Fiona and Alaya - BOOK II

by 000000robot

Summary

This is a story about the life and times of Fiona Saint Clair and Alaya Vastra Flint. Original story and a few original characters including Fiona Saint Clair and Alaya Vastra Flint. All other characters owned by BBC or History books. [[[ A work in progress ]]]

I write when there is time, as life has a tendency to get in the way, but there is an epic story to tell. So much to write so little time. There will be a total of five [5] books.

I also encourage you to simply google search my characters, as a few are the real-life inspiration for the character development.
Fiona did not fall asleep immediately, she cried and screamed to Alaya chest. Alaya held her close. Finally, after hours of emotionally draining loss both and fell right to sleep.

During the night it became quite warm. Fiona needed to cool her body so she seeks out her cool wife, the bed is empty. She called out softly, "Alaya?"

Fiona reached for her glasses, turned on the lamp, and looked at the time. It is two-fifteen in the morning. She has to go to classes in five hours. Immediately her mind floods with anger believing the Weeping Angels took her Alaya.

She jumped out of bed to the second floor landing whispering, "Alaya?".

That is when she heard a horrible sound coming from Vastra's laboratory. She runs towards the sound. She hear it again, it was her Alaya. She is in pain and quickly opened the door to see Vastra and Alaya both moaning in fetal positions on the floor with Jenny trying to comfort them.

Jenny quickly turns her head, "Close the door. I could use your assistance."

Fiona runs over, sits up again the wall and softly puts Alaya's head in her lap. Fiona instinctively strokes her wife's forehead and finds it slightly sticky, unlike the usual softness.

"What is happening? Should I get a Doctor?"

Jenny looks to her daughter's wife, "No, this is self inflicted. It is for us, little one."

"Us?"

Fiona watches as Mother Jenny fills a syringe with a clear substance and goes to Vastra injects the syringe into her body. Vastra immediately yells something in a foreign language. Vastra slinks back down and moans.

Jenny fills another syringe with the same clear substance and goes to Alaya injecting the substance instantly Alaya curls tighter and screams. Fiona bends down and holds her wife's head close and starts to cry.

Jenny moves quickly to the wall sitting up and places Vastra's body on her lap.

Fiona crying and trying to talk at the same time, "What did you do? What is happening?"

Jenny with watery eyes, "They are doing this to keep us from getting pregnant."

Fiona trying to comprehend what came out of mother Jenny's mouth, "What? I don't understand."

"After my complications with Alaya I was content to have one child. It scared us, little Alaya's crown was too much for my body. I was in pain for months, everything needed time to heal. It was very traumatic, nothing like the stories I have heard from other mothers."

Vastra curls up to Jenny with slight moans.

Fiona has tears flowing down her cheeks. All she can do is console her wife with soft touches and gentle words, "I love you."
Alaya finally calming down uncoiling her tightly wound body.

"Vastra and I talked, and concluded, we should not have any more children. It was a tough decision, but the right one. Looking back I do not believe my body would have sustained another birth, no matter how willing the spirit. I did not want to give up my bed with Vastra, neither did she."

Fiona is hanging on every word coming from Mother Jenny's mouth. Here she is laying on the floor to witness weakness in her half-Silurian. It pains her to see such a strong woman coil in pain, all for her. Fiona must concentrate and listen to Mother Jenny.

"Vastra went into the lab trying to figure out how we got pregnant in the first place. There is nothing in any history book, species or manuscript of two women or men having given birth. Alaya is obvious our child, split down the middle half-Vastra and half-myself. We could not have asked for a better child."

Jenny affectionately pets Alaya's ankle. Alaya lets out a sound acknowledging her mother's touch.

"It was something biological. Vastra started to compare blood samples. That is when she noticed the fertilization is happening because of a bacterium through our body fluids."

"Bacteria?" Fiona is puzzled, "I don't understand. My mother and I assumed you used some sort of insemination process. What do you mean?"

"Vastra can explain it much more detail, not in her current state. It is natural bacteria produced in Silurians. These Silurian bacteria when comes in contact with our blood during our hormonal cycle can fertilize our eggs."

"What was in the syringe?"

"A potion that Vastra created to infect their bodies and kill the bacteria. As you can see it is quite painful. My Vastra has taken monthly injection since Alaya was seven months old."

"You injected Mother Vastra with this over twenty years? All that time watching... Oh god." Fiona is trying not to get sick. Fiona whispers afraid of the response, "W... w... when did Alaya start her injections?"

Alaya moans loudly, protesting her mother answer.

Jenny ignoring Alaya, "The moment you moved into her room."

"I... I... have no words. What a sacrifice."

"It was out of caution. She did not want to accidentally get you pregnant."

Fiona smiling at Jenny, "What does she think? Does she believe that like her giggles her body bacteria has powers?"

Alaya moans.

Fiona pats Alaya shoulder.

"To be honest, Alaya didn't want to take a chance of it accidentally happen. She is my brave girl."

Alaya wants to hide.

"How long does the pain last?"
"A few hours. They're able to walk and will be pain-free in the morning. For a day they will be sluggish Silurians."

