

OVS Minisode - The Terror of San Cristobel

READERS: Due to some RL issues, Episode 10 will be delayed until April 11th. In the meantime, the OVS team is treating you all to some special "deleted scenes" from previous episodes. We hope you enjoy and appreciate your patience. Hugs and lots of Purple Love to all!

The Otaia Virtual Season mini-sodes are representations of the talent of our writers and artists. These mini-sodes may or may not be actual scenes or plots that will be a part of the regular OVS episodes.

Title: The Terror of San Cristobel

Author: Geekgrllurking

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Rating: PG-13

Words: 1270

AN: Missing scene from Episode 108, *Here Beneath My Skin*. Insert slathering of suntan lotion here...

Natalia Rivera stretched out on her lounge in the shade of the big umbrella and stared out into the bright blue ocean. A gentle breeze blew, cooling her slightly, as did a sip of her iced tea. The cry of seagulls and the crashing waves calmed her, lulling her into a very lethargic and peaceful mood.

She closed the manuscript that Blake had given her earlier in the week to look at. Even though Natalia no longer worked for the woman, Blake still had her reading some of the new submissions, valuing her opinions. The red head had thrust this latest manuscript at her with a wink and a cryptic "I think you might like this one."

Natalia had practically fallen out of her airplane seat when she opened the manuscript to discover a lesbian romance novel in her hands. Blake had apparently expanded her publishing interests in a new direction. It was actually a quite entertaining pirate adventure. She could almost picture a certain intimidating corporate raider with a heart of gold in the role of Pirate Queen. Natalia smiled at the mental image of Olivia in thigh high leather boots, tan pants and a flowing white blouse, with her trusty sword at her hip, standing at the prow of a tall ship, the wind whipping her hair around her shoulders...

Sighing happily, Natalia leaned over and took a much needed sip of her cold drink. She scanned the beach hopefully for her lover, disappointed when there was still no sign of her.

After their jog along the boardwalk and an amazing buffet breakfast, their tour of the Galaxy San Cristobel resort facilities with the general manager, Doug Riker, had taken up a good portion of the morning. So when Olivia had suggested she go ahead and relax on the beach while she went to check out the driving range with the older man, Natalia had gladly jumped at the chance.

The late morning sun was warming the air quite nicely now and Natalia stood to reposition her lounge into the sunshine. Grabbing her bottle of sun lotion, she popped the lid up and squirted a dab of creamy lotion onto the palm of her hand before spreading it over her arms and face and methodically rubbing it in. She definitely did not want to get a sunburn. Natalia frowned as a long shadow fell across her body.

“Need a hand?”

Natalia looked up and noticed recently painted pink toenails, digging into the scorching white sand, burrowing down deeper to find cooler earth. Her eyes traveled higher, following up never ending bare legs along the gentle swell of thigh to find white bikini briefs bright against the slightly tanned skin. A white linen shirt just covered her assets and fluttered open wider in the warm breeze to reveal even more skin and toned abs, as well as the matching bikini top stretched tight across ample curves. She almost stopped right there, but she desperately needed to see her favorite feature of the delightful woman standing in front of her.

Bright green eyes stared back at her, amused. A lone eyebrow quirked up and a naughty grin graced those oh so kissable lips as she flicked her blonde highlighted hair back from her face and then extended a hand forward to take the tube of suntan lotion.

“Roll over and I’ll do your back.” Olivia Spencer slowly moistened her lips and waited. Natalia swallowed hard at the hungry look in those intense eyes and silently handed over the tube.

“N-new bikini?” Natalia finally found her voice and did as she was asked, rolling onto her stomach. She knew you would never find something like that in Springfield at this time of year. Olivia sank down beside her on the edge of the lounge cushion, lightly running her fingers along the lower back of her own one piece suit.

“I saw it in the small boutique off the lobby and thought it was cute.” Olivia glanced down at her new swimsuit. “I liked the detailed trim.”

“There was trim?” Natalia jerked a little as Olivia squirted cold lotion straight from the tube onto the back of her legs.

“Uh, yeah.” Olivia smirked and started to massage the cream in, rolling the muscles and sliding along the slick skin. She felt her lover start to relax under the rhythmic movement of her hands. She moved down to the tiny feet and started working her way up, dipping into the hollow at the back of Natalia's heel and over the small bone of her ankle. The familiar smell of sand, sea and lotion brought back fond memories of days spent hanging out at the beach with her friends. Natalia's low moan quickly brought her back to the here and now.

“Oh , that feels soooo good.” Natalia mumbled into the cushion, melting little by little under her partner's strong hands.

Olivia squeezed out more cream onto her palms and rubbed them together to warm it up a little before once more moving along her lover's legs. Long fingers wrapped along the calf muscles slipping across the soft skin. Her thumbs dug in a little behind each knee before inching up the inner thigh. Natalia tensed for a moment and then shifted, spreading her legs ever so slightly.

“So how's that new book you've been reading? Something about pirates?” Olivia traced lightly along Natalia's inner thighs with the tips of her fingers before rolling across the hamstrings and then back again, slowing moving higher. She had given up all pretense of smoothing lotion on and was just enjoying touching her lover. Natalia rolled her hips slightly and she smiled to herself, knowing that she was getting to the woman.

“Uh,it's good,” Natalia couldn't seem to focus, Olivia's massage driving her nearly insane.

“Any maidens ravished yet?” The pads of Olivia's fingers eased under the edge of Natalia's bathing suit, moving just beneath the material in small circles along her hips.

“Not yet, but maybe if I'm lucky...” Natalia murmured under her breath. She felt a soft chuckle by her ear and knew Olivia had heard that.

“Did I ever tell you about the Terror of San Cristobel?” Olivia whispered, leaning forward and pressing her curves against her lover's back, pulling the long dark hair to one side. Natalia valiantly tried to remember any local pirate legends but shook her head no, sighing as long fingers started massaging at her neck and shoulders.

“You're living with her.” Olivia nipped a tender earlobe enjoying the shiver it sent down the brunette's body. “Time to get in out of this sun before you get overheated, don't you think?”

“God, yes.” Natalia panted and rolled slowly to her back, coming face to face with her smiling lover. “I think I need to take a closer look at the fine workmanship on that new bikini.”

As they quickly moved to gather their items up and head back to their suite, Natalia glanced at Olivia's bikini top and smirked. “Well, what do you know. There is trim.”

The Terror of San Cristobel simply cocked an eyebrow, and started plotting the best way to ravish her fair maiden...

Was the Terror of San Cristobel real? Find out yourselves in "Hidden Treasure", an Otalia Uber tale set on the high seas. Chapter 1 Coming Soon...

OVS Minisode: "A Day in the Life"

OVS Minisode: A Day in the Life by Ceridwyn

Betas: emmacub, wolfmeister, ariestess

*This is one of our mini-sodes, though this one ties into my previous one and will connect to **calliopes_muse** next episode, which will be out 6th June. Part of this story spawned from an incident at home. I'll let you figure out which scene it is. :)*

In the unseasonably warm spring evening Olivia moved through the quiet house, with only the odd creak as she stepped over worn floorboards. Poking her head around the nursery door, she smiled as she noticed Francesca was sleeping soundly in the crib, the infant's fist curled close to her face. Gently, she headed towards Emma's room and looked in to see her daughter sprawled out under the sheets; an odd limb poked out from the covers.

She didn't notice Natalia's presence until she felt an arm move across her abdomen and a warm body press against her back. Leaning back against her partner, she tilted her head back, resting it against Natalia's, and sighed.

“She looks so peaceful,” Natalia whispered gently, nuzzling Olivia's neck.

“After her exhaustive day with Maureen and Clarissa, it’s not surprising.” The older woman smiled as she remembered the completely worn out Blake dropping Emma off an hour earlier, before trudging her way back to her SUV. Olivia had barely managed to get the girl’s hands and face washed, and into her pyjamas before Emma was out cold in her bed. “She couldn’t even stay awake long enough for a story.”

“Did Blake tell you what the girls were up to?” Natalia asked as she pulled Olivia back into the hall and down the stairs.

“Something about soccer tryouts in the school gym, then playing in the park followed up with a run to the mall.” Soft footfalls avoided the known steps with creaks as they made their way into the living room and into the kitchen. Olivia glanced over at her partner as the younger woman went about removing some wine glasses and bowls from the cupboard. “What are you up to, Natalia?”

“A late night treat.” She moved seamlessly through the kitchen, getting the cocoa, mixing some milk in with it in a pot on the stove. A pinch of chilli powder was added to the mix and swirled through with a wooden spoon, the rich scent permeating the room. Turning the heat down to a low simmer, Natalia moved to the fridge and pulled out some fruit, placing it on the counter, and then she moved to grab a knife and sliced into the honeydew melon.

Like an orchestrated dance that shifted around the kitchen, Olivia observed her partner’s fluid movements and was mesmerized. Leaning back in the chair, she watched Natalia. “Can I help?”

“Nope, you just sit there and relax. All taken care of,” Natalia smiled sweetly as she responded, and then she grabbed the cantaloupe and cut and divided the fruit into small chunks, placing them into the bowl. Pulling the strawberries closer, she emptied them into a colander, washed them, halved them and then added them to the bowl, mixing all the fruit together. Reaching up to the shelf, she picked out an ornate bowl, and poured the heated liquid chocolate into it before placing it in the middle of a serving platter, and then she scattered the mixed fruit around the plate. When she was finished, Natalia slid closer to Olivia with a chocolate dipped strawberry and raised her partner’s face to meet her gaze. “Open.”

The decadence of the fruit and chocolate, combined with the softly spoken command, undid Olivia and she sweetly surrendered to Natalia’s will. Her arm snaked around the younger woman’s waist, drawing her ever closer, and she reached up and pulled Natalia’s face down to meet her own, joining their mouths in a passionate kiss. When they pulled apart, Olivia looked at her partner through desire-hooded eyes, and quietly spoke, “You have chocolate on the corner of your lips.”

“And what do you plan on doing about that?” Natalia asked; her voice barely above a whisper.

Olivia ran her the tip of her tongue along Natalia’s lips to the corner and licked the remaining chocolate from them; the younger woman’s ragged sigh felt hot against her mouth. “This is positively delightful, but how about we take this upstairs?”

With a disbelieving look, Natalia shook her head as she leaned back, still held within Olivia’s embrace. “And get this chocolate on the bed sheets? I don’t think so. Do you know how hard it is to get dried-on chocolate out of those expensive sheets you insist on having on the bed?”

“Uh, no,” Olivia replied, only slightly repentant – at the Beacon, she’d generally just send them out to be laundered. “You like those sheets, though, don’t you?” the older woman smiled sensuously as she leaned forward to place a kiss on Natalia’s neck.

