Nefret some first Italian words. When she then also found out, we were befriended with the Borghese family, she was even over the moon.

Today, she has taken along her grandson, who she takes care of a few days per week. It is the third time I see the little guy. He simply adores our foster daughter. He is only six but can really look at her with love in his eyes. Now he is lying on the couch, in between Nefret and Lieve, laughing, as he is being tickled and hugged.

He will not be able to play with her a lot today, as she will of course join us shopping, but fortunately he loves watching his cartoons on the big screen of the living room-TV. When the taxi pulls up, Luna asks Maria if there is something that we can buy for her or her grandson. The old lady of course says that this is not necessary. She clearly does not know my wife very well yet, let alone my assistant.

The girls have decided to start a few miles outside of the city center at a large shopping mall. Modelled after the large American examples with all sorts of shops and boutiques. The advantage is that everything we buy there, we can temporarily store at the reception area, to have it delivered all at once. The first two shops are clearly focusing on our eager teenage daughters. The two are buying jeans, shorts, tops and summer dresses and are having a ball trying everything on and letting themselves go completely. Luna guides them through it all.

Erica and I keep a little more distance and are watching it all from the side. Every now and then I see Erica look at me, to check if I don't think her daughter takes too much advantage of this situation.

Reassuringly, I say that Luna is perfectly able to guard those limits. These are not the most expensive shops anyway, and what Luna has paid so far, is not shocking at all. The two girls are already delighted with their purchases. Next is a large, well sorted shoe store. Luna and I are browsing ourselves there as well and even Erica surprises herself, finding two pairs of shoes too.

Well, if you walk into a well assorted shoe shop with five women that have too much money to spend, one shouldn't be surprised that we walk out in the end with seventeen boxes. Luna and Nefret drive our first two shopping carts, filled with stuff from the first three shops to the reception already, while Erica takes her Lieve into a game store. Her daughter adores nerdy fantasy board and card games. She wants to check out if they sell anything here that is very hard to come by in the Netherlands. I gave Erica my credit card and insisted she would not be modest about what she could or could not get.

I sit down on a terrace, right across the corridor and have myself a drink. Watching the people that walk by, waiting for the first to return. After the first sip of the ice-cold fruit juice, I feel a slight tingle inside of my head building up. An all too familiar sensation, even though I have not experienced it for over two weeks already ...

... the bitterness of the wine from the silver chalice makes me drowsy. I put it back next to the bowl on the altar and look around. The chapel is almost empty, yet all the candles are lit. Apart from myself, I only see two men in the room, who are staring at me from the back. It feels like they think I should not be here, but they do not come any closer.

Spread out over the surface of the altar are many pictures. Mainly folks dressed in long white gowns. Every now and then a naked woman. They remind me of witches from LARP games which I saw on TV. With flowers in their hair and the most weird and wonderful necklaces. When I look up again, the men are just leaving. From outside, the clear sounds of a large party, that are muffled again as soon as the door falls shut. I feel the ring slightly vibrate on my finger. Briefly I wave my hand through the air. All candles are extinguished, but one.

In the back, to the right, an older woman who I didn't notice there before. She holds the only burning candle and looks afraid, when I float to her. I try to ease her mind. She closes her eyes in prayer. I glance back at the altar. Behind it, I observe myself sitting on some form of a throne. I look down and see the floor through my own body ...

... Luna calmly looks at me. Nefret drinks her coke as if nothing has happened. Erica and Lieve have not returned yet, so I can't have been out for that long. How many minutes, my love can't say, as they just arrived here, two minutes ago, finding me like this. She asks me if I had a dream again, as it looked a bit different than before. More like staring, with my eyes open. 'It also felt differently,' I reply, and it did not seem to be even remotely connected to Ohfizja. Our two guests are approaching, and I indicate I will tell her more details later.

Erica hands me back my card. Lieve looks extremely happy with the things that she was allowed to buy. None of her friends will have this too. I am happy for her, especially as she will be starting to build a new group of friends in Amsterdam. To have a few unique items might be very helpful in that effort. My secretary notices that something has occurred, and I quickly explain that I briefly fainted again. Just like a few weeks ago, when it happened regularly. She knows the stories and understands this is the time nor the place to talk about it. We all have a drink and continue our shopping spree in the large mall.

In a toy store, the two girls buy a lovely present for Gabriel, Maria's grandson and Luna finds a large wooden rosary to hang on the wall, for our kind housekeeper.

Because this old Italian lady is telling us since day one that we should have one in our entry hall as well, my wife has even bought two of them. They are not my favorite piece of wall-art, but I am totally fine with it, if they hang one of them there.