"I will be here for Alaya for her injections. Inform me of the schedule, please. It doesn't have to be done in the middle of the night."

Mother Vastra sits up and motions to head towards their own bedroom. Mother Jenny looks down at Fiona holding her daughter. "I will, thank you. Sleep well."

"Thank you Mother Vastra."

Fiona petting her wife, "Alaya? Do you want to go to our own bed?"

Alaya moans and nods. Fiona assists Alaya standing up and they slowly walk to their bedroom. Fiona quickly gets Alaya in the bed and covered as she curls up in front. The two depleted bodies fall asleep within seconds. Only once did Fiona hear a moan and pulls Alaya's arms tighter around her warm body. Alaya moaned softer this time.
The Day After

Alaya woke up to a warm but empty bed. She opens her eyes to see the message cylinder on Fiona's pillow. She quickly spins the dials to open and a note pops out.

Dearest Love,

It terrified me watching you go through all that pain. How can I make it up to you?

I shall stop by the shop first thing after my classes to check on you. Do you suppose we could have a lunch in your office? I have to study for my exams, please make a space for me in your office.

Your Fiona

PS Less than ten days and I am all yours for the summer.

That was all Alaya needed to start her day, ignoring her body as it protests loudly. She went downstairs to the kitchen for the strongest cup of coffee her mother Jenny is able to produce, packed a lovers lunch and went to 14 Savile Row to begin her day.

Once Alaya entered into the tailor shop she is busy with reviewing orders, ordering stock and as always paperwork.

The morning flew by. A knock on her office door.

Alaya said in an authoritative tone, "Come in."

Fiona enters shutting the door and coming to Alaya, who transformed back her half-Silurian self. "Hi! Your note truly helped me wake up. Thank you so much. I have our lunch here," as she pulls out a box.

Fiona takes the box and in return hands Alaya four envelopes. Fiona sets up lunch on a small table. Alaya joins her and reads the letters.

"You have four options? All these hospitals …. you are brilliant. What do you want to do?"

"I am still going to go to Louisa's Hospital, but Edinburgh …. to be there again. It would be wonderful to breath the air of the highlands."

Alaya reaches for Fiona's hand. "Are you feeling obligated to stay. Do you truly want to return to Edinburgh?"

"Yes and no. Yes, I owe Louisa so much. No, my life is here. Besides I rather like the idea of being in a woman's hospital to receive my training. I am quite annoyed with the male egos. Don't get me wrong there are a few that will make amazing physicians, but the rest I can't imagine how they are getting through their terms. Also, I do not want to deal with the added expense of housing or the anxiety being away from you."

Alaya blushes, "When do I call you Doctor?"

"Soon." Fiona looks down at her lunch, "Your injections. Tell me."
Alaya’s eyes grow sad, "It is a painful process, but my dear there is no other way. Unless …" looking at Fiona cheeky.

Fiona squinting her eyes cautiously, "Unless what?"

"Unless you want us to be either a bountiful family or we shall sleep in different rooms to live a chaste life."

"There is no possible way I could control myself into a chaste life." Fiona laughs. Squeezing Alaya's hand tight. "I am glad we are responsible for our own maternity. Does it have to be so painful? What does it feel like?"

Alaya opens the wine and pours each other a glass. "Let us eat while we talk. My appetite is enormous I could eat a horse behind the saddle."

Fiona unwraps the sandwiches, opens a wrapper of dates and nuts and smiles when there are two custard tarts. She places them all on the table and hands out the silverware. "Yes, you need your strength back."

"The pain is a burning sensation, it feels like my body is on fire. I can only coil as the injections kill off the bacteria. The needle is the most painful and I can feel the liquid burning into my body. It takes hours to feel any relief. This morning I did have a moment with my mother Jenny. We have the injection the first of every month and will be scheduling the injections after supper. That way we all can get a good night sleep."

"Why do you get injected at such an odd hour?"

"If was not so before you came into the home. But it was moved to accommodate you and your transition into our family."

Looking sternly at Alaya, "Why didn't you tell me? Why didn't anyone tell me? How long were you going to keep this a secret?"

Alaya took a drink of her wine. Then a bite of her sandwich and chewed. Swallowed, "Two reasons. The first is was too soon. You were recuperating and second it is embarrassing. My mother Vastra and I share this experience and mother Jenny has gone through this for years …. I was never hoping to tell you. Honestly. But my mothers have told me time and time again you would understand."

"I do understand, now after your Mother Jenny explained. It is absolutely unnecessary to do this without your wife. I would take this burden off you in a second if I could. I mean there are ways."

"What ways? Vastra has looked into every solution to keep the toxins from fertilizing the eggs."

"I could have a hysterectomy … " saying in almost a whisper,"... with just a three percent chance of death."

"Any percentage is unacceptable and you will be barren. Unacceptable."

"It could be an option in the future. Also, the future holds other options we aren't able to replicate it in 'our London'." Taking a sip of the wine she asks, "I guess we need to talk about this … we never really … I just didn't think." Blushing, "Do you want children? If so how many? If not, why not?"

Alaya stares at the half-eaten sandwich. "I honestly do not know if I want you to get pregnant."