“MmMmm.” Natalia pulled back and moved away from her partner to retrieve the plate of fruit and chocolate fondue before making her way into the living room and laying it on the coffee table. Further setting the mood, she lowered the lighting and turned on some music, and then called Olivia in.

Carrying in a bottle of wine and two glasses, Olivia moved closer to Natalia and quickly kissed her before resting the bottle and glasses on the table. Taking in the sight before her, she tilted her head to the side slightly and beckoned the younger woman close again. “Are you trying to seduce me, Ms. Rivera?”

“Is it working, Ms. Spencer?” Natalia responded coyly, her voice a register lower than usual.

“Oh, most definitely.” Olivia leaned in and kissed Natalia just as the music changed songs, and the gentle contralto of Vienna Teng’s voice began to flow gently over the piano accompaniment. The lyrics of "Eric’s Song" spoke to the women as they danced in tight circles, wrapped in each other’s arms:

"And with each passing day / The stories we say / Draw us tighter into our addiction / Confirm our conviction / That some kind of miracle / Passed on our hands / And how I am sure / Like never before / Of my reasons for defying reason / Embracing the seasons / We dance through the colors / Both followed and led..."

As the music once again changed, Natalia led them both over to the couch. Reclining back against the arm cushions, she pulled Olivia against her and then dragged the table closer so she could reach the fruit. She picked one up for herself, and dipped it into the chocolate and brought it to her lips before doing the same for Olivia. They worked

through the plate of fruit and chocolate and glasses of wine together, breaking every so often to share kisses. Before long, the food and drink had been abandoned in favour of exploratory kisses and wandering hands. Neither noticed as the moon rose higher in the sky.

When Olivia woke sometime later, the blanket that covered them on the couch had slid to the floor and she could feel the strain in her neck where her head had rested awkwardly on one of the cushions. Where Natalia's head lay across her arm, Olivia noticed the limb had fallen asleep as she tried to move it to check the time on her watch. Guessing that it was still pretty early, she nudged her partner. But when Natalia only shifted closer, she took advantage and tried to wake Natalia with a kiss. She hadn't, however, counted on Natalia fully responding to the kiss, rolling to pin her against the back of the couch. After a few moments Olivia pulled back from the kiss, feeling when she felt something poking into her back. Pushing her partner back so she could sit up, she turned around and located the source of the problem: one of the remote controls had lodged in between the cushions.

As their covers shifted from them with their movements, Olivia noticed that the earlier warmth of the house had decreased through the night and she shivered slightly as the air hit her skin. "Hey, sweetheart, it's getting a little cooler. Why don't we take the leftovers into the kitchen and head upstairs? There are a few more hours to get some sleep before the girls wake us up." Olivia pulled her housecoat around her and secured it, and then picked up Natalia's, which had ended up on the floor next to the couch.

"Hmm?" Natalia was still half-asleep and not quite processing what Olivia had said, but the words sleep and girls slipped through the fog, "Francesca?"

"Sound asleep. Come on." Olivia stretched out her hand to her partner to bring the younger woman to her feet and handed Natalia her discarded housecoat.

After tugging Natalia to a standing position, they brought the platter, glasses and bottle into the kitchen and put them away. As was Olivia's routine, she double checked the security system to make sure everything was settled. Turning out the lights, she then grasped her partner's hand as they ascended the stairs to their bedroom. Not bothering with pretence of adding sleep attire, they slipped under the sheets and gathered each other close in warmth, love and comfort.

Tossing and turning, her thoughts disordered with worry and annoyance at the recent incidences of vandalism against their property, Olivia woke barely four hours later. As she sat up in the bed, she heard the plaintive cries of their youngest child, and she carefully dislodged herself from her soundly sleeping partner to attend to the infant, snagging her robe from the end of their bed along the way. Pulling her robe around her, tighter against the draft of the old house, she entered the girl's room and picked up the

child and held her close; her gently whispered words soothing Francesca's cries to a whimper. Determining that the girl was wet, Olivia gathered the supplies and brought her daughter over to the change table. When Francesca's diaper was changed and redressed, she went to the chair and rocked her daughter gently while singing to her. From her position, through the window, she could see the sun rising over the horizon, changing the pre-dawn pink hues into a beautiful orange glow through the morning sky.

A beatific smile graced her face as she gently caressed Francesca's cheeks while she looked down at the infant. "Start of a new day, little one. May all your wishes and dreams come true."

She sat for a few minutes more before rising to get one of the bottles of milk from the Vertical Limit, smiling yet again at Phillip's present to them for Christmas, before returning to the chair to feed her daughter. The infant was quick to finish the milk and once burped, she was all smiles and giggles as Olivia tickled her sides. Olivia raised her up and carried her downstairs, not wanting to disturb either her partner or Emma, and made her way into the kitchen. She secured the infant into the highchair and then set about preparing the coffee for breakfast. She then retrieved a few more items from the fridge to make omelettes. After a couple minutes, she heard Francesca banging her hands down on the tray and Olivia turned around to see the displeasure on her daughter's face; disconcerting as it had the uncanny resemblance to Natalia's expression when she wasn't being paid significant attention. Abandoning her cutting board, Olivia turned around and leaned closer to Francesca and the infant reached out to grab a handful of Olivia's hair. At her mock annoyance, Francesca giggled, which made Olivia smile at the sounds.

Sensing her partner's presence before seeing her, Olivia glanced up and saw the joy in Natalia's face as she glanced at her family. Disengaging her daughter's grasp on her hair, she reached for Natalia's outstretched hand and pulled the younger woman closer, placing a quick kiss to her lips.

"Hey, you. You looked so comfortable that I didn't want to wake you."

Natalia stretched and then relaxed, curling into Olivia's arms and resting her head on her partner's shoulder. "Thank you. I was exhausted. How's Sweet Pea this morning?"

"Good. Changed and fed, though I'm sure she'd like some yoghurt. I was just going to make some omelettes if you'd like one...?"

"Mmm, sounds good. But coffee sounds better right now."

"It's brewing."

"You are a goddess," Natalia whispered.

“And you’re still half-asleep.” Olivia grinned at her partner’s wording, and she directed Natalia over to the table before retrieving a tub of yoghurt along and a bowl and spoon and put them in front of the younger woman. She placed a kiss on her head and then went back to the counter and finished cutting up the mushrooms, onions and peppers before adding them to the skillet on the stove. A few minutes later, she slid the omelettes onto plates and put them on the table, and then retrieved the cutlery and mugs of coffee for herself and Natalia.

After a few sips of the caffeinated drink, Natalia’s alertness returned. Tilting her head to the side she regarded her partner. “What’s got you awake so early this morning?”

Well-known for not being a morning person, Olivia smiled at their role reversal, but remembering why she was up early, her mood turned more somber. “I didn’t sleep well, so when Francesca awoke this morning, I went in and looked after her.”

Natalia quickly picked up on the change in her partner’s demeanour and she placed a hand on Olivia’s forearm. “How come? I mean, why didn’t you sleep well?”

“Just...I’m worried about what’s going on with the vandalism around town, and why first my business and then our house was hit. It’s hitting too close to home and that makes me uncomfortable. Scared. And you know how much I like being scared.” Olivia sighed heavily as she laid her knife and fork down.

“You want a target to lash out against.” Natalia understood her partner’s frame of mind.

Not wanting to frighten their daughter with her tone, she tempered herself. “I want this case solved now and the culprits to pay. If that means I have to go pull a few strings with Doris, I will.”

“I’m sure she’ll look into it for you.” Natalia briefly broke eye contact with her partner as she turned and fed her daughter some of the yoghurt before the infant decided to take matters into her own hands, literally.

“I know. I’m just not very patient where you and our family are concerned.”

Natalia reached over and covered Olivia’s hands with one of her own until the older woman looked up at her. “I trust you with my life. And our daughters lives. You know that.”

Olivia nodded and then returned to eating her breakfast even though she’d lost most of her appetite. After a few more minutes she gave up and placed the remains into the

garbage bin and the plate into the sink, and turned back to face her partner. “I do know that. And you know that I trust you with mine. I always have.”

Natalia stood and crossed the small kitchen to face her partner. Raising the older woman’s hands in her own, she kissed them, and as she took a moment to revel in the closeness of their bond, she drew Olivia into a hug before drawing back.

“I’m going to go get Emma up for breakfast and get her stuff ready for school. What time are you going into the Beacon?”

“I’m not.” Olivia said with a smile. “I picked up the contracts I need to go over and the staff rotations yesterday, so I’m just going to work from home today. If there’s anything that comes up that needs my immediate attention, Keira can contact me.”

With a big grin, Natalia replied, “Oh, goody! You can help me with laundry.”

“Funny girl.”

“I am. And you love me for it.”

“That I do.” Olivia leaned in and captured Natalia’s lips. “Now, go. See if you can get that daughter of ours up out of bed.” Olivia looked over to where their youngest was batting her hands on her highchair table and gurgling. “I’ll keep Francesca occupied here.”

Once Natalia left the room, Olivia turned around and refilled her coffee mug before she moved back over to the table. Removing the lid from the yoghurt container, she poured another small amount into the bowl before putting the container aside. As she looked at the smiling face of her infant daughter, she picked up the spoon and went to work at feeding the girl.

Natalia had just managed to get Emma’s backpack over the girl’s shoulder and out the door when the bus pulled up to the curb. Giving Emma a quick kiss, she watched her get on the bus and then she turned around to head back inside where Olivia was balancing Francesca on her lap on the living room floor. Francesca’s giggles echoed through the room as Olivia raised and lowered her knees. Natalia leaned against the banister, looking over at her family and smiled, enjoying the peace of the moment before heading upstairs and getting herself dressed for the day.

The morning had passed with few interruptions as Olivia sat at the kitchen table, spreadsheets covering most of the table, with her laptop and a mug of lukewarm coffee

sitting near the edge. Lying on top of the sheets of paper were her Blackberry and the glasses she'd taken off before rubbing her face in frustration. She'd been staring at the screen for so long that the strain on her eyes was bothering her. After a moment or two, she replaced the glasses on her face and stood, stretching before going over to throw out the coffee and pour some fresh brew from the carafe. When her cell phone rang, it startled her for a second, before picking it up and answering.

"Hey, Doris, what's up?" Olivia took her coffee back to the table and sat before her laptop. "Really? Hang on a sec, I'll bring it up." A few keystrokes later and Olivia found herself frowning at the screen. "Oh, you have got to be kidding me." On the screen was the Springfield newspaper with an article on the police department's crime lab losing forensic information and files specifically related to the vandalism cases around town. "What a bunch of incompetent..." Olivia started off on a rant.