After lunch, we relocate to the city center of Rome, to continue our shopping there. Luna and I are not buying much ourselves, although we do regularly look at each other, when we fancy something that we will go back for another time. This is especially not the right moment to get some lingerie or erotic toys that we see in some shop windows. Of course, Nefret and Lieve see these too. Our little girl immediately asks with a giggle if they should wait outside. I do buy two dresses and Luna finds herself three revealing tops.

Mostly, however, this day is for my secretary and our daughters. As time passes, and Erica understand more and more how relaxed we are about all that is spent, she allows herself to select a few more things too. The last thing we buy this afternoon, is a large suitcase as they will at least need one extra to get everything back to the Netherlands with them.

To makes sure it won't get too late for Maria, we decide not to go out for dinner and drive back home at the end of the afternoon. Gabriel is sleeping on the couch and his grandmother is reading a book next to him. The girls kiss him awake and give him his present. Maria smiles happily as she sees her grandson unwrapping the toy firetruck, after which he gives Nefret a long hug to thank her. When our daughter points to Lieve, as it is also her present, he seems a little shy at first, before giving her a warm hug as well.

Maria thanks the girls and then gets the lovely rosary from Luna. Tears well up in her eyes. She really thinks we are spoiling her way too much. And when we explain that we have one for the hallway in this house as well, she radiates even more and promises to bring a nephew of hers along, tomorrow, who will hang it up beautifully.

Erica and Lieve say their farewells to the two, as we will be already to the airport tomorrow, when Maria will arrive back here to prepare the guest bedroom. As soon as they have left, we order food for the five of us and while we wait for delivery, Nefret and Lieve are climbing into the jacuzzi again.

Erica takes a long warm bath upstairs and Luna is adding up all the receipts of today. Although she knows I am totally fine with it, she does show me the total amount: € 13.694,93.

'My bride needs to play poker soon again,' she teases with a smile, knowing that is of course not needed.

We sit down at the fireplace, and I tell her about the new dream this morning. She quickly says 'sorry', having to admit she has completely forgotten about that. After all, it had not happened for quite some time of course. So, I don't blame her at all and tell her about the chapel, the pictures and the fact that I appeared to be a ghost.

We both are wondering if this dream will develop itself again over several episodes and if it will be the start of another adventure in real life again as well. As there seems to be no connection whatsoever with Ohfizja, apart from the ring on my finger, that is not very likely at all yet. Luna repeats all the details that I shared, gets up from the couch and lights a candle, a few meters away from me. I activate my ring with a kiss and wave my hand through the air ... the candle indeed extinguishes instantly.

'It is connected,' Luna determines confidently. She is convinced that this dream is a continuation of my story, as it has already revealed a new power to me in the very first episode. I nod my head and wave my hand once more. The candle is being lit again. That is something I did not even do in my dream.

'Many will fear her...' Luna mumbles the words of Ohfizja, while we talk about the woman that seemed to be so scared of me. Well, I would probably be afraid too, seeing the ghost approaching of someone I see sitting there, a few meters further. Maybe that's the reason of those two men leaving quickly as well. For now, we can't do anything more than to wait if there will be a second dream.

We get up to set the table for dinner. Our daughters return in their bikini's and sit down. While they talk to Luna, I walk upstairs to see if Erica has not fallen asleep. I softly knock on the door of the bathroom, followed by a louder one:

'Yeehees,' I hear the impatient voice of a mother who thinks that her daughter is knocking on the door. I look around the corner and see her lying in the bathtub with a wet cloth draped over her eyes. Though the bath contained foam at some point, that has all but disappeared.

I walk up to the tub and look at my loyal friend. From business suit to naked in four days, I think and enjoy the view of her beautiful body. Especially for a woman of her age.

'What is it, love?' Erica asks her daughter. I say nothing, kneel besides the bathtub and give her a kiss on her lips.

'Thank you, darling,' she smiles, *'has dinner arrived?'* Because I remain silent, she lifts up a corner of the cloth and looks startled at my smiling face. She then grumbles something of me being like my mother and places the cloth back over her eyes. She clearly does not mind at all me seeing her like this. I whisper that the table is set, dinner can arrive any second now and I give her a longer kiss. This time she answers it and satisfied I leave the bathroom to walk downstairs. My secretary is now definitely a very close friend.

'Did you kiss my mother?' Lieve asks in English, so the other two can understand my answer. Luna has made a bet with the two girls. She felt I kissed Erica and the teenagers were giggling but do not believe it to be true. I ask what the wager is. Nefret explains that she needs to be kissing Lieve if Luna is correct and if not, then Luna needs to give me a deep French kiss. I start laughing.