Fiona is stunned, "Oh."
"No, no, no …. do not misunderstand me. I want a family, but not at a cost of your life. What if you
don't survive. My mother had serious issues. They had to stitch her … her … "

"It is called a vagina."

Alaya blushing and leaning in close to Fiona, "Shhh! The staff might hear."

Fiona laughs, "I am sorry. It was funny how your face wretched trying to figure out which word
should leave your lips."

Alaya shrinking in her seat, "Please stop teasing."

Fiona reaches for her wife's hand, "I am sorry. It was funny. If you sit in medical classes as much as I
do anatomy and the terms have lost their power."

"I suppose."

Fiona sits back, "You are one beautiful half-Silurian. Our children will be fourth-Silurian and the
three-fourth-human. Even if they all have crowns, I suspect that my body will adjust just like your
mothers. Also … sorry dear … vaginal birth are not the only way. It is called a Caesarean section
and women survive quite well. Also, I have a hundred years of evolution on my side."

Alaya just deciding if she wants to finish her sandwich, "What does that have to do with anything."

"Please eat dear. In the future women have a planned pregnancy, induced labor and majority have
cesarean births multiple times. The trend has evolved into newborns with larger heads."

Alaya offers a puzzled face to Fiona.

"They do not look like hot air balloons on skinny bodies. The head average is a few millimetres
larger than those born in 'our London'. Your mother could easily have more children."

"Oh?"

"Wouldn't you like a little sister?"

"I have not thought about it. But it is an interesting proposal. If you could guarantee your health and
life, I would not mind between six and twelve children?"

Fiona freezes instantly.

Alaya looking perplexed at her wife. "What?"

Fiona gently puts down her half-eaten custard tart, wipes her mouth and looks up to her Alaya. "I …
um … wow. I want to be a doctor."

"You shall."

"I can't with a brood of children."

"Why not?"

"How will I maintain a career and raise twelve children?"

"How will we raise them. You are not alone."
Fiona slightly annoyed, "How will we raise them? You are missing the point."

"I am simply suggesting that if we are able to have a large family, without endangering you, I will a good mother and role model. My mother Vastra and my mother Jenny raised me equally."

"I have never imagined a large family. It has always been my mother and myself. You are an only child … I assumed we would just continue the tradition."

"I support you no matter we have a small or large family. I am sorry we are limited to female offspring."

"I am not. There are families that have nothing but boys or girls. It is the amount of attention, love and support."

Fiona suddenly got very quiet.

Alaya taps her wife's temple, "Where are you?"

"I am not ready to be a mother. I am sorry. " The next four years are going to be tough. I will be working all day and night with little free time. This is going to impact us dearly. I don't want to lose you. ... early this morning ... watching you in such pain, how can I ever make it up to you?"

Alaya stands up and cups Fiona chin in her hand. The coldness is refreshing on Fiona's hot skin. "You will not lose me. All you have to do is smile and be happy. We have much to look forward in the future."

Fiona offering a genuine smile, "Thank you, for being in my life. I could not be happier. We shall consult Louisa concerning childbirth and medical school."

"That is a wonderful idea." Alaya finishes her lunch, "Well I have to get back to work. Will this table be efficient enough to study?"

Fiona looks around and notices Alaya has rearranged the office to ensure she gets a window. "Yes, this perfect."

The rest of the day Alaya and Fiona are in a shared space each concentrating on their own responsibilities. If anyone walked into Alaya's office they would notice a diminutive scent of honey and moss.

That night Alaya ravaged her wife.

Fiona made a mental note, before passing out from hours of pleasure at three in the morning, 'must study again in Alaya's office again s... s...soon'.
The Journal

Alaya slips quietly out of bed and heads down to the basement for the sessions. "I didn't wake Fiona. She can sleep another hour."

Mother Jenny, "She has earned her rest, but make sure she has time to get to classes. Also mind your own body, it has gone through plenty from the injections."

Alaya nods as she gets into the proper stance, Jenny follows as Vastra leads.

Vastra teases her daughter, "You do not look like you had enough sleep. Shall I put a cot in our room for you to make your escape?"

"Vastra!" Jenny shrieks, "Your mother sometimes doesn't understand boundaries."

Alaya is accustomed to her Mother Vastra's remarks, but this is the first time it truly made her blush. That is when she attacked and Alaya found herself on floor.

"Distractions, dear can come from our allies," as she pulls her daughter up from the ground.

Half hour into the session Fiona walks down the stairs in housecoat holding a cup of coffee. She makes herself comfortable on the stairs, "Good Morning, how can you move after the injections and shorten sleep?"

Alaya smiles as she dodges Mother Vastra left attack. "Good morning to you. I was …" she ducks again. "I wanted you to sleep, you needed the rest." Alaya attempts to duck, but Vastra counters and Alaya falls to the basement floor. She smiles devilishly up to her Mother Vastra. "I know, distractions."

Vastra smiles as she lends a hand to her daughter, "Why not let your mother and I spar? Tomorrow I shall not be generous."

Alaya stands dusting herself off, "Thank you Mother." She walks to the steps and sits one step below Fiona. Fiona shares her cup of coffee with her wife. "You rescued me. It was embarrassing how many times I hit the floor this morning. My buttocks will tender for a few hours."