"Who are you talking about, Olivia?" Natalia asked as she came around the kitchen door, resulting in her partner just about leaping out of her chair with a little scream.

Trying to get her heart rate back to a normal level, she looked up at Natalia. "Don't DO that! Are you trying to kill me?"

"Sorry, I thought you'd heard me. I called out to you a minute ago. When I didn't hear anything, I came down to check to see if everything was okay." Natalia moved behind Olivia and bent over, kissing her head. When she noticed Olivia was still holding her phone, she asked, "Who were you talking to?"

"Doris." Remembering the other woman was still on the line, she brought the phone back up to her ear. "Hey, Doris, can I call you back later? Yeah, sure, drinks on me." Olivia disconnected the call and laid her phone back on the table.

"So, what was that all about?" Natalia asked her curiously.

Olivia pointed to the screen where the article was still displayed. She felt Natalia lean against her back as the younger woman read over her shoulder, and then she felt the side of Natalia's head press against hers.

"How could that information and evidence go missing? Isn't the lab supposed to be secure?"

"Supposed to be, yes." Olivia frowned as her long-standing lack of faith in the Springfield Police Department's competence was fairly legendary.

"What's going to happen now?" Natalia moved her hands up to Olivia's shoulders and started massaging the muscles at the nape of her neck, working outwards to her arms.

“I’m assuming Doris will be talking with Frank to find out what’s going on.” Lowering her head at her partner’s manipulations, Olivia let go a groan as she felt a pop in the muscles. “Oh, God, please don’t stop.”

Coming around the upstairs hallway, Natalia could hear the television from the living room. Not recognizing the show, she descended the stairs with a full laundry basket in her arms and stopped when she saw Olivia stretched out with a weight held in one arm above her head, she looked at the screen and then back to her partner. Shaking her head in admiration at Olivia’s form, she came around the end of the banister and put the basket on the floor.

“Olivia, what are you doing?”

“This exercise program Dr. Rick recommended. He seems to think I need some new cardiovascular exercise. Some Kettlebell thing. Promises the best body of your life. I’ll believe it when I see it.” Olivia lowered the weight to the floor.

Coming up behind her partner, Natalia wrapped her arms around her and whispered into her ear, “Querida, you already have a gorgeous body.” She could feel Olivia shudder in her embrace. A voice on the screen caught her attention and she looked around Olivia at the television. “Uh, Olivia, is that who I think it is?”

“Bares a striking resemblance, doesn’t she? Has the same first name, too. Frankly, I think it’s a sick joke of Dr. Rick’s. I mean, really? Promoting an exercise program with a woman who looks just like his best friend’s wife? What’s up with that?”

Glancing back at the screen, she was a little baffled at the resemblance and the same tone of voice she’d heard before. “That does seem a little weird.”

“A lot weird. But if it means keeping Dr. Rick from giving me grief at my next appointment, I’ll give it a try.”

Leaning in and pressing herself against her partner’s back again, she whispered into Olivia’s ear, “Mmmm. I like you all sweaty. When you’re done, come find me.”

Natalia was almost through the room with her laundry basket before Olivia came out of the fog-induced state in which Natalia’s words had left her. Shaking her head, she hit the pause button on the DVD player and followed after the younger woman.

The mild evening allowed the women to sit out on the back patio and Natalia could hear the raucous laughter from Doris and Olivia as she came out with mugs of hot chocolate, whipped cream rising over the rims. Handing over the mugs to the women, she then curled up next to her partner on the bench.

“What were you laughing at?” Natalia asked.

“A bad joke,” Olivia said as she calmed down to only a few giggles escaping. “I’ll tell you later.”

“Did you ask her about the article in the newspaper?” Natalia asked.

Doris looked over to the other woman and nodded. “I called Olivia about it earlier. I’ve got a few queries out to find out what happened, and I have a call in to someone I think I can hire to replace the department head if I don’t get the answers I need.”

Leaning forward, Olivia turned to Doris. “Do you think it will come to that?”

“Oh, most definitely. From what I’m hearing, it’s not the first time evidence has walked. I’m really surprised Frank hasn’t done anything about it yet.”

Olivia mumbled something under her breath and caught a gentle elbow to her side and a smile from her partner.

As the evening progressed, the women shared stories and more laughter until finally Doris looked at her watch and decided it was time for her to get home, so she entered the house with Natalia pulling a stiff Olivia behind her.

Once Doris left, Natalia turned out the lights while Olivia set the security system and they went up the stairs again, Olivia much slower as the exercises earlier in the day made her thighs ache. They checked in on their daughters’ rooms, ensuring that the girls were sound asleep before entering the master suite. Natalia went into the bathroom to start the hot water in the shower, getting it to just the right temperature, and returned briefly to the master bedroom and pulled Olivia back into the bathroom and. She undressed her, guiding her into the shower. Placing the woman under the hot spray, she stepped for a moment to remove her clothes and then she stepped back in to join her partner. Natalia poured a liberal amount of shower gel on a puff and ran it down Olivia’s back. In between moving the sponge around the older woman’s body, Natalia pressed feather-light kisses along the same path as the water sluiced, rinsing the soap from Olivia’s body. When Natalia was finished cleansing and adoring her partner’s back, she moved around front and applied the same loving attention. Looking up at Olivia, Natalia

was mesmerized by the partially hooded, darkened green eyes, and within seconds she felt Olivia's hands resting on her waist, drawing her closer.

Olivia was relishing Natalia's adoration of her body, but she was finding it hard to keep her legs steady as the younger woman moved down her body, washing her legs, first down the outside and up the inner leg, moving across her pelvis and repeating the same action on her other leg. What she thought initially was going to be a relaxing shower was rapidly becoming anything but, as her arousal was being heightened with every brush her partner made against sensitive skin. Finally unable to stand the wait, Olivia raised Natalia into a standing position and pulled the younger woman's body tight against her own, capturing the brunette's lips.

Vienna Teng, full lyrics for "Eric's Song"

OVS Minisode – "This Is Home" by Ceridwyn

This is one of our minisodes, though this one ties into my ep, "Family Matters". This takes place sometime in early June; Emma's still in school, but it follows just after Geekgrllurking's "The Road Less Travelled."

Beta: emmacub, Kels

It was a wet Saturday morning and Olivia had decided that it was just as good a day as any to get working on Emma's diorama project for school, so they wouldn't get stuck doing it the night before it was due. When the kitchen table was laid out with heavy-duty cardboard, Popsicle sticks, scissors, and other craft supplies, she, Emma and Natalia set about working together to create miniature versions of their home and of the Beacon. Deciding to start with making the farmhouse, Olivia watched as Natalia showed their daughter how to place the Popsicle sticks once they were glued. She smiled as the girl's face lit up at how it was starting to take shape. After their home was put together, they put it aside to let the glue dry, and then started making the miniature Beacon.

There were lots of giggles when they started creating the hotel, as Olivia kept adding more sticks to make it bigger, and Natalia kept swatting her hands away.

Olivia pouted. "I'm putting on our new expansion."

“The one that has yet to be approved by city council?” Natalia asked, with a grin.

“Details, details. I’m sure it’s on the docket for the next meeting, and by then it will be a moot point, anyway.”

“Mommy, what’s a moot point?” Emma asked curiously.

“It means Doris had better approve it if she knows what’s good for her,” Olivia grumbled.

Shooting a mock-disapproving glance at her partner, Natalia then turned her attention on Emma. “You’re mother’s not being very nice. A moot point in this case means that your mother is hoping that the approval for her hotel expansion will go through without too much trouble, and that by the time your project is presented in class, it won’t matter that the model is bigger than it should be right now.”

Emma seemed to think over the explanation for a minute and then nodded before helping her mother put together the hotel model. Once that structure was complete and put aside, Emma checked the house model to see how sturdy it was. “It’s ready.”

“Okay, now we need to measure it so we can attach the cardboard around it and then we can paint it. Emma, do you want to get the ruler and see how much we need? You need to measure how tall it is and how long it is, okay?” Natalia asked her.

Emma nodded and placed it against the sides of the model, measuring out the length and telling her, and then she watched as Natalia measured out strips of cardboard and cut it.

“Now, carefully glue the back of the cardboard and lightly press it against the sticks.” Natalia handed her the different pieces of cardboard as each one was applied. When she looked up, she noticed that Olivia had gotten her a fresh mug of coffee and handed it to her, and she took the proffered mug and laid it on the table.

They worked away at the project most of the morning, gluing and painting until they got the miniatures looking the way Emma wanted. As the pieces dried, Emma worked on Olivia’s computer writing up little snippets of information about the farmhouse and the Beacon. Finishing her work, she asked her mother to print it out for her and then asked if they could go to Company for lunch.

“Sure, Jellybean. I’ve got to make a run into the Beacon to get some paperwork, so we’ll go in and get that printed on cards for you. I’ll get my paperwork and we can go get food.”

“Yay!” Emma bounced cheerfully in her seat.

Taking a sip of her coffee, Natalia sat back and admired her family. After a few moments, she stood and kissed the top of Emma's head as she passed behind the girl, and then moved behind her partner, leaning down and wrapping her arms around the older woman's shoulders. "I'm going to take a peek in on Francesca and get her ready to go for lunch. Meet you down here in about twenty minutes?"

"Sure, I'll get Emma all sorted here, and I want to give Ava a quick call." Olivia turned her head to smile up at her partner, who bent down and pressed a light kiss to her lips. When they broke apart, Olivia turned to her daughter. "Hey, Em, can you go get Shadow and take her out to do his thing? Then we can give her a bit of food for her lunch before we go."

"Sure, Mommy." Emma slipped down from her seat and went to get the dog's lead.

Shadow, who had been lying on the floor near the table during most of the morning's activities, had quickly gotten to her feet at the word 'out', and was now excitedly shifting her weight between his front paws. She could barely wait until Emma put the lead on her so they could go. When Emma opened the back door, she took off running, pulling the girl behind her as she sniffed each bush along the house edging before finally finding the perfect spot. She relieved herself and then turned to Emma, her tail wagging excitedly at the promise of food.

Emma laughed at the puppy's antics as she followed behind him back into the house. Putting the lead up on the hook, she took the little cup in the bin in the porch and then poured some kibble into Shadow's dish. While he was eating she went to refresh the water in his dish.