'In that case,' I say very slowly to build up the tension, *'you will have to kiss each other, just like you have done yesterday, after watching Luna and me in the jacuzzi.'* Lieve's face turns a blushing, deep, dark red and Nefret, who is getting more and more used to Luna and me, has the biggest smile on her face. Erica's daughter carefully asks how I know this, but I simply say that I have been young too. It is absolutely nothing to be ashamed of, anyway.

Luna crosses her arms in front of her chest and stands next to the two girls to check whether the kiss is satisfactory. The first kiss is way too careful and therefor dismissed. The second one is already more like it and then Nefret, who has a great role model in her young stepmother in how to be bold, takes Lieve's face tenderly between her hands and gives her girlfriend a genuine long kiss. Which makes her blush even more, though answering that kiss with visible pleasure. The two really like each other. A few moments later, Erica comes down and although there is no more kissing, she sees her daughter's red face and looks from one to the other.

'They lost a bet,' my wife briefly explains.

When my assistant, although she should know better, asks what the bet was all about, Luna now also takes Erica's face between her hands and kisses my secretary tenderly on her lips for a good ten seconds. She now is nearly as red as Lieve and Nefret looks at me with naughty eyes, giving me a wink. She loves teasing others as much as my darling wife does.

'I am glad we are going home tomorrow,' Erica teases the girls back, even though I know for sure she does not mean that at all. When she sees Nefret looking sad, because of her words, she quickly apologizes, wraps her arm around her and explains that it really was just a joke. Our girl knows that and whispers she will really miss Lieve.

Erica kisses her forehead, and her daughter sits next to her friend and cuddles up against her. It is touching to see how close they have become. I blow my assistant a kiss from across the table and she radiates. Feeling part of the family now, and she sure is. Luna has taken her seat next to me, by now, and as usual is throwing some fuel onto the fire.

'I don't blame you, darling,' she playfully forgives my unfaithfulness, 'your secretary does have the perfect lips to kiss.' Erica starts laughing and wants to give her a reply, when a loud ringing sound comes from the hallway.

'Saved by the bell,' Luna shouts quickly and rushes to the door. When she returns with our food, everybody sits calmly at the table.

'Can you make it a bit more cozy, love?' Luna asks, while pointing to the candles in the middle of the dining table. I stick out my tongue to her, but don't mind being put on the spot. I wave my hand and the three candles immediately start burning.

Nefret claps her hands enthusiastically and Erica looks a bit worried at her own daughter. She knows a little bit of my powers herself, but to Lieve it is all just magic tricks that I do. Luckily, she considers this to be one too and applauds.

'You should go to Las Vegas,' the 14-year-old says in admiration. I tell her that I will travel there for sure one day, for a different reason, not to be on stage. Nefret whispers something in her girlfriend's ear, who turns red once more.

'No, Nefret, not just for sex either!' I laugh and Luna gives her foster daughter a slap on her bikini bottom.

She adds that our girl must stop her naughty behavior, otherwise she has to go to bed without any kiss from her Lieve, this evening. Which makes the Dutch teenager burst into laughter again and so the mood is kept very relaxed with some teasing back and forward. The food is tasty and when Erica and I clear the table and bring the dishes to the kitchen, the three are on the couch, watching TV.

'You're a good mother, just like your mother,' Erica whispers while we fill the dish washer. I think about it. My mother and I indeed had a nice bond when I was younger. It lessened only after I met Patrick. Not that I blame him for any of that, but it is me who changed back then, not my mother. Now I seem to be more like I was when I was a child, once more. Something that I recognize in Luna, Nefret and Lieve. There are no regrets about my life with Patrick, on the contrary. Still, it feels like I was not myself for over fifteen years.

Erica watches me think and keeps me company in the kitchen. She whispers Patrick was a decent guy. Luna, however, is clearly what I need in my life, and I can make a lot more people around me happy now than I would ever have been able to. That is exactly what I am doing now. She sees that every day again. In Luna, in Nefret, in her daughter, in herself, in Maria, in my mother, in Elena and Nailah, in Lucio, in my grandfather, the list goes on and on. It feels double, I admit. How happy I am now, with my sweet Luna, somehow feels as a betrayal to Patrick. When I think of how all these things could not have happened with him in my life. Nevertheless, he is still a man I truly loved. Erica nods her head.

'Sometimes, that what you love is not necessarily that what you need,' she says. It is a good sign that he is still this deep in my heart. That love has been real too, and I should cherish it. This new love though, does give me riches in my life, that are far beyond.

She wraps her arms around me and wipes away the few tears that I have. Feeling more like a mother to me now than a friend. Age wise, she is closer to my mother than I am to my wife. I look in her eyes and thank her, one last time, for all those years of loyal support and for all future years of friendship. With those words I kiss her. Filled with love. Like a daughter can kiss her mother, in worship and gratefulness. She feels the value of that kiss and accepts it with all her heart. I kiss my ring and make the tears and the red eyes disappear and turn to their normal color.