Alaya and Fiona watch the sparing for a bit more but decide to head upstairs to make breakfast.

"My exams, my final examinations, are coming up. I have my last summer break of my youth and then it is off to medical school. Are you ready for the change? I am a bit nervous."

"I am a little concerned. Our Louisa and Flora have been through the same experience."

"I will not be by your side as to we have become accustomed. I will not be here, the hospital will dominate our lives."

"What are you saying?"

"That you need to do something with your free time. I do not want you just sit around waiting for me to return home."

"My dear Fiona, what a pitiful life I must have had before you bestowed your presence. What shall I do?" Alaya takes her arm across her forehead and pretends to faint.
"Did I just insult you?"

"Yes, a little."

Fiona leans over and kisses Alaya cheek, "I am sorry dear, your Mother Vastra must be rubbing off on me."

"You are right though, I need to be prepared to be alone."

"Maybe I should seek out less demanding training. I could easily be an apprentice for a general physician."

"No! Fiona, you must stay the course. Opportunities will come from the best education, networking and making contacts."

"You sound like my mother." Fiona smiles at her wife affectionately, "How am I able to negotiate with an alien species, why not with my wife?"

"Then allow us to have a household staff."

"Alaya, we can manage."

The basement door opens. Vastra and Jenny enter the kitchen sweater than before. Mother Vastra's curiosity always get the better of her, "What can we manage?"

Fiona places on the table breakfast for the mothers. "We are negotiating responsibilities."

Vastra kindly looks to her family, "May I suggest everyone go about their day as usual and tonight we come up with a solution that we all agree?"

Jenny smiles at her strong Silurian wife, "Yes, tonight."

Vastra quickly turns her attention to the newspaper and began to read the front page articles. That was a hint to everyone in the room that the discussion is now current affairs. Another Suffragette, this time Emmeline Pankhurst sentenced to three years of prison and the Nevill Ground's cricket pavilion destroyed in a suffragette arson attack.

Fiona doesn't know which is worse.

The day ends with everyone who resides at 13 Paternoster Row, with satisfied stomachs from an excellent dinner, relaxing in the drawing-room.

"On the day of your wedding April graciously deeded 14 Savile Row and the business to the Flint-Saint Clair clan. April also handed me this with personal instructions." Vastra hands over a journal to Fiona and places a key on the table.

Fiona opens the journal. She tears up when she recognizes her mother's handwriting and takes a deep breath before she reads the inscription on the inside ...

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My Dearest Fiona,

I am so sorry that I am not going to spend the rest of your beautiful life with you. I have to confess that I have known since you first began to crawl, hints of your future. I knew you would find love in a woman whose mothers are interspecies, your love would begin with letters and I would not have much time to spend with you after were married.
This journal was Alaya’s Christmas gift to me the same evening she announces your courtship. My heart sank. I knew it would just be a matter of time before you are married. Every night since I decided to write important events in this journal.

Keep this safe, at all cost and destroy this journal, if necessary.

I also know you will have a good life, love and be loved.

I strongly encourage you to pass onto our future generations. Certain items will not be apparent until much later in the future:

1. Learn to drive a car and change your own tires. It would also be helpful to learn how an automobile works, that way you will not be cheated by mechanics.

2. Master computer languages and learn to keep a secure database.

3. Learn to live a healthy life. Keep a healthy mind, body and if possible a vegetarian diet.

4. Learn short-wave and ham radio. Radio will be your friend. I am a fan of NPR and BBC radio.

5. Investments that are worth the wait: IBM, Apple, Google and Amazon.

6. Styles change continuously through the years, but the classic look will forever remain in fashion. The classic look is a simple solid color button down blouse with a black skirt or trousers.

7. Learn to make your own pasta.

8. Learn to be alone with your own thoughts. Even though you are in love, you still need to take time for yourself.

9. Get a hobby.

10. Learn to speak Silurian, German, Latin, Spanish and Mandarin Chinese

One more thing ... Don't live to work, work to live.

I love the woman my Fiona has turned into, except her sacrificial personality. Under no circumstances do you stop or put your education on hold, this is imperative. That is my only request, no my only demand.

Be Courageous!

Your Mother,

April Saint Claire Ph.D.
Director of Computational Cybernetics Department
The National Science Foundation
(18-06-2014)

London will always be my favourite place in the world. I have a key for a safe deposit box number 221 with C. Hoare & Co. on 37 Fleet Street. You have a duplicate. It is paid for one-hundred and ten years, please use it for necessary storage.

"That is why she was sad at Christmas. Have you read this journal through?" Softly asking Alaya's mothers while re-reading the inscription. "Did you know of my mother's qualifications? Why was
she a tailor? Cybernetics?" She places her head in her hands and lets out a sigh. "I don't understand, do you?"

Vastra speaks up, "Your mother has shared much with us and her qualifications mean nothing in 'Our London'. It was either to be a cook or a tailor, she didn't like the hours of being a cook. This journal will keep our family safe for many generations."

"What of our Prime Directive?"