As Olivia spoke on her cell phone with her oldest daughter, she looked at how responsible Emma was being with the new addition to the house. Initially she had been so hesitant about having a dog, let alone a puppy, as she figured that it would come down to Natalia and herself being the full-time caretakers. However, the lingering threat of Edmund hanging about was enough to make her realize that having the dog around wouldn't hurt. With Phillip's guidance, Emma attended training sessions with the puppy, as the young dog learned to be a protector. Each day, she noticed Emma taking the dog to various spots in the house and giving him commands; the puppy would sniff at certain things and then bark only if it smelled something different, something that shouldn't be there. Olivia was pleased that Emma had this new companion. She knew Jane had been a large part of their lives over the years, and Emma would continue to miss the young woman, but it gave her daughter an outlet to focus on. She and Natalia had been keeping an eye on the girl's emotional well-being. Emma had been through so much in her young life, and Olivia continued to be impressed with how her daughter adapted to situations.

Finishing her conversation with Ava, she disconnected the call and asked Emma to go wash up her hands before they left for lunch. She moved Emma's miniatures up onto the counter to continue to dry, and she tidied up the table, putting away the craft supplies into Emma's craft container. Before she left the kitchen, she noticed the puppy curled up on her pillow in the corner of the kitchen, and she placed the expanding plastic gate across the doorway. They'd gotten the gate shortly after they'd brought the puppy home, to limit her movement when they weren't home. Just as she had entered the living room, Natalia was coming down the stairs with Francesca perched against her hip. Emma bounded down behind her.

"Are we all ready to go?" Emma asked. "I'm hungry."

Olivia smiled at her daughter. With Emma's recent growth spurt, she'd been eating more, though Natalia made sure they were healthy snacks, like fruit and vegetables. "Sure thing, Bean. How about when we get home, we go measure you on the door frame?"

Since she'd given the gift of the frame to Natalia for Christmas a year and a half ago, her partner insisted that they start adding Emma's height changes to the growth chart that they'd trimmed and placed on one side of the upstairs bathroom frame. Natalia had told her at the time that she wanted to be able to add Emma's and Francesca's height measurements at different ages and growth spurts, just as she had with Rafe.

Olivia picked up both her purse and Natalia's as the younger woman grabbed up the diaper bag. Natalia led them out to the car, and got the baby secured into her seat, and Emma into hers, while Olivia stayed behind a moment to set the alarm before moving to the vehicle, sliding into the driver's seat.

The post-lunch rush at Company had come to a lull, and only a few people remained when Olivia, Natalia and their family came through the door. While her parents were busy talking with Blake by the bar, Emma rushed to her favorite booth in the corner; smiling when she saw Lillian sitting there folding some napkins.

"Can I help?" Emma asked excitedly.

"Sure, sweetie." Lillian smiled as Emma sat next to her and she handed her some of the napkins. Giving Emma some direction on the napkins, they got to work and before long they were finished, and Olivia and Natalia had come over with Francesca.

"Hey, Em? Whatcha doin'?" Olivia asked.

Emma gave a toothy grin. "I'm helping Mrs. Cooper."

"Oh, please, sweetie. Just call me Lillian."

Remembering her manners, Emma asked the older woman, "Really?"

When Lillian nodded and then excused herself to go check to see if Buzz needed some help, Olivia slid into the seat next to Emma. Natalia passed her their youngest daughter before going to get the high chair and once the infant was settled, Olivia caught Blake's attention and signaled that they were ready.

"What can I get you ladies?" Blake asked cheerily. "Are you ready to order?"

"What do you say girls? Buzz burgers all around with fries?" Olivia asked and then received nods from Natalia and Emma. "I'll also have a diet cola. Thanks."

"Chocolate milk, please," Natalia added, as she noted that anytime she had soft drinks, it seemed to irritate Francesca's tummy after she breastfed her.

"Extra onions, right?" Blake confirmed with Natalia. She looked down at Francesca and ran a hand over the infant's dark hair. "Oh, I've got some mashed vegetables put away in the fridge for this little beauty. I'll just heat some up for her." She looked over at Emma and asked what she'd like to drink.

"Mmmm, may I have some chocolate milk, too?"

"Yes, you may." Blake smiled at the girl before heading back to the kitchen to place their orders with Buzz.

After several moments of chatter, Emma tugged on her mom's shirt.

"Yes, Jellybean?"

Emma kept her voice low and a little hesitant. "Mommy, remember when I asked you about asking Buzz if I could call him, 'Grandpa'? Do you think I can do that now?"

"You can do that today, yes. But how about we wait and ask him after we finish our lunch? You can make it special that way."

Emma thought for a moment before she responded. Slightly disappointed that she'd have to wait – she'd been waiting to ask him for weeks, but it never seemed like the right time – she decided that it was something big and she wanted to save it for just a little bit longer. "Okay."

To distract Emma while they waited for their food, Natalia asked her how the training sessions were going with the puppy, and it seemed to work, as Emma's face lit up as she described what she was learning. When Phillip had set up the training sessions, he'd contacted an old buddy of his that had worked a K-9 unit in Chicago to help train the dog. Shadow was still pretty young for most of the intense work, but she eagerly followed directions. He was also good with Emma, teaching her what to say to the dog to get her to do what he needed to do, and how to reward her for a job well done.

"Shadow was really good. She was doing all these exercises, running through obs... obstacle courses. Then the trainer put boxes around a room while another man had Shadow outside, and then when she came in, the trainer showed her a towel that the puppy sniffed, and I held Shadow's lead as she went around the room looking for the right box." Emma barely drew a breath in between sentences, so when she finished, she heaved a huge breath. She was about to start again on something else the puppy did when Blake arrived with their food.

Olivia noted the way Emma's face lit up as her hamburger was put in front of her, and she exchanged an amused glance with Natalia as the girl dug into her burger. There were few things that got Emma to be quiet with family – food, sleep, and bed-time stories – otherwise she was a very busy girl. Concentrating on her own food, Olivia picked up her burger and took a good-sized bite, relishing the taste. It wasn't very often she actually had hamburgers when she went out now, usually choosing something healthier. Natalia's habits and occasional cajoling were overall a positive influence, but sometimes Olivia realized, a woman just needs a burger.

Natalia alternated between eating her own burger and feeding Francesca some of the mashed vegetables. However, the infant was not all that impressed with her food. Instead, Francesca pointed at her mama's food and grunted that she wanted that instead. There wasn't a lot that Natalia could do to convince her youngest to eat what was in her dish. She blew out a sigh and took another bite of her burger before it began to cool.

Olivia could see the frustration in her partner's posture and she tried to give Francesca a spoonful, only receive the same treatment. Rather than accept defeat, Olivia took one of her French fries and mashed it up. Scooping a little bit of ketchup onto it as she put a bit of the fries onto the spoon, she fed it to the baby.

The infant's eyes suddenly went round at the new taste and texture, and after she swallowed it, she smacked her lips together and pointed at Olivia's plate, clearly looking for more.

When Olivia looked back up she saw the slightly admonishing look on her partner's face, and heard a giggle from Emma.

“You’re a bad influence,” Natalia grinned as she shook her head.

“Well, she’s eating; that’s a plus.”

Natalia just shook her head as she went to work on her own food before it went cold. She supposed, given the occasion to have French fries over mashed vegetables, she’d go with the fries, too. As a general rule at home, Natalia made sure that Francesca had the same foods that they were eating, just that the baby’s food was run through the blender first.

Emma had plowed through her food, barely breathing between bites, as she was so excited to ask Buzz her question. She had gotten a few looks from her mothers and slowed her eating, just slightly.

Blake came around the table to see if they needed any refills or anything and she noticed Emma’s hopeful look at her mothers.

Smiling at her daughter’s exuberance, Olivia turned to her friend. “Hey, Blake, would you mind asking Buzz to come out when he has a moment? Emma’s got something she wants to ask him.”

“Sure thing.” Blake disappeared back into the kitchen to pass on the message to Buzz, and then followed, not quite unobtrusively, back with him, when he came over to the Spencer-Rivera family table. Lillian joined him as he bent down looking at Emma.

“I hear some little girl wants to ask me something,” Buzz said with a smile.

Emma nodded her head and then bit down on her bottom lip, a bit unsure about what his response might be. “I was wondering...would you mind if I called you Grandpa?” Emma paused a moment, then continued. “I know you’re Francesca’s grandfather, but I was wondering, since Granddad Alan died, if you wanted me to call you Grandpa, to?”

Buzz was speechless. He looked to both Olivia and Natalia to see both women smiling, and Olivia nodded her head. When he shook his head a moment, he saw the fall of Emma’s face, but he smiled at her and noticed the hopeful look in her eyes. “I would be honored, Miss Emma Spencer, to be your Grandpa.”

As Emma slid off the bench to give the older man a hug, Lillian could see the smile that lit the girl’s face, and a responding tearful smile crossed her face; she knew the affection her husband and the young girl shared.

Pulling back from the hug, Buzz smiled and cleared his throat. As he looked at Emma, he stated, "Well, I think this celebration calls for some dessert. Would you like an ice cream sundae?"

Emma looked at her mothers with a hopeful grin, and all but bounced in her seat when Olivia and Natalia agreed.

"Come on, Jellybean, let's go pick out your toppings." He slowly stood up, his back somewhat stiff from being crouched down for even just a little while. Looking at Olivia and Natalia, he asked if either of them wanted any dessert. When both declined, he led an excitable girl into the kitchen.

"She's going to be on a sugar high the rest of the afternoon, you realize that?" Natalia mentioned with a smile.

"That's okay. We'll take her over to the park and have her kick around a ball for a while, get her to wear off that energy. Maybe we'll have a movie night tonight."

"That sounds like a great idea. We'll make a run to the video store. Maybe, 'Freaky Friday'?"

"Do you really want to be giving her ideas to torment us with?" Olivia countered with.

"Good point. So I suppose 'The Parent Trap' is out of the question as well?" Natalia giggled.

"Ya think?"

"Wall-E?"

"That's probably safe; she likes it, and so do I." Olivia smiled at her.

Leaning against her partner's side, Natalia spoke quietly. "I don't think I got a chance to see that one. I heard about it, but I don't remember seeing it."

"I think you'll like it. It's romantic."

"Okay. Hey, it's the weekend, we could pick up a few movies, and invite Doris and Blake over. Blake can bring Clarissa with her and maybe once the girls have gone to bed, we could make a girls' night of it.

“Sounds like you’ve got this all sorted,” Olivia smirked. “When we get to the park, I’ll give Doris a call. I’m going to get Francesca all packed up here. Would you mind going to check on Emma? Make sure she’s not eating Buzz out of house and home?”

“Sure thing. I’ll ask Blake about movie night.”