Erica shakes her head and says she can't comprehend all the things I can do. I ask her if she wants to experience another one of my powers. That she does and I project in her head the image of the kissing Lieve and Nefret, some one hour ago.

'Thank you,' she says and understands the feelings of Lieve towards our daughter better now.

Back in the living room we find her daughter sleeping on Luna's lap, who is asleep herself as well, sitting up straight. Only Nefret is awake and gives us a wink. I take a blanket out of a cupboard in the hallway and cover the two, after which my daughter joins us upstairs. Outside her bedroom, I give Erica one more kiss and so does Nefret. Tenderly, Erica strokes the girl's hair.

When she closes the door, we walk to my bedroom together and I have her crawl in bed with me. Comfortably, she curls up in my arms, against my naked body and soon falls asleep, no doubt, dreaming of her Lieve. Through the glass ceiling, I look at the stars. I listen to the silence in our home ...

... I kiss the praying woman on her forehead and float back to my own body. Calmly I sit down inside it again and open my eyes. I get up and look down once more. Apparently human again and at least I am still alive. The praying woman looks at me and sees me get onto my feet. She sinks down on her knees and makes the sign of a cross with her hands. I walk towards her. My footsteps sound hollow in the empty chapel. Only now, I recognize Luna's mother. She is scared and thought I had died. I take her in my arms and comfort her.

She whispers that a powerful force is protecting me and thanks the souls that guard me. Looking around, I see no angels. Not sure what she saw, apart from my spirit, but I say I am indeed blessed with a divine power. Luna's mother bows her head and allows me to help her onto her feet. I give her another kiss on her forehead, and she looks warm and happy again. While she takes her seat, I walk towards the exit to leave the chapel. One more time I turn around and see the picture, still lying on top of the altar.

I grab them and open the door to the outside world. The noises from the party die out as I step outside. I hear my own breathing ...

Sunday, June 7th

... Luna and Lieve have joined us in the large bed. During the night, they came upstairs as well. When Nefret was not in her room, Luna took the girl with her to our bedroom. They crawled in bed with us. Lieve was very nervous to do so. Mostly because she saw I was naked and Nefret almost as well. She decided to keep her shirt on, but Luna of course did join us naked and lied down behind Erica's daughter. My love has her arm around her and the two girls between us are very close to each other, face to face.

I watch the eyes of my wife slowly open up. They start radiating to me, like they do every morning. Carefully, we both move backwards out of bed and meet each other next to the foot board. We kiss and look at the two in our spot. Luna takes a picture with her phone and sends it to Erica, who is already preparing breakfast in the kitchen downstairs. It doesn't take long before she replies with a heart.

The Italian beauty walks into the shower, and I slip into a bathrobe to first walk down. On the clock, on the wall next to the winding stairs, I see it is eight o'clock. We have plenty of time. Their check-in is at half past two. My mother will then land over an hour later. In the kitchen, Erica greets me with a kiss. I can't suppress a little smile. Wonderful, to be having this bond with her now. We're drinking coffee together when Luna comes down. Her hair wrapped in a towel and just like me, dressed in a bathrobe only.

'Finally!' she says, while pouring herself some coffee and she explains that she has gotten her period. Although I understand her relief, it does briefly make me sigh now. My love presses herself against me from behind and hugs me tight. She knows that, after our adventure in Egypt, I am convinced that I will never have another period again in my life and am infertile. With her it would only be a brief pause, which turns out to be true now. I am not just happy for her, but for both of us. If we ever want to have kids, she at least can have them.

'Lucio will also be pleased to hear this,' I say, also indicating that I am really happy for her. My love chuckles and starts writing to the prince at once. We don't have to wait for long to receive an answer and on top of that, the answer is surprising. She shows me the messages of both him as well as his sister.

Nailah and Elena have started their period today as well. The three women are synchronized! I concentrate on all four of them and project a thought into their heads, that I am looking forward to having Lucio to myself a few days, once every month. He immediately sends me a thumbs-up and a heart. The girls all three say that there is no reason to ignore them sexually during those days.

Erica, who can't follow all details, looks at us questioningly. I briefly explain to her the situation.

'Why did I ask?' she wonders and smilingly walks upstairs to continue packing and to check whether her daughter is still asleep. Halfway up, she bumps into Lieve and Nefret already, both in their bathrobes and both with wet hair. I take a look at them and see that they indeed have taken a shower together. It is clear, Erica realizes that as well, even though she says nothing and glowingly walks on to the upper floor.