"We aren't going to change history. Turn to the section marked WWII."

Fiona flips through the headings and starts to read a section WWII. Fiona tears up, "Our home?" She hands the journal to Alaya, who quickly glances over the section.

"It seems we own my mother-in-law our lives," Alaya pulls her wife close. "What are we to do?"

"I am not comfortable knowing some of the information." Vastra looks to her own wife for comfort. "But, this is a tool. I could not imagine the world to be so angry and full of hate. We might not be safe."

"So what do we do? Hide?" Alaya asks as she holds her wife's hand tighter.

"Yes. No. Perhaps." Jenny takes Vastra's hand in comfort. Vastra bravely says, "I do not know."

Fiona gets quiet, puts her head down and with soft whispers, "Please let us continue this discussion in a few days. Allow Alaya and I to read the journal." Fiona looks to Vastra and Jenny, "Allow me time to digest. Excuse me."

Fiona gets up, heads up to their floor. The second-floor office door closes shut and echoes down the stairway into the quiet drawing-room.

Alaya gets up, "Excuse me mothers, I am going to the basement."

Mother Jenny blocks her daughter's exit, "May I suggest that the basement isn't where you ought. You must know that?"

"I believe she wants to be left alone."

"No, she was finished discussing the matter with your mother and me."

Alaya looks up towards the second floor, "Yes, I want and need to be nearby. Thank you mother."

She instantly runs up to be with her wife.

"Alaya will learn, just as you have learned." Jenny kisses her wife's cheek.

Fiona curls up in the Edwardian tub chair and opens her mother's journal to the first page with '1913' written in the upper corners. She jumps as the office door opens and closes to see her Alaya leaning against the closed door, "I am sorry I didn't follow directly. I assumed you wanted to be alone."

"I don't want to be alone. I do not want to go on this journey into the future without you. We will travel together."

"Yes, my heart has no choice. I want to be by your side." Alaya smiles, "Did you mind if we get comfortable? It looks like it is going to be a long night. But I would not be a proper wife if I did not mention your exams. Are you prepared?"
Fiona lets out a burst of air from her chest, "I am prepared. I will not get a perfect score, but I am prepared. I will need to go over notes in a few days, may I have your assistance?"

"Of course. I will be right back with coal. Would you mind getting a blanket. Let's get comfortable." Alaya exits the office looking back to her wife. "Together."

Fiona puts down the journal and opens up the murphy bed. She grabs from the cubbyhole pillows and a couple of blankets. The pillows smell like her mother. She goes to the master bedroom and grabs all the pillows off the bed and returns to the office.

By the time Alaya has returned the office has become a lounge area with Fiona heating up water for tea. "I've decided we are in here tonight. I hope you don't mind."

"No, it is appropriate. Your mother's scent lingers."

"Yes, I can smell her perfume on the pillow cases. You don't need a Sliurian tongue to do everything."

Alaya smiles as she puts more coals on the warm fire. "If we are going to be here for the night, I will change."

"Why?"

"I want to be more comfortable."

"I need a distraction to keep me focused."

Alaya doesn't hesitate and disrobes all the way to her pink and emerald layer. She bends down picking up her clothes off the floor, "If you need assistance ..."

"I am good, thank you."

Alaya looks to her wife who is already naked, "That was fast." They fold their clothes, and arrange their shoes next to the chairs.

Fiona hops into the bed. Alaya follows. The two wrap themselves up as Alaya opens the first section, '1913'.

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1913 will be the last peaceful year for the world, enjoy it. There will be many wars in the future, but two of them one in 1914 and the second in 1939 will have an global effect that will last throughout all earth's history, there is even residue in my future.

1913 will be your last opportunity for safe travel, luxuries, and sustaining a full Silurian diet. Here are my suggestions preparing for the transition from a peaceful world into a hostile globe.

**FOOD**

1. Get an allotment, it will supplement your meals.

2. Learn to grow your own high protein foods: Pumpkin Seeds, Asparagus, Cauliflower, Peanuts, Bean Sprouts, Almonds, Spinach, Broccoli and Quinoa. You will learn to love a vegetarian diet. - As I write this I see Vastra winching at the idea of having a no meat. If refrigeration is not an option may I suggest to dry the meat in strips at a low temperature 140 degrees 4-6 hours. This will dry the meat out, but if you store the dried meat in canning jar they can last up to 6 years.
3. Fats will be a luxury. Luckily fat can be stored in canning jars. You will find that between 1915 and 1950 fats for cooking will worth more than gold. It might be a great financial investment.

4. Flour will be rare. Many will use potatoes, straw and even saw dust to create the illusion of bread. The best way to store flour is through a process called oven canning. Preheat oven to 200 degrees, fill canning jars with dried goods and place in oven for one hour. Don't let Fiona burn herself, you might have to tape pot holders around her wrists. Put on the lids and place back in oven for thirty more minutes. This will give your dry goods a storage life up to twelve year.

5. Fruit, especially imported, will be rationed. Can as much preserves as possible.

6. Petrol will be extremely limited. I know that it might be inconvenient, Especially during Fiona's
medical school obligations. Do your best, that is all that matters.