“Great. I’ll be right there.” Olivia unhooked the straps that kept her youngest daughter in the high chair, and Francesca immediately lifted her hands, wanting to be picked up. “Hey, Sweet Pea, Mommy’s got ya. You know what? Your Ma and I are taking you and Emma over to the park for a while to play.” Olivia smiled as Francesca grinned and bounced in her arms. She was getting big enough now, crawling around, that they could put her down on the grass and let her move around. Though, they still had to keep a close eye on her because she was at the point where she was trying to put everything into her mouth. At home, she was either trying to put stuff in her own mouth, or into Shadow’s mouth. Fortunately, the dog was a patient sort, and if it was food being put in his mouth, he was unlikely to complain. Olivia slung the diaper bag over her shoulder and picked up her purse before going up to meet Natalia at the bar. She noticed Emma sitting there on one of the stools, her legs dangling over the edge, as the girl finished her sundae.

“Is everything all settled for movie night?” Olivia asked her partner, and Blake, who was tidying up the bar top.

“That sounds great, Olivia. I’m sure Clarissa would love it. And I could definitely do with a girls’ night. Do you want me to bring some wine?” Blake asked. To be blunt with herself, she was finding it hard to be at Frank’s when she was feeling a strain in their relationship. He was spending so much time at work, or arguing with his ex-wife, Eleni, and more often than not, he was so distracted when he came home, she was feeling left out. It was getting harder and harder to try to make something work, when she really wasn’t sure that was what she wanted. She’d come to the conclusion that she and Frank were better off as friends. So, time with some female friends was something she was really looking forward to having; and if it involved some nice wine, pizza, and movies, she was going to have fun.

“That sounds like a plan. We’ll pick up the movies, and I’ll get Doris to pick up the pizza.”

“It’s a date!” Blake said and then spluttered when she noticed Olivia’s raised eyebrow as she realized what she said. “Not like that. Well, not specifically like that. Oh, never mind.”

In an effort to spare Blake further teasing, Natalia turned to Emma. “Hey, Jellybean? You just about finished there?”

Emma nodded and passed her bowl to Buzz who had just come back out from the kitchen. "Thank you...Grandpa," she said, testing the word out with him. When he gave her a big smile she got down from her stool and to give him another hug. After a moment, she turned to her mother. "Mom, are we going to the park now?"

"Yep. Come on," she told her, and then lifting her eyes to meet the older man's, she smiled. "Thank you, Buzz. This means a lot to her. It means a lot to me, too."

"She's a sweet girl, Olivia. You've done well by her."

Olivia blushed slightly. She looked over to her partner, and then back to Buzz. "I don't know that I can take all the credit for that. Natalia's helped so much with her the past couple of years."

"Yes, you can, Olivia. She is a wonderful child, and part of what drew me to you was Emma and how much you love her."

The intense emotion was disrupted when in a frustrated tone, the word, "Mama" was vocalized by Francesca; it stunned all the adults in the room into silence.

Natalia was the first to recover, "Was that--?"

"Her first word?" Olivia continued, still quite baffled. She knew the infant had been making attempts to say words but most of the time it was just gibberish.

Blake came around the corner of the bar, so excited she was bouncing almost as much as Emma. "Oh my God! That's wonderful!"

"That definitely calls for a celebration," Buzz called out as the proud grandfather.

"Yes, it does," Olivia started. "However, Emma wants to go to the park, and I need her to wear off some of that sugar rush before we get home, so can we postpone that celebration?"

"Let me just give Frank a call," Buzz said, excitedly, wanting to share the news with his son.

Blake interrupted him, "Buzz, would you mind holding off on that until tomorrow? We're having a girls' night in tonight." Blake looked at him, beseechingly. "It's a huge favor to ask, I know, and they do want him to know about this milestone. Just, give them the day to enjoy it. Besides, it couldn't hurt just waiting one more day."

"A girls' night in?" he asked.

“Moms and daughters and friends: Olivia, Natalia, Francesca, Emma, Doris, Clarissa and myself.”

“I suppose I can wait.” Buzz let out a mock long-suffering sigh. “I know he was going to be working late at the station this evening, anyway; something about proving that Edmund was as far away from here as possible. I certainly hope he’s right. He mentioned Anna had some new evidence come up and wanted to review it with Eleni.”

Blake’s shiver at the mention of Frank’s ex-wife went unnoticed by most, but Olivia seemed to pick up on the tension in the other woman’s bearing, and she tried to catch her eye, but Blake avoided her gaze. Olivia decided maybe she’d ask the red-headed woman later. But for the moment, there was a park to get to and a ball to kick around. Herding her family out the door, they headed to Olivia’s car and packed all their belongings and drove over to the ball field. Olivia spent the better part of half an hour kicking the ball around with Emma, as Natalia played with Francesca on the picnic blanket they kept for outings with their youngest.

On each inside corner of the blanket, there were different crinkling toys attached, and Natalia reached inside her bag and pulled a few extra toys for the baby to play with. Every once in a while she’d look up as Emma ran up and down the field, kicking the soccer ball around, Olivia following a relative distance behind the girl, and she smiled. She’d noted from her partner’s last heart check up that Rick wanted Olivia to be doing some more moderate exercise, and she was glad to see the older woman keeping to that, even if it was under the guise of trying to keep up with Emma.

A little while later, Emma came over holding the ball in her arms, Olivia standing behind her. Olivia noticed Natalia’s concerned look at her heavy breathing, which she acknowledged with a nod, but waved it off as nothing potentially worrying. She sat down next to her partner, and pressed a kiss to her temple.

“She said her first word today.” Natalia was still in awe.

“I know.” Olivia put her arm around Natalia’s shoulders and then she remembered she had yet to call Doris. “Oh, hey, I’ve got to give Doris a call about movie night tonight, before it gets too late.” She grabbed her phone from her back pocket and placed the call, arranging the time with the other woman. With that settled, Olivia leaned back on the blanket, resting on her elbows and looked at her family; Emma was playing with Francesca and her toys, and Natalia was watching Olivia.

Emma looked over to her mother, asking her what movies they were going to get. At one of her mother’s suggestions, she grinned widely, and then started making comments about things she wanted to show Clarissa when she got there. Soon, they packed up their

belongings and put the blanket in the trunk and headed to the market to pick up some snack stuff, then over to the video shop to pick up some movies.

Once home, Emma ran upstairs to get her things organized, and then she asked her Mom if she could go see the ducks. She'd gotten permission, but in light of her mother's security concerns, she couldn't go alone. She understood that the adults around her seemed super protective of her and some other children in town, especially since her sitter Jane died, but it didn't stop her from being frustrated at having restriction of movement. She sighed as she noticed her mom check her phone for messages before picking up a loaf of stale bread and joined her as they left the house to go down to the ducks.

Olivia seemed to notice the change in Emma's demeanor as they reached the lake. 'What's wrong, Bean?'

Emma bit at her lip, unsure about telling her mother what she thought about all the extra security. Shadow ran back and forth in the field, chasing and retrieving a ball that Emma threw for her.

"I just wish I could go down to see the ducks on my own, like I used to." Emma sighed, frustrated.

Olivia stopped their forward movement, sat down on the grass, and gestured for Emma to join her. Once her daughter was seated, Olivia brushed a few stray strands of hair that escaped the girl's braid and then looked her in the eye. "I know, baby. We need to be careful; hopefully for just a little while longer. There's still a threat to people's lives right now and you know your Ma and I are going to do our best to make sure that you and Francesca are safe. Your daddy also wants to keep you safe. Don't you know you girls mean the world to us?"

"I know," Emma said, a little defeated; she knew her mother was right. "I just want this to be over, so things can go back to normal."

"Ah, Bean, so do I. So do I." Olivia wrapped Emma into her arms.

"Why can't Uncle Frank and the police catch the bad men?"

Olivia shook her head, wondering the same thing – certainly they had to have something by now to pin on him. Trouble was, Edmund was a slippery bastard, and it wasn't the first time that he had managed to get under the radar. "They're trying, Emma. And there's some new people around that seem to be helping him out." Olivia had begun to see how much work Anna had been doing to help them and would continue to do so; she'd really underestimated the other woman and she wanted to give her the benefit of

the doubt. The police detective's recent admissions at the Spaulding Mansion about their joint history and its consequences had been an utter surprise. She saw Anna in a different light; her own changes over the past few years had certainly given her a new perspective on life. She hadn't noticed that, sometime during her mental meanderings, Shadow had come over and lay down beside them, having dropped her ball by her paws and was now resting her chin on Emma's leg, the girl's small hand curled into the dog's neck fur. They sat for a while just together, taking comfort in each other.

Placing a kiss on her daughter's head, Olivia then guided a hand under the girl's chin, raising it to meet her eyes. "Bean, did you want to go feed the ducks for a few minutes before we go back to the house? Blake should be here before too long with Clarissa."

"Okay," Emma said as she stood. "Oh, Mommy, I saw some new baby ducks the last time Ma and I were here. They were all fluffy!" Emma smiled.

Olivia had been a bit slower getting to her feet, as she was a little stiff. She knew they all weren't out of the woods yet until Edmund and his lackeys were apprehended and put away, and there would probably be more concerns Emma had, but she made sure that she would keep an eye on her Jellybean. She followed her daughter down to the pond on their property where the small flock of ducks had taken up habitation.

The house was bustling in the early evening when Doris arrived with a couple pizza boxes to join in the melee. Emma and Clarissa were keeping Francesca occupied as the adults got the plates, glasses and napkins all ready and brought into the living room. When everyone was seated, Olivia asked Emma to get the "Wall-E" DVD and put it into the player. Emma did and then returned to the big cushions they'd brought down for the girls. Olivia leaned back against the rear of the couch and drew Natalia to her side with one arm, and she brought up a slice of pizza to her mouth with her other hand. Blake and Doris sat on two nearby chairs, eating and drinking, and occasionally making commentary on the movie and the nice time they were having.

As the movie played, Olivia occasionally caught some cautious glances between Blake and Doris that either woman hadn't noticed anyone else saw. She was familiar enough with stealing glances at potential romantic interests, and she was pretty sure that was what she was seeing between the two women. Olivia knew she hadn't had a lot of friends, mostly of her own making in the past – more often than not she viewed them as competition for various men – but she wanted to protect the ones she had from getting hurt.

Her apparent distraction had been noted by Natalia, and the younger woman drew her back to the film. Natalia's hand had captured her free one and Olivia could feel the

heightened tingling sensation as the younger woman's thumb passed back and forth over the back of her hand. Needless to say, Natalia's hand motions were causing a completely different kind of distraction, and she suddenly wished they were alone.