The two give me, as well as Luna, a kiss and then go fetch themselves some breakfast. Meanwhile touching each other more often than Luna and I did, during those first days in Rome. Which is only a month ago. Already it feels like my darling has always been there. I look at her. She is teasing her friends in the chat. I get up and stand behind her. I kiss her neck, whisper that I love her and sincerely hope our prince will have a child with her someday.

She nods, barely noticeable, but I feel that it is what she wants too. She puts away her phone and turns around. The kiss does not stop until Nefret puts down her plate on the opposite side of the table with deliberate force. Luna laughs and I see her eyes glow of happiness.

Calmly she turns to the two teens behind her and says they should be kissing more themselves if they do not want to watch us doing it. Lieve blushes a bit less than yesterday already and even dares to say that she thinks that to be an excellent idea. I see how she squeezes Nefret's hand under the table. Then I give my lovely wife a final kiss and head upstairs to the shower.

There, I do not think of the future child of Luna and Lucio, but of the fact that I did not tell my love yet about the second dream. I know why that is. Her crying mother might worry her too much. Still, I cannot and do not want to keep these dreams to myself, nor do I want to keep parts a secret. Getting dressed, after the shower, I look at the crystal on top of Luna's dressing table. The triangular based pyramid that has become the symbol of our group of five.

Her ruby glowing brightly in the center of it. I close my eyes and see the relentless amount of love she sends to my upper corner. Of course, to the other three of our group as well, our friends are very dear to us, but it is incomparable to what I am receiving. I send a thought into her head and ask her to come upstairs.

With a slightly worried face she comes dashing in. I never called her this way before. I take her hand in mine and together, we sit on top of the bed. Calmly I tell her about last night's dream and how sorry I am that I waited this long to share it with her. Luna kisses me and says she completely understand the reason, as it is indeed painful, knowing her mother cried and was afraid of me. Of the ghost version of me, at least. She instantly eases my mind, saying we should try not to draw conclusions too fast. There can be over a hundred reasons for this. We know far too little about this new dream. Maybe, it just indicates her mother is afraid of my powers. That could certainly be true, hence we did not share a lot about this topic with her parents yet.

My Italian girlfriend kisses me and says that she is very happy with her powerful bride. She loves the fact that I wanted to protect her. But she would love to do it all together. Just like our first adventure. 'You think these dreams will lead to an adventure again?' I ask her. She nods. She was fairly sure after the first dream already. But now that there has been a second one, she is totally convinced. It will be related to those photos. As I decided to grab them along. Though be it, without first walking to the altar, my love continuous to analyze. I can't imagine that these would be the type of powers, which I will be able to develop.

Luna wonders why this could not be possible. It is not more weird than taking fragments of crystal out of a solid cube or melting these fragments together. She absolutely has a good point there. Some of my powers which I seldomly use, are indeed just as absurd, unexplainable and unlikely, as grabbing some pictures over a distance. Maybe, we should start practicing more again, with all my powers. Luna thinks that is a great idea. We agree that we will get back to training, as soon as my mother has left again, and we'll be alone again. Just the two of us. And with our three friends back in Rome as well.

Then we hear the sound of breaking glass from below. I am startled but Luna starts laughing.

'Or you can start a bit of practice now already,' she grins and quickly we hurry downstairs. A shaken-up Lieve is standing next to the dish washer, with a few pieces of wineglass in her hand. She looks at us with big eyes when Luna and I come rushing into the kitchen. We immediately calm her mind by saying we don't mind the glasses. I ask if she herself is okay and take over the shards from the girl. She just has a small cut in one of her fingers.

Nefret explains they wanted to help by filling the dish washer, and two glasses fell down. I see it is only half the truth, although I don't even look what exactly did happen. They will have been playing a bit too frolic, I presume. Luna dabs the blood from her finger. Erica now enters the kitchen as well and asks what has happened. Shaking my head, I tell her that a few glasses have fallen, that is all. Nothing to worry about. Her daughter still looks very shaken. I ask if I can make her smile again. She looks at me surprised.

'How?' Lieve asks. I take over her hand from Luna and look at the little cut. Not big, though quite deep. The bleeding will not quickly stop. A piece of cloth will not be enough, I say to my wife, who winks at me noddingly. Erica and Nefret watch on, tensely.

I kiss Lieve's finger, lick away the blood and the cut has completely vanished. In disbelief she looks at her own finger. Then at her mother, who has her eyes filled with tears. Next, her eyes go to Nefret, who proudly glows and smiles at her.

'Now, you are truly family,' Luna says and gives Lieve a hug, 'and this is a little family secret, okay?' The girl hugs Luna and me and suddenly gives our daughter a very long kiss, in front of everybody. She then embraces her mother, who can only smile happily at the rest of us.