7. Tea will become sanctioned with a two grams weekly allowance. Did Vastra and Jenny just gasp?

Fiona laughs out loud, she has always loved her mother's sense of humor. "Let's find out!"

Alaya's eyes sparkled as they both leapt out of bed, covering themselves up with a blanket and head out the landing. Alaya coughed loudly. This time the first floor door opens. Mother Jenny comes out, "What?"

"We just got to tea. How did mother react?"

"It wasn't pleasant."

Everyone laughs and soon an upset tall Silurian emerges from her bedroom naked. "It is not funny. We need to find a way to store tea."

"Which shocked you the most? Lack of meat or lack of tea?" Fiona teases Mother Vastra.

"I don't find it funny that what little I ask of 'Our London' will be taken from me in form of government control. Not funny indeed."

"Mother Vastra. Have you ever gone without meat or tea?"

"Yes, it wasn't pretty."

"You can always have my tea and meat. I shall go vegetarian, will that please you?"

Vastra looks up, "That is generous little one. I accept."

"I will not give up my tea."

"You did not get to number nine and ten, did you?"

Fiona looks to Alaya as they both run back to the room.

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8. Soap will be rationed. Learn to make your own.

9. There will be a paper shortage. Newspapers will be limited in number of pages and publishers will be allotted a small amount of paper. Which means very few books, especially those recreational will be limited print. Has my Fiona started to cry? Alaya hold her close, it will get worse.

10. Whisky, especially Scottish Whiskey will be rationed. It will be difficult to buy, the supply will almost non-existent. Alaya, good luck!

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Fiona runs out to the landing, looks down to see a smiling Vastra. "Ye ur terrible!"

"It seems, little one, we all have to make sacrifices."

"Ah shaa trade mah tea for whiskey an' a good book?"

"My kingdom for a horse?"

"Och aye."
"Are you ladies going to cough all night to get our attention?" Jenny demands.

"I don't know. You have read the journal. What is your guess?" Alaya smiles back down to her mothers.

Vastra regrets not reading together as a family, "We have much to discuss. April was quite thorough. We shall gather once you read it through."

"What of your exams? Are you prepared?" Mother Jenny asks compassionately, "This is is emotionally taxing and an unplanned distraction."

"I am prepared. Thank you for worrying. I ... do appreciate you. May I count on your support next week to cram my brain with facts?"

"Of course. As long as I don't have to talk about cricket," Jenny smartly retorts.

"No cricket. Thank you both. Good night."

Alaya and Fiona return to their room and continue to read the journal in private. Each take turns writing down questions and notes while the other reads.

By the time it was two in the morning Fiona's eyes were fighting to remain open. Alaya closed the journal, turned off the lamp and curled up to her wife.

Tomorrow they will read about WWII.
Fiona and Alaya have placed their chairs unnaturally close as April's journal lays open in front of them.

Alaya's mothers are across the table prepared to deal with whatever decisions are made tonight.

Fiona takes a deep breath and looks to her wife's mothers shaking the journal, "This is the most painful thing I had to read ... I am frustrated. Please be patient with me as this is most difficult."

Jenny sympathetically responds, "Little one, we have no regrets when you entered our lives. We will not love you less after tonight."

Fiona tears up for a second. She wipes her red swollen eyes with a semi-dry handkerchief "Why is she insistent that I become a physician?"

"Fiona, I ask this with love and respect, why won't you accept the fact you have an exceptional mind? Medicine might be the first step towards something unimaginable. It is the most challenging career for a woman, at least in 'our London'." Alaya points to a section of the inscription, "She has a for you a safe deposit box. I believe we should make a habit of documenting our lives. Mother Jenny, I believe pictures would be most appreciated."

"If April has the other key her intentions is to use it immediately upon returning to her time. Let us make sure there is something for her to read. If it were me, I would get a ticket to ride the next ship back to London."

Vastra slightly irritated the discussion veered away from the most important issue, "Exciting as all this ... April's words concern me greatly. We can potentially live decades more. We need to have plans to assimilate or hide. We have to decide as a family, no one will be alone. Who knows how many of the Flint family there will be in a decade, in four decades … we must plan."

Jenny pulls her wife close, "But we must agree together. Also my love, sometimes to get through the tough stuff a little distraction is good. Be patient." she hands everyone a small piece of paper and pencil. "Write down either hide or adjust."

Vastra looking at her precious daughter and her daughter's wife, "Our lives will be filled adventures either way, there is not wrong answer. To hide means we are isolated and live peaceful lives. To adjust mean, we are alone in a crowd with unexpected challenges. Neither is perfect and either is acceptable to the Flint Family. What say the Flint-Saint Clair Clan?"

All four women write one word on their piece of paper, fold it in half and slide it to the middle of the table.

Jenny gathers them, she reads them out as she unfolds, "Adjust."

Fiona and Alaya hold hands.

"Adjust."

"Adjust."

Jenny unfolds the fourth and the last one placing it in the middle of the coffee table for all to see, "Hide."
"Let me see that." Vastra grabs it out of Jenny's hand. "Alaya? Why? Tell me."