Her attention had been sufficiently removed that she hadn't noticed Emma had stopped the movie at the end of the credits and was currently looking at her, hopefully, wanting to put in another movie. It wasn't until she heard someone's loud deliberate cough that she stirred from her pleasant state of mind.

"Mom, can I put in another movie?"

Olivia looked down at her watch, noting that the time was a little later than she thought. Pausing a moment, she considered the pleading look on Emma's face. Blowing out a sigh, and given that it was a weekend night, she said quietly, "You can stay for another movie, but Bean, I want you to go up and get into your pajamas." She looked to the young Marler girl and sized her up, as she was taller than her daughter. Olivia turned to Natalia. "Sweetheart, do you have an old shirt Clarissa could use to sleep in?"

Before Natalia could respond, Blake interrupted, "Oh, you don't have to do that. I brought one of hers with us. I figured the girls would probably fall asleep at some point."

"Perfect." Turning her attention back to Emma, Olivia added, "Okay, get your jammies on and grab a blanket and we can start another movie when you get back."

"Yay!" The joint exclamations could be heard from Emma and Clarissa as they raced over to the staircase and up the stairs to get ready, in the effort to get back down as soon as possible.

Just as the girls were making noise running up the stairs, a tired Francesca woke up in her playpen, making her dissatisfaction noted. Natalia looked over to Olivia and then back to her youngest daughter and lifted her up. "I'm going to take Francesca up to get changed and give her the last feeding. I'll lie her down while the girls are getting ready. If they come down first, start the movie without me and I'll be down shortly." She placed a kiss on Olivia's lips as she passed her, and then headed upstairs.

Doris and Blake helped Olivia carry the glasses and plates and garbage into the kitchen. Olivia placed the dishes in the sink and started washing them, in an effort to buy time. She wanted to ask Doris if she'd heard anything more about the investigation into Edmund. Her talk with Emma earlier had focused her thoughts on the issue, and she didn't want to come off as blaming her and the police department. She knew that Doris really couldn't 'do' anything until the men were apprehended and charged. She sighed heavily. "Doris, have you heard anything more about the case against Edmund Winslow?"

“Probably not much more than you have; I know you’ve been checking in-”

Olivia quickly turned from her place at the sink. “Can you blame me? Really, Doris? He killed Jane, he nearly kidnapped Emma.”

Doris interrupted, trying to diffuse Olivia’s anger, “Hey, I wasn’t blaming anyone. I was just saying that you probably know that Frank and his detectives have been working over-time to make sure that any evidence they have will stick when Edmund is charged. They’re just being diligent.”

“Diligent, my ass,” Olivia mumbled.

“Look, Anna’s doing her best. We might not be on the best of terms, but I trust her police instincts; she has a solid record and she’s been doing a good job since she started with the Springfield Police Department. She’s focused a lot of her time working with Eleni and Frank to tighten the investigation against Edmund. They’ve got some solid evidence. I can’t tell you anything specific, but trust me; I want this almost as much as you do.”

Bristling at the mention of Eleni’s name, Blake spoke up. “The Feds should be brought in on this, shouldn’t they?”

Both women were actually surprised that Blake was the one to ask that question, especially as she was currently dating the Chief of Police.

“I just mean that, if Edmund was kidnapping people, crossing national borders, doesn’t that fall under federal jurisdiction?” Blake added.

Doris conceded that fact to the other woman. Maybe it was time to call Jeffrey and see what his Agency connections could do, maybe bring Mallet back to town to help investigate.

“So, what are we going to do now?”

“I’ll call Jeffrey in the morning. But tonight is our girls’ night, and we’re going to get some popcorn and something to drink, and we’re going to go in and enjoy another movie,” Doris said pointedly. “By the way, Olivia, I saw those other movies. I’ve got to give you some recommendations, because, really, ya gotta broaden your horizons.”

“Oh yeah?” Olivia asked curiously.

With a raised eyebrow, Doris smiled. “Most definitely. I’ll email you a few titles.”

“You don’t by chance have these in your personal collection?” Olivia was glad to be finished the tense discussion she’d started when they came into the kitchen, and she enjoyed the friendly teasing banter that had grown between herself and Doris.

“Maybe. I have a few that may be to your liking.”

“I’m sure you do,” Olivia shook her head in amusement.

“Maybe we can do another girls’ night, with some other movies,” Blake started.

“Sweetheart,” Doris said as she turned to Blake, and smiled. For someone who wrote romance novels, Doris didn’t think she’d be this naïve. “These are not movies one watches with friends unless they’re really good friends.” Doris’s eyebrow rose pointedly at the other woman.

The redness of the blush that infused Blake’s face clashed horribly with her red hair. “Oh, God. I feel like an idiot.” She regained her composure, and then grinned at Doris. “Email me a list of those titles, too.” She watched as Olivia’s stunned eyebrows rose to match Doris’s, and she laughed.

A little while later, Emma and Clarissa had come downstairs and were curled up on the floor cushions, while the adults sat back and watched the second “Shrek” film, cracking up at the jokes and innuendo that had obviously gone over the heads of the younger girls. Before long, both of the girls were fast asleep, despite the movie playing and the laughter around them; their tired eyes closing of their own volition. When the movie was over, Natalia and Blake carried the girls up to Emma’s bed. When they returned downstairs, the remnants of the popcorn were taken to the kitchen and thrown out, and glasses and bowls were put in the sink. Blake made arrangements to pick Clarissa up in the next morning and said her goodbyes. Doris also said her goodbyes to Olivia and Natalia, giving them both a hug, before taking her leave.

Blake was already in her car and turning around in the driveway before Doris could ask her what she meant by wanting those movie titles. The other woman had surprised the hell out of her, but also made her more curious about this newish friend of hers. Straight friend of hers, she mentally added. Straight, seeing someone else friend. She shook her head before climbing into her own vehicle and heading home.

Olivia closed the door, checked the locks and set the alarm before turning out the lights and joining Natalia upstairs in their bedroom, checking on the girls as she passed Francesca’s room and then Emma’s.

“Well, that seemed to go quite well,” Natalia said, smiling. “We should do this more often.”

“Yes, we should. I had fun.” Olivia pulled an old, nearly threadbare Beacon shirt out of the dresser and a pair of cotton shorts, pulled them on and climbed into bed. For a moment, she was pensive as she stared across the room, looking towards Natalia but not really focusing on her. It wasn’t until Natalia had joined her on the bed, that she realized her presence.

“Penny for your thoughts?”

“Pardon?” Olivia shook her head, her brain still ruminating over her earlier conversation with Emma down in the field.

“You seem far off. What’s on your mind?” Natalia leaned over and curled against Olivia’s side, soothingly brushing her hand across her partner’s abdomen.

Olivia sighed. “Emma and I had a talk earlier when we went out to feed the ducks.” She bowed her head. “I hate that this stuff with Edmund is affecting her as much as it is. As grown up as she seems sometimes, she’s still just a young girl. She needs to not have to worry about all this security and focus on having fun as girls should be doing.”

Looking up at Olivia, Natalia made sure she caught the older woman’s attention, knowing that her partner had the frequent tendency to blame herself for bad things happening to her and her family. “This is not your fault. You did not cause Edmund to kill Jane, to try to kidnap Emma, or anything else he might have done. He’s a grown man capable of making and acting on his own bad decisions.”

“But--”

“No buts, Olivia. We just have to protect our own family. That’s what’s important. Maybe after the Bauer BBQ we can go away for a couple days; just go somewhere fun, for us, and for Emma.” Natalia resumed her position against Olivia’s side, her hand placed over Olivia’s heart.

Raising her own hand to cover her partner’s, Olivia breathed deeply. “God, that sounds like such a good idea. I’d take up you on that right now, but I really want to see that man locked up behind bars forever. Until that happens I can’t know for sure that you and the girls will be safe.”

Deciding there wasn’t more she could say to reassure Olivia at the moment, Natalia quietly, but very surely, whispered, “I love you, Olivia. Never forget that.”

Olivia turned to face the younger woman. Wrapping her arms around Natalia, she drew her closer and pressed a kiss to her temple and returned the promise, "I love you, too. Always." They stayed, curled tight against each other until they drifted off to sleep.

OVS Minisode - Deja Vu by Calliopes_Muse

Next week is a new episode of OVS! In the meantime, here's a little something to tide you all over. This was written after a reference was made to Doris having a Jacuzzi installed at the farmhouse after the vandalism in Ceridwyn's "Family Matters" episode, and everyone was like "Oh no, you can't suggest something like that and NOT show us how Otaia used it." So...here it is. The official christening of the Jacuzzi of Love.

Rating: R/NC-17

Beta: Ceridwyn

Natalia glanced up as the back door of the farmhouse opened, revealing a much revealed Olivia. The brunette smiled at the image of her gorgeous partner in the bathing suit she had worn in San Cristobel, and the sheer white wrap draped over her tantalizing skin.

Olivia didn't have to fake the swagger as she carried two champagne glasses filled with bubbling liquid to the edge of the Jacuzzi. She enjoyed the dark eyes tracing the outline of her body and landing solidly at the juncture of her thighs; a delicious rush of anticipation gathered in the pit of her stomach. There were so many ways she loved making love to and with Natalia, but nothing quite beat the slow and steady build that had been the trademark of their relationship. For someone who had been used to a fast and furious kind of love, all with the hopes of grabbing it before it was gone, her relationship with Natalia had been a curious and welcome change.

The younger woman knew she was being teased, and she loved every minute of it. One of the things Natalia loved about Olivia was the slow fire she was able to build in her; she could almost feel it start in her toes and shimmer up her spine. The other woman had a way of making Natalia feel wanton and free. She had never known what it had meant to truly be uninhibited until Olivia. Her life had always been so tame and reserved, but Olivia drew out a passion in her that she hadn't even really been sure still existed. It had been there so many years ago with Nicky, the night she had let herself

forget about responsibility, and give in to a deeper need, but the consequences of her actions and the requirements of feeding and clothing Rafe had caused her to tuck away her own wishes and desires. But here and now, she had no reason to hold back. This feeling was what love was about; this complete trust in the rightness of the moment.

Natalia took the glass from Olivia and set it to the side before offering her hand and helping the other woman into the warm water. "Is everyone asleep?"

Olivia nodded as they moved together effortlessly, arms and legs intertwining. "Yep. The monitor's in the bedroom window so we'll hear Francesca if she wakes up."

Natalia wrapped her legs around Olivia's waist and they settled comfortably on the bench inside the hot tub. "And if she does, she's grounded until she's forty."

"Then we'll never have a moment alone." The blonde quirked an eyebrow, letting her hands roam the exposed skin of Natalia's back.