'Thank you,' Erica whispers at me and she walks upstairs with her daughter to finally finish packing.

'Now she knows, it is not just tricks,' Nefret says as she helps Luna with carefully throwing away all the shards. I won't repair the glasses. We will simply buy a few new ones. When I leave the kitchen, I hear our girl behind me whisper at Luna that it was her fault that Lieve dropped them. She had sneaked up to her from behind and kissed her neck unexpectedly, like she has seen us do so often. It took her friend completely by surprise, which made her drop the glasses. Luna again reassures her that we really don't mind about those.

More important is, whether Lieve liked the kiss in her neck. Nefret does not know that, she for sure did.

Our final lunch with the five of us, is very festive. The girls can barely refrain from touching each other. Erica pretends, just like we do, she doesn't see anything and grants them their little moments. Luna has a farewell present for our guests. She asked a jeweler friend to make a number of pendants on a silver chain.

It is a mini version of our crystal, without the ruby inside of course. At first, only meant for Nefret, because she, as our daughter, is not part of our special group around the prince, but always close. It quickly became clear however, that the second circle around us, will become larger rapidly, so she ordered a lot of them. Among others, she wants to give one to Carlo, her friend from university, who also our wedding photographer, for his birthday next month.

Now, the first two are for Lieve and Nefret. They hang them around each other's neck and thank each other extensively with a kiss. Almost forgetting to thank Luna, until Erica makes a remark about that. After that, Erica gets a pendant too. Hers is slightly bigger and she herself does of course immediately thank Luna with a tender kiss. To me, she just winks and that is all that is needed.

The taxi-van has arrived already and carrying two suitcases more than with which they came, a week ago, we all get in. Erica and I sit side by side and take this moment to talk about what and with whom she is going to arrange things at work. In any case, I promise her to call my father tomorrow, together with my mother. So, he will be prepared already, for the upcoming resignations.

After that, she can start preparing everything around our working relationship and their move to Amsterdam. As I don't know if or how well I will be reachable over the upcoming period, I will empower my mother to sign things on my behalf, if there are urgent things for her to get sorted. The last thing I have to tell her, something Luna and I have discussed earlier this week.

'The expenses for Lieve's education, we will also pay for. You both are family now, after all.' One last time, Erica is struggling to keep her tears from flowing and she gives both Luna and me another kiss. Her life will be so different from now on. New boss, new city, new home ... and everything her daughter can wish for.

At the check-in desk, there is a lot of hugging and crying. Especially Lieve and Nefret are having a hard time saying goodbye, despite being happy about the fact they will soon see each other again. As our guests walk through the border control, the girls blow each other one more kiss, after which our girl hides away in the safe arms of Luna.

We remain seated on that bench for a while, until she has calmed down a bit. Then we walk to the arrival hall, to wait for my mother. She will not be here soon, so we have a drink first. Knowing very well that Luna will not be able to say 'no', because she is sad, Nefret insists on going to McDonalds where she has a large shake. We both take one as well and it has been a long time, since I had a drink like this. In fact, the same is true here as it was yesterday at that karaoke restaurant. Not even half as bad as I always convinced myself it would be. I'm sure we'll enjoy this as a family more often now.

On screens in the hall, I see that my mother's plane has a ten-minute delay, so we do not need to rush and calmly walk to the indicated exit. Nefret quickly buys a rose herself, to give to my mother. Although I know that she doesn't even like flowers that much, this gesture is so very sweet, that I am sure my mother will appreciate this just as much as I do. We look at all the people, coming out of the same exit as my mother soon will. Of course, I hear a lot of voices speaking the Dutch language around me.

At last, she appears between the siding doors. I feel an intense warm happiness inside, seeing her again. Even though it has only been week since we last saw each other. In previous years, I often didn't see her for months in a row. This time, I am intensely happy that she is here. First, she walks up to Nefret to give her a long hug and an extra kiss when she gets that rose from her. After which she kisses my Luna on her lips, also slightly longer than might be considered normal for a mother- and daughter-in-law.

Finally, she walks over to me. Her eyes glowing, as I know mine do as well. In Cairo, we did not have much time together. Now we do. On top of that, I see that she is just as happy to have her daughter back, as I am to be getting this bond with mum again. She kisses me. Lovingly. For minutes, we stare in each other's eyes, without stopping our lips from touching. Luna stands close and whispers she loves us, realizing how special this moment must be for us. Even Nefret joins and wraps her arms around my mother and me.

We enjoy each other for a long while like this. Not bothering about all the eyes around us, staring surprised in our direction. My tears flow constantly by now and my mother tastes them on her lips.