"Vastra! No!" Jenny stands up looking down at her wife. She takes a deep breath and knows that soft words will reach Vastra quicker. "You have so much love for your family. I know you are scared, worried and terrified. We all read this journal. We know the future." She sits back down, takes the piece of paper out of her wife's hand and asks her daughter, "There is no wrong answer."

"The future is full of hate and anger. My Fiona has already tasted such evil, such pain ... No. How can you want to partake of this," tapping the journal with her finger, "future?"

The room was full of mixed emotions. Vastra flicked the air and then stared at her daughter.

"There is no wrong answer," as Jenny touches her wife's arm. Vastra doesn't alter her tense body. Jenny repeats it softer, a whisper into her wife's ear, "There is no wrong answer."

Vastra is woken out of her thoughts by Jenny's gentle words. She evaluates her daughter's posture, eyes, and notices the hand-holding. Fiona is comforting her daughter, Alaya is not the strong one.

"I have faced more than my share of despair, loneliness and loss. I am not immune to facing all those things again and again. Hiding will not keep your wife safe from harm. You know this to be true. Little one, why did you write 'adjust'?"

"Because I trust the people around me ... and my mother. This journal is a wonderful gift, no, like you said before it is a tool. This will allow us to survive not simply exist." looking at Vastra and Jenny while having a tight grip on wife's hand. "I understand why Alaya chose to hide. There is no right or wrong answer, but there are always consequences. Louisa reminded me we live with our reactions longer than the consequence themselves. Alaya reaction comes from a good place." Fiona turns to her wife, "Together we can do anything, go anywhere ... it doesn't matter to me. My heart has no choice. I want to be by your side."

Alaya leaps up and grabs the paper from her Mother Jenny's hand. She writes something, folds it in half and slides it to the middle of the table. She then kisses passionately her wife. "Together."

Fiona nods yes with tears flowing down her face.

Jenny grabs the folded paper, opens it and show Vastra. Alaya has crossed out 'hide' and wrote 'adjust'.

Vastra stands instantly, shocking everyone, and starts to pace.

Jenny looks to her wife, "Vastra! What are you doing?"

"Thinking."

"Why?"

"We need to plan, we need to make decisions."

"Yes, we know. That is why we are here together. To make decisions."

Vastra turns to look at her little family, "Yes, but I have never been so proud."

"Please come back and sit by me."

Vastra comes back to her wife's side, "I can be such an emotional Silurian."
Jenny pulls her wife close.

Fiona is staring at the journal. Alaya pulls back strands of red hair from her face and tucks it behind her ear. "My dear Fiona, what is going through your mind?"

"Mother Vastra is correct, we must plan. My mother writes of wars, politics, criminals and other events that make the Titanic sinking insignificant. How can we go through life knowing that millions die ... I will die, my children will die. I know these are facts of life. There is no cheating death, but how can we outlive many without feeling some obligation to humanity?"

Vastra sitting back she pulls her wife close, "My dear there are burdens to those who outlive their loved ones and walk through multiples histories. You have to live in the moment, and hold tight to the ones that matter. There is no obligation except let life go on, without interfering. If we reproduced my blood and gave it every man, woman and child to maintain long life ... what would happen?"

"People will live longer."

"Is that better?"

"Yes."

"What of population? What of the poor? Longer life doesn't stimulate quality or riches. Some always outlive another." Pulling her Jenny close, "The burden is mine. I chose to live my life with someone I love. She will not live a long Silurian life. I can't change the fact or even fix it biologically. You must see the moment in front of you. Living life is hard enough to start worrying about death."

Fiona puts down the journal, grabs her wife's face and kisses hard. "How is that for a moment?"

"That was wonderful. Thank you." Alaya simply smiles at the attention, "My mother is right. We must plan and think of our future life. I am concerned about sustainability." Alaya turns to her mothers, "Being a detective can't be sustained beyond two generations. We need to expand our investigation and research family business. We only need a figurehead to run a business, out devices can assist in maintaining the illusion."

"Yes, we need a global presence, no matter our location our clients will hire our services. What do you think Alaya? How do you suggest we go about this?"

"The future seems dangerous enough and I rather not have to fight criminals when we are vulnerable. Research, especially corporate, is profitable." She holds up April's journal, "Although, I would rather like to hunt these Nazi monsters."

Jenny looks to her daughter with sad eyes, "We do not hunt, we investigate."

Vastra gently grabs Jenny's hand, "Yes, we investigate. Let ourselves focused on being safe. We do not leave 'our London' until Fiona has the requirements and experience completed."

Alaya humbly, "As far as developing a global presence I will go through my university notes and create a business plan."

Vastra nods smiling, "I look forward to your presentation."

"When do we leave for 14 Savile Row? The Tailor shop is profitable but for how long?" Fiona asks with a little apprehension, going home and not seeing her mother will be difficult.

"After your spring term has ended, I would suggest that you and Alaya start organizing and
construction for our living quarters. Your mother and I will get this home ready for rent. I do not feel comfortable selling since we know the result. We will submit our residential requirements to you before the end of the week."

"The most important thing is keeping our family safe and live as cheaply as possible."

Fiona looking into Alaya's eyes, "Yes, I agree."