Natalia leaned in to place a light kiss on Olivia's lips. "Nix that idea then."

A flash of an image came to Natalia's mind as the kiss deepened, and she pulled away feeling a slight wave of dizziness. The blonde glanced down to catch her eyes, concern evident on her face.

Olivia brushed the long dark hair out of Natalia's face. "Hey, are you okay? You got white as a sheet."

Natalia braced herself by grabbing the soft hand caressing her cheek. "No, I'm fine." She shook her head. "I think it was just a case of déjà vu, but not. It was weird."

"Weird, how?" The older woman let her hand drop from Natalia's cheek and simply held her hand, reassuringly. She could have sworn in the flickering light of the citronella candles around the hot tub that Natalia blushed.

Natalia glanced up with shy eyes and bit her lip, quirking her mouth a little to the side. "Well, it wasn't true déjà vu. It was more like a dream, instead of something that felt like it really happened."

"A dream?" Olivia prodded. There was the blush again; this time a little deeper than the last. She smiled to herself. "What kind of dream?"

The brunette shook her head, knowing she had been caught. "Oh no you don't! Don't tease me about this."

Olivia raised a hand. "What? I didn't do a thing."

Natalia wrapped her legs a little tighter around her waist, the drop in her voice having the desired effect of distracting Olivia. "You didn't have to." She was pleased to see Olivia's green eyes immediately darken with desire as she felt her mouth consumed by a hungry kiss.

Natalia surged forward and Olivia responded by tilting her head to deepen the kiss, her arms wrapping around the younger woman's waist.

Olivia dipped her mouth down to Natalia's ear, her voice raw with need. "Tell me your dream."

Natalia groaned as images from the dream flitted across her mind. She didn't want to stop to tell her about it. She just wanted to make it come true.

Olivia scraped her teeth along the sensitive skin at the base of Natalia's neck then whispered when the younger woman gasped. "Please."

The brunette rolled her head back, frustrated at her partner's stalling of their much more enjoyable activity. "Okay, I'll tell you. I need a drink though first."

Olivia smirked and handed Natalia her glass of champagne.

Natalia hesitated a moment, remembering she was still breastfeeding but knowing logically that one glass wouldn't hurt her or Francesca, she took a small swallow. She gagged at the unexpected taste. "Sparkling cider?"

The blonde shrugged. "You're still breastfeeding."

Natalia tilted her head and smiled. "That was sweet."

Olivia rolled her eyes. "Yeah, yeah, yeah. Anyway, this dream. Tell me."

The younger woman shook her head and waved a hand, as she took another swallow of her drink and set it down. "Fine! It was a long time ago."

"How long ago?"

Natalia swatted at her arm. "Are you going to let me tell you or do you want to tell it for me?"

Olivia raised a hand. "Sorry! Go right on ahead."

“Thank you. As I was saying, it was a long time ago.” Olivia rolled her eyes and gave her a mocking “hurry up” motion with her hand. Natalia laughed and grabbed the offending hand with her own. “It wasn’t long after you kissed me after Emma’s presentation. I had forgotten all about it because I think I had just locked it away or something until now. It’s so weird because it was literally that same image of you climbing into the hot tub and me wrapping my legs around you; exactly as it was in the dream.”

Olivia watched as Natalia’s eyes became unfocused. With her voice lowered to a register she knew affected her partner, she spoke quietly, “Was that all that happened in the dream?”

Natalia shook her head and smiled. At the time of the dream, she had been so terrified about how it made her feel, to think of Olivia that way; the way her body responded to the dream had been even more frightening. But now, it was a comfortable, warm feeling that rested in her bones. It was simply more proof that they were destined to be together. “No. A lot more happened in the dream.”

The younger woman had eased in closer, their lips barely caressing. Olivia closed her eyes at the luxurious feel of the woman in her arms, the tender brushing of lips against her own. “Tell me.” She reverently whispered.

“I’d rather show you.”

Natalia pulled her in for a kiss. Pretenses, along with glasses, were set aside as the two women fell into the kiss, savoring the feel of the other as hands slid into hair and mouths tasted the sweet and salty skin along necks and shoulders.

Sensing Natalia’s urgency, Olivia resisted the urge to take control, rather letting her partner fulfill her dream. Truth be told, transferring control of their lovemaking to Natalia, was something that Olivia had been curious about. She watched as Natalia kissed down her arm to the palm of her hand, and she felt the younger woman’s tongue gently caress the sensitive skin, until her middle finger was taken into her partner’s warm, wet mouth. For her part, the reality far surpassed any fantasy she’d ever had.

Natalia kissed her way up Olivia’s arm, eventually finding her way to the older woman’s neck where nibbled her way to Olivia’s enticing earlobe. Natalia whispered huskily in her ear, as she tugged at the strap on Olivia’s suit, “Take this off.”

Gentle fingers guided the satiny material on Olivia’s shoulders down her arms to reveal her breasts to the night air. The blonde shivered at the light caress of Natalia’s lips on her collarbone and the brushing of long, dark hair over her sensitive nipples.

Olivia leaned down to nuzzle along Natalia's ear. She breathed in deeply, enjoying the thrill that rushed through her veins at the younger woman's unique scent. She had heard the cliché about lovers being intoxicated with each other, and she never really understood what that meant until Natalia. Olivia was rendered useless, as everything about Natalia overwhelmed her senses; the heated breath of the younger woman's mouth as she slowly drifted lower on her chest; the soft caress of Natalia's fingertips on her hips as her swimsuit was swiftly removed, and the sweet ache that seemed to radiate from her fingers and toes all the way to her center, all built to an excruciating need, one that only Natalia could satisfy.

God, she was so in love with Natalia, she could barely function.

But when Natalia gently lifted her from the water, urging her to sit on the side of the hot tub, Olivia didn't care about anything anymore except the urgent driving need of Natalia's tongue against her. Nothing else mattered in that moment as she gave herself over to the woman who held her heart.

Natalia's heart raced with the feel of Olivia beneath her tongue – the deep moans and insistent tug of a heel into her back, urged her for more. She couldn't resist the delicious rush any longer. The primal need to lay claim to her lover's body pounded like a heartbeat in her ears and her body. Stripping her suit off quickly so she could feel Olivia's warm, wet skin against her own, Natalia rose from the water and devoured Olivia's mouth. The groan that Olivia let loose told Natalia what she needed to know, and without hesitation, Natalia slipped her fingers inside.

The response from them both was instantaneous as they broke the kiss and gasped. Natalia felt the older woman's arm wrap her waist, to steady her as she pressed against one of Olivia's thighs, using the support to drive her fingers deeper into Olivia.

Olivia rolled and bucked against the intruding fingers, seeking a hard, fast release as her breathing labored in fevered pants. Slow, steady and patient was no longer in Olivia's vocabulary.

"Dear God, Natalia. Oh...God."

Natalia squeezed her eyes shut, feeling the heady build-up roll in like waves to her center, as her body reacted to her own impending orgasm. Her eyes flew open as Olivia wrapped an arm around her waist, pulling her in tight against her thigh, and she felt the fire of her orgasm race up her spine.

"O...Olivia...that's...that's it." She panted as green eyes locked onto hers and she felt Olivia shudder in her arms.

For a long moment, Natalia simply held the other woman in her arms, nuzzling softly along her jaw and cheek, as Olivia's quivering body relaxed. Sliding Olivia back into the warm, churning waters of the Jacuzzi, Natalia pulled her close, enveloping her in her arms. The stress and chaos of the last few weeks faded away. There would always be more trouble and more stress, but they'd always have each other.

OVS Minisode - The Mom Problem

FYI, OVS Season 2 starts Sunday, November 7th!!!! Are you ready?

Title: The Mom Problem

Rating: NC-17

Timeframe: After Olivia and Natalia's trip to San Cristobel and the rape talk but before Francesca's baptism. Father Ray is in this and he's not portrayed kindly.

Major Warnings: If you have mom issues or just get skeeved by the blurred line of female intimacy and motherhood, then you may not want to read this. Let's just say that it brings up some issues related to Freud's inversion theory and the mother as the root of homosexuality.

A/N: I also want to add that as one of the executive producers of OVS I took it upon myself to write this. It was not cleared with any other EPs or anyone else on the team so don't take it as a reflection of them or their views. I wouldn't even take this as my view either, but I love psychology so the idea fascinated me.

A/N2: FYI, I come at this topic from a personal POV as well. I was adopted at a young age, and after I came out, my adoptive mother used the "you're just gay because you miss your biological mom" philosophy on me and even offered to help me find my bio mom if it would help make me straight again. Yes, I have a screwed up mommy relationship, which makes this all the more understandable. Just sayin'.

A/N3: Finally, I haven't passed this by our betas so any errors are mine alone.

We had fought before. God knows, we were good at fighting. But, after living together and loving together...having a family together, this fight hurt more than usual. Old fears and doubts held both women back.

The silence in the living room was stifling. Olivia refused to look at Natalia who was standing by the fireplace with her arms crossed.

The hurt in Olivia's voice was evident as she spoke, "I can't believe you said that, but most of all, I can't believe you talked to Father Ray of all people."

Natalia closed her eyes, wondering how many times she had to say the same thing over and over again before Olivia started to believe her. "I told you, I didn't go to him. He approached me. He's the only one able to do the baptism. I've had no choice but to talk to him."

Olivia turned to her, eyes red again and brimming with new tears, but there was an edge of renewed anger on her face. "But you didn't have to get into MY past with him! How DARE he say that I only love you because of my mother! And, what's worse, you told him about her. Did you tell him about the rape too?"

The brunette drew back as if struck. Natalia couldn't believe that Olivia would think she could do that. "No! Of course not!" She shook her head and took a deep breath before trying to approach Olivia. "Querida, I promise you, the only thing I said to him was in defense of you and our relationship, that yes, you hurt over the way your mother died, but it has nothing to do with our relationship. We love each other because it's real. It's not about our pasts."

Natalia paused at the look of frustration on Olivia's face. The older woman turned away again and ran her hands through her hair. Natalia felt the twist in her chest at the thought that Olivia didn't believe her, that she thought Natalia had given her up – betrayed her somehow – to the likes of Father Ray.

Remembering the conversation she had with the priest sent a new flood of anger through her. It had taken everything she had to remain civil to him, when in the midst of planning for Francesca's baptism, he started in on how she needed to beware how the sins of the parent are visited on the children. In his usual backhanded way, he suggested that Natalia and Frank would have to work extra hard to ensure that Francesca wasn't inadvertently sent down the wrong path by Olivia's influence.