'*Sorry*,' I softly say, as our lips let go of one another. I know she knows exactly what I mean by that. I have missed her. But, and that is much worse, she had to miss me.

Fifteen minutes later, we walk to the exit together and get a taxi home. I'm in between my mother and Luna. Nefret sits across from us and smiles along. While driving, I want to ask my mother to call my father, as soon as we are home. She shakes her head:

'I already told him you will be leaving the firm,' she whispers, giving me another kiss.

Maria is waiting for us at home and proudly shows us the rosary that her nephew put up. She then politely introduces herself to my mother and wishes us a pleasant evening. We'll see her here again tomorrow. Nefret shows my mother her room for the coming days and Luna sits down with me on the big balcony.

'I love your mother,' she softly says, while squeezing my hand. She adds that I resemble her so much, that she can already see how much she will still love me in 25 years' time. I can only acknowledge that I am much more like my mother than I ever realized or even thought possible. As a child I completely adored her.

When I went to university, and after that period, I considered her to be just a hippy, living her carefree life, not even seeing her as an adult. Now, I want nothing more than to live just as free as she has always done. She has become my role model.

To emphasize that hippy-image a bit more, she comes walking down the stairs with our daughter, both dressed in a bikini. They climb into the jacuzzi. Busy, chatting with each other in Arabic, not even noticing that we are there too. I look at my Luna. We don't need words and ten seconds later, we climb in with them, both stark naked.

Nefret shakes her head to indicate that she thinks her foster parents are being too frivolous again. Then start laughing because my mother throws her bikini top over her head onto the balcony. She sighs and takes her one off as well. Still a bit shy sometimes, but already very accustomed to the way we treat each other here.

My mother wraps an arm around her and kisses her cheek. Nefret cuddles up against her and rests her head on one of her grandmother's boobs. I realize that it has been a long time since I saw my mother like this, although we often took a long bath together, when I was younger. Even up until right before I met Patrick, when I was only slightly older than Nefret is now.

My mother observes me watching and gives me a wink. I feel myself slightly blushing and suppress the feeling that I enjoy watching her nakedness. As always, Luna is a bit more bold and she compliments my mother on her beautiful body. If she would not have been married to her daughter, she would have for sure taken a shot at seducing her. 'And you would have succeeded,' my mother answers, making Nefret giggle. Somewhat surprised, I look at the flirting between my own mother and my wife. Just as at the good time our little girl seems to have, watching this game.

We are all silent. I close my eyes to look at the energy flowing between us. There is nothing to be worried about. Yes, there is an attraction between the two of them, yet, most of all, they both radiate love and desire towards me. I feel my blushing intensify, now that I notice the intensity of my mother's desire, to intimacy with me. Not sex, like the longing I feel coming from Luna, but intimacy, nonetheless. I sigh ...

... the crowd stares in disbelief, when they see me walk out. All but Luna. My darling is a bit to the side of the main partying group, talking to a lady in a long white gown. She gives me a wide smile, when she sees me, over the shoulder of this woman. Here and there, people are starting to clap and sing. The two men I saw in the chapel earlier, walk up to me, carrying a chair, and invite me to sit down.

One of them has a stethoscope around his neck, like a doctor, and listens to my heart and breathing. He confirms to the crowd that I am indeed no longer dead. Even though I understand what he says, of course, I try to figure out the language that he is speaking, as it does not sound anywhere near familiar. By now, Luna has walked up to me and sits down on my lap. Just like I am, she is completely naked and does not wear a white robe, like most others.

Both the men as well as the women. For a moment I think back of the youngsters of the circle in my previous series of dreams. These people are all much older. Most are older than I am, I think.

Still, there is a similar sort of adoration from them towards Luna and me. Combined with the same type of free, erotically charged, vibe as back then. A few times, one of them walks up to us and caresses Luna or me briefly ...

... her hands softly stroke the curvatures of my breasts. I smile and open my eyes to look straight into the face of my mother. She kisses me gently and indicates that Luna and Nefret will soon return. I look into my own eyes when I see her and feel her hands still touching my breasts. Something inside of me wants to push her away, of which I feel it is the old Juliette.

Julia savors this attention from her mother and without realizing what I am doing, I bent over to kiss her. Not a kiss between mother and daughter, a real kiss, like I can give to Elena or Nailah as well. With sincere passion. Her response is equally intense. When I let go of her again, a bit confused, Luna and Nefret are smilingly watching us from besides the jacuzzi. Both holding a tray of food.

‘She is a good kisser, isn’t she?’ Luna laughs and even Nefret nods her head with conviction. They explain that they got to know each other a bit better, while I was sleeping. That works best with giving some intimate kisses to one another.