Fiona takes the journal from Alaya and begins to read it again. Tears swell with tears as she reminds herself that this is the last communication from her mother. Alaya just holds Fiona's hands as the Flint Family and Flint-Saint Clair clan continue the discussion. Fiona smiles and nods her head. "Yes, we have a future to plan."

Alaya pulls Fiona close, "Remember we can plan, organize and research yet still fail. Adjustments will be essential." Looking to her mothers, "I know our commitment to not hide, but there might be a time when it is the best solution. I am headstrong and determined therefore I have to trust your judgements when we escape to solitude or stay strong."

Vastra nodding in agreement, "We should always have a sanctuary. I am not sure of that place ... a different time-line or not here on earth." She pulls Jenny closer, "We need determination to keep up our safety, it shall be our number one priority." Turning to the sad-eyed Fiona, "Your mother just saved us all and we owe a debt to your Mother. We will do our best to repay her any way possible."

"Which reminds me," Jenny jumps as she writes it down on the list she has been keeping and looks to Vastra, "I need a darkroom and my supplies."

"Yes dear, it is also a good time for our Alaya to master photography."

"That would be wonderful. May Fiona join us?"

"I believe that Fiona would be better in front of the camera." Jenny laughs shaking her head, "My dear you are too clumsy to handle the chemicals."

"Yes I would have to agree. I will keep a journal for my mother, in my own hand," looking at April's journal, "Yes, I believe she would love to know more details of our lives."

"We will miss her friendship. If you do not mind, from time to time, We would like to offer an addendum." Jenny offers knowing there are things a mother needs to know.

"Thank you. I would appreciate any assistance. I know that our schedules won't sustain a daily, weekly or monthly journal. I was planning on just notes with a year-in-review. If you and I compile that together it would mean the world to me."

Jenny laughs loudly, "Since the first day you delivered Alaya's first correspondence your touch of dramatics has not faltered." Fiona blushes as Jenny adds, "I would love to help to write about our lives, it will be a new year tradition."

Fiona nods.

"Now on to sober topics ... what do we bring with us to Savile Row? This house is larger than the residential space of the tailor shop. Not everything will come with us to Savile Row."

Silence.

No one ever wants to give up personal property let alone the four women of 13 Paternoster Row.
Finally

The large courtyard of King's College is filled with family and friends as they sit waiting for the procession of graduations. It starts with the president, vice president and following all the professors wearing black robes with hoods of various colors. Once all the staff and guests have been seated on stage energy shifts to excitement everyone watches graduates slowly walk as they fill the front empty seats row by row.

Alaya finds her wife smiling, waiting to catch her eyes.

Fiona is looking for her family. She spots Mother Jenny as two veiled women sit on each side. It pains her to not have access to her wife's eyes or see her smile.

As if Vastra and Alaya was reading her mind both lifted their veils to show their grins.

Fiona points to her pink and green hood followed by a wave with a golden stole.

Alaya nods and covers her head.

Mother Jenny leans into her daughter, "What is that?"

"Colors represent her focus medicine and public health. The golden stole is for highest marks."

Jenny and Vastra sit a little taller.

Alaya beams with pride.

Fiona smiles and waves to two others in the audience, it is Louisa and Flora. They nod in return.

The ceremony begins with the President saying a few words of encouragement of life's endeavours, followed by the keynote speaker Virginia Woolf and then on to the graduate representatives.

"At this time we would have our student's choice followed by the Valedictorian. This year the honor goes to the same person. It is a pleasure to introduce Dr. Fiona Saint-Clair."

To the amazement of family and parents the graduates all stand to cheer and applaud as Fiona makes her way to the stage. Fiona gathers herself and looks towards her friends and then to her small family.

Virginia Woolf face is white and mouth slightly gaping. She composes herself as she watches a young red-headed woman walks up the podium. She studies that face, could this be the woman?

"It is true I am Valedictorian and voted by my peers the daunting task of sharing my thoughts on our graduation day. I promise this will be short and to the point … " Fiona takes a deep breath, looking out to a large audience while attempting to find her wife.

Alaya pulls back her veil; Fiona smiles.

"I am lucky. My brain loves knowledge. I love learning, reading and the process of digesting a large influx of information. There is a sadness, as I exit King's College arch as a student, knowing my pursuit of learning will be my responsibility. I will have to pay attention to the world around me as it changes and challenges me understand each new aspect. Being a student of this fine institution has left me with an urge, an urge to explore and discover. King's College gave the thrust of curiosity I will carry me to my next professional objective."
Fiona looks to her wife and takes a deep breath.

"My mother, who was an exceptional woman, owned a tailor business on Savile Row. It was not her passion, but it provided me with a great education and opened doors that would be have been locked to a Scottish girl from the Isle of Mull."

Virginia Woolf sits up taller, this is the girl. She wonders if the typewriter did make a difference.

"Life will not be as your expected, the skills you acquired here at King's College will aid in your constant adjustment. You have learned to gather, analyse, decipher documentation to make an informed decision. I will be a physician and I proudly head off to medical school. I have been offered three other appointments including a tempting offer to return to Scotland. But I have changed. My