If Natalia wasn't angry enough at him at that point, he pushed it over the edge with the statement that Olivia was using her relationship with Natalia to find the love she lost by being motherless. The pain of what she and Olivia had experienced in San Cristobel was still so fresh that it took all of Natalia's restraint not to say something she'd regret.

Natalia always wanted to give people the benefit of the doubt. She wanted to believe in their innate goodness, and if someone was wrong or jumped to conclusions, that it was simply a matter of responding in truth and honesty to make that person see their errors. That's what she had tried with Father Ray. She should have known better. She had hoped he had a modicum of human compassion and could feel for Olivia's loss. Instead he turned it on Natalia.

“See? Her guilt at fighting with her mother and ultimately causing her own mother’s death, at behaving like an irresponsible child, that she’s trying to reconcile with her lost female connection...through you.” He paused for effect. “It’s only logical that she’d project that need for connection onto Francesca. It’s all very Freudian. Inversion behavior is a very common response to parental loss.”

She looked at him in shock. She couldn’t believe he’d suggest such a thing. In a far more calmer tone than she felt, she responded, “I suggest you stop while you’re ahead, Father. You’re talking about the person I love.”

He looked down in contriteness, but somehow she didn’t buy it. “Okay, let’s not talk about Olivia then. How about you, Natalia? What do you get out of this relationship with Olivia?”

She threw her hands up in the air. “Love...family. What else?”

Father Ray nodded his head in understanding. “Perhaps the love and family you lost after sinning when you were 16? A replacement for what you lost so many years ago?”

She felt the comment like a punch in the gut. No way! That wasn’t what it was about. She truly loved Olivia...completely. Didn’t she?

“I refuse to stand here and talk about this anymore with you. We’ll discuss the baptism because I have no other choice, but don’t ever bring this subject up again.” Natalia turned on her heels and left the church. Her heart was racing and it felt like the earth was giving out from under her.

She had spent the next two days praying, unsure of how to bring it up to Olivia. She knew it had to be talked about because she had made a promise to never keep anything from her partner again. But she knew Olivia and she knew it was going to be difficult.

Taking in the sagging shoulders before her, Natalia stepped forward and wrapped her arms around Olivia. It was difficult with Olivia wrapping her own waist in a hug, but she pushed closer behind her until she had a tight grip on the older woman. She felt Olivia sag a little more under the affection.

Natalia kissed her shoulder in front of her and leaned up on her chin so Olivia could hear her. “You’re my heart, Olivia. I wasn’t trying to hurt you, but I promised I’d tell you everything. I can’t keep anything from you.”

She heard Olivia sniff and tired green eyes turned to look at her. “Is he right? Are we here just because of our mothers?”

“And what if we are? Does it really matter?” Natalia shrugged.

Olivia pulled away and turned fully to her. Her anger was rising again as she pointed an accusing finger at Natalia. “Of course it matters! I want you here because you really want to be here, not because you miss your mommy!”

Natalia opened her mouth to respond when Francesca started crying upstairs. She sighed at being interrupted. This was a conversation that desperately needed to be finished between them, and right now, she was grateful that Emma was spending the night with Phillip so she wouldn’t overhear it. That, unfortunately, didn’t stop Francesca from being disturbed from slumber by their loud words.

Natalia glanced at her watch and looked at Olivia. “She may be hungry. Let me take care of this.” She started to walk around Olivia to ascend the stairs. She stopped in front of her and put a hand to the older woman’s tear-stained cheek. “Maybe you should take a hot bath, relax a little. We’ll talk more about this after, okay?”

She didn’t wait for Olivia to respond. Knowing her partner, she’d need a little time alone to clear her head. There was always the risk that Olivia would throw up more walls if given a chance, but there was little choice in the matter with Francesca demanding her presence.

Olivia ran her hands through her hair as Natalia walked upstairs to tend to Francesca. When the door closed and the crying quickly subsided, she walked over to the couch and slumped down on it in exhaustion.

She couldn’t seem to get her mind to think clearly. Words, phrases, and images kept flying through her head so fast that she couldn’t make sense of anything. She felt out of control, and that was a feeling she wasn’t good at handling. This was about the time she’d drown herself in a martini or a warm, willing body, but she wasn’t that Olivia anymore. She was essentially a married woman again, but unlike all the other times, this time she wanted to be the kind of person worthy of a person like Natalia.

So, she stood and walked the stairs to the bathroom. She pushed all the warring thoughts aside and set her mind to being the person Natalia needed. She wasn’t a substitute. She wasn’t a replacement for something missing, and neither was Natalia for her. They were lovers, partners, and family, but they weren’t what Ray accused them of. As she began to run the steaming hot water in the tub, she felt her ire rise again at the arrogance of the priest. Then she angrily brushed at the tears that fell from her cheeks. She pushed the anger down and went out to the bedroom to get her night shirt and shorts.

Through the wall, she could hear Natalia's murmurs and soft singing. She felt a warmth hit her solidly in her chest and spread out through her body. She loved this – loved to be a part of this home and this love, to experience Natalia's familial warmth for their children. It was for their children, all of this. This home. This life. The love for their children had brought them together and helped them make a home and a family. Everything they did was for the kids. It was something neither of them thought they could have and certainly not with each other.

Olivia couldn't resist the pull. She figured she had a couple of minutes before the tub got too full so she tiptoed out to the hall and stood outside Francesca's door, listening to the gentle sounds coming through the wood. She put her hand and forehead against the cool door and could picture the scene inside. Natalia rocking slowly with their daughter cradled in her arms, the fingers of her free hand soothingly passing over Francesca's flushed cheek and lulling her back into sleep, and a full, soft breast exposed and being greedily suckled by the infant.

The intense eroticism of the image slammed hard into Olivia, and her eyes flew open at the thought. She shook her head and pulled back from the door. Refusing to linger on the thought, she ground her teeth together and walked purposefully back to the bathroom. Sinking into the tub, she tried to fill her mind with other images of Natalia – on the beaches of San Cristobel or at the New Year's Eve party seductive and beautiful. The emotions mixed with other images that were all Natalia too – the way her partner cuddled their newborn child right after the birth, Natalia's full and round belly as she pulled Emma close to hear the baby's heartbeat, and the wonderful feel of her hand caressing Olivia's own when they talked about baby names. It all mixed and coalesced into something unique, scary, and forbiddingly erotic.

She didn't want to think about that. She couldn't think about it.

With frustration and no more relaxed than when she had climbed into the tub, she exited and dried off. Slipping on her night clothes, she walked into the bedroom.

She stopped short seeing Natalia leaning back against the headboard - her hair wet and tousled. Seeing the confusion in Olivia's eyes, Natalia volunteered the information. "I went ahead and showered in the spare bathroom. We need to finish that talk."

Olivia sighed and walked over to Natalia then sat on the edge of the bed. "There's nothing to talk about, Natalia. What Father Ray said was a bunch of crap and you know it."

Natalia pushed the covers back and sat up on her knees to hug Olivia from behind. "I do know that, but it upset you so much."

Olivia shook her head. "I'm fine. I don't want to think about it anymore."

She ran her hand over Natalia's and leaned back to the side. Locking eyes with the worried brown counterparts of her partner's, Olivia couldn't resist the need. She wanted to erase all of the strange and painful thoughts of the last couple of hours with the truth of what she knew. She needed to feel the solidity of what they had flowing between them unhindered.

Olivia wrapped an arm around Natalia's waist, deepening the kiss. A soft moan urged her on and she maneuvered so she could hover over Natalia, where she urged her to lay back.

She broke the kiss only to seize upon the soft, warm skin of Natalia's neck, bent back and exposed to her. She lost herself in the heady rush – the smell and taste of her lover, feeling the familiar clenching and tightening of her stomach muscles.

For a moment she hesitated with the words that were on the tip of her tongue, but then Natalia scraped her nails down her back and into her shorts, pulling her hips tight between her legs. Neither could stop the groans that escaped and Olivia bit down on Natalia's earlobe, making the younger woman gasp as her grip became impossibly stronger.

"I want to fuck you...so bad and so hard," Olivia growled into Natalia's ear and she felt the resultant thrust of hips against her.

"Oh God, yes." Natalia couldn't stop this drive, this need, between them, and God help her, she didn't want to. They needed to talk, yes, but they needed this more. This primal connection that went beyond anything they'd experienced before.

In minutes, Olivia had both of them undressed and she latched onto one of Natalia's breasts. Natalia hissed at the sensitivity from Francesca feeding earlier but didn't stop her. She rolled her head back, soaking in the very different sensation and the promise of so much more throbbing painfully between her legs.

Olivia moved back and forth between Natalia's breasts, increasing the tempo and pressure at each pass. When she'd hear Natalia hiss at the pleasure and the pain, she'd back off and move to the other. But when she slipped her hand between their bodies and felt the incredible wetness greeting her, Natalia wrapped a hand in her hair and wouldn't let her move from the work she was doing on her breast.

Natalia watched as Olivia worked her breast. The visuals combined with the sensations and Natalia knew that if Olivia barely touched her in just the right place she'd come. She

wanted to make it last and fought against her body's urges to seek out Olivia's talented fingers. "Harder...suck harder."

Olivia looked up and caught the dark look in Natalia's eyes. It drew a primitive growl from her as she took Natalia deeper into her mouth as she slipped easily inside of her. Natalia gasped and rocked against the invading hand, inadvertently pushing her breast further into Olivia's mouth.

A rush of strange tasting liquid suddenly burst into Olivia's mouth and she pulled back, stopping all movement.

Natalia saw her shocked look and glanced down to where Olivia was looking. A small white dot of liquid sat innocently on the tip of her hardened nipple.

A confusing mix of desire and disgust passed through Olivia. The sweet taste was still on her tongue and she felt the rush of desire for more tangle and fight with shock at the thought. She shook her head and pulled back and out of Natalia. "I can't."

In an instant, Natalia registered the significance of the moment and the sharp look of self-recrimination on Olivia's face. She reached for Olivia, tugging her back by her wrists. "I want you to."

Olivia continued to shake her head and resist Natalia's urgent tugging at her. "I can't. The baby..."

Natalia reached up and roughly pulled Olivia's face up to look her in the eyes. "There's plenty." Then Natalia felt a strange pull of desire of her own, and she realized something for the first time. "I want to give this to you, share this with you. This is a part of who I am, and I want it to be a part of you too."

Olivia suddenly let go of a sob she didn't realize she had been holding back and surrendered to Natalia's pull as they fell into a kiss. The pace picked up quickly and Natalia urged Olivia down her body again. Slowly...reverently, Olivia took the breast that Natalia offered into her mouth. The sweet taste greeted her and this time, as tears fell, she took all that Natalia had to offer.