‘Don’t worry about it,’ my mother whispers in English, so the other two can listen in, ‘this is love, not sex.’ She says she learned that it is possible in a relationship based on love, to kiss passionately, without it becoming sexual. That’s why she can also kiss Nefret, without having to feel ashamed for it. It has made the bond between the four of us, much more intimate and intense, without it becoming awkward. I contemplate her words and nod.

Without knowing the reason behind it, I did the same with Nefret in Egypt. Intimate kisses without further intentions, have made the love for each other much stronger. I think I have more questions for my mother now, about her and her life, than my mother has for me about the last month.

‘We need more than a week,’ I sigh. Luna fully agrees and my mother is convinced that we would be able to keep talking for a year. We’ll see how it goes. We’re not in a hurry. This bond will not disappear again. Those words make me happier than I can explain to her. Apparently, I radiate that feeling as she smiles at me, with tears in her eyes.

'Welcome back, July,' she says with a dry throat and turns to Luna to thank her one more time, from the bottom of her heart and soul, for everything she has done for – and to me.

'You gave me my daughter back,' she whispers and kisses my Luna at least five times. Her first granddaughter gets a few hugs and kisses as well. Silently enjoying each other's presence, we eat.

When finished, despite it being only around eight o'clock, Nefret asks if she can go to her room already. She wants to chat with Lieve. She gives the three of us a kiss and whispers in Arabic, in my mother's ear, that she is happy in our family. Her grandmother answers that this feeling is completely mutual and gives her a small kiss on the tip of her nose, before she leaves the tub. We decide to follow her example and dressed in some bathrobes, the three of us go inside to sit on the large couch together. Luna gets drinks and snacks from the kitchen, and we start the extensive catch up, for which we long so much already.

By her request, my mother starts, to make it all more chronological. She tells us how she got more and more interested in esoterica and such, during her time in college, while she already had met my father. Even becoming part of a witches' coven, at some point in time, and she has been initiated there. Immediately I think of my dreams, and I see Luna briefly look at me. My mother has seen it too and smiles. We know all three that it will have to wait but we'll get to that part. So, when her father asked her, after his wife passed away, to take over her mother's role in a spiritual adventure, she didn't hesitate for a second and said yes.

Only at that point, she found out that her mother, my grandmother that is, was a witch herself and interested in the feminine side of spirituality. In hindsight, she regrets that she never has been able to discuss this topic with her own mother. They were living too much their own separate lives for too long. I look at her face and see, she is thinking the same thing that I do, as does Luna, who grabs hold of our hands and squeezes them gently.

She continues her story. Although the adventure has given her many things and made her stronger, spiritually, she has never been able to solve the Egyptian mystery. Moreover, as it is becoming clear now, solving that puzzle even turned out to be the key to some powers that she never considered to be possible.

To wrap it up, she tells us about the bond she developed over the years with Lucio's mother. Yes, that bond is intense and sexual. Still, she thinks it is incomparable with what we have as a group of five.

Before I have Luna tell our story to her, there is something I need to ask her. I have pushed it away so often.

'How did this work with grandpa and Berini?' I carefully ask. My mother bursts into laughter and shakes her head. She explains that from the stories the two men told them, it was clear that there was a very liberal attitude between the two men and both of their wives. It was the 60's and 70's after all. But there is no need for me to worry about that sort of intimacy between the generations. However, she did form a much more intimate connection with my grandfather, more so than alas ever was true with my grandmother.

All the holidays together lead to having barely any secrets for her father. Just like we had in the jacuzzi, there was a kiss every now and then, and there it stopped. The same is true for Lucio's mother and Berini. A very intimate relationship has developed, without the sex. Between the two women, there was an abundance of sexual activity however, she laughs. The men have regularly been a witness to that. Both gentlemen have nevertheless always kept a respectful distance, despite the fact that they gave them a hard time doing so.

I smile at the idea of the two women making love, regularly teasing the men, in their Egyptian tent.

'We just were not the right generation,' my mother concludes. Her parents have been much closer to Berini and his wife, as part of this quest, than the princess and she were with these two older men as company. Their own husbands, the princess had not been a widow yet, had no interest whatsoever in the puzzle. That is why their last hope was, giving it to Lucio and me. Well, then this little sex goddess came along, as Lucio regularly calls my Luna. Thanks to her, the group of five became to be and together we have been able to find the grave and give me the powers that I now seem to possess.

Luna beams proudly and starts to tell our part of the story now. In Italian, as my mother is fluent in that language and it is much easier for my wife, that way. This time around, no detail is skipped. I'm sure the story has never been told so precisely to anyone before. About our meeting, the dreams, the sex and the powers like healing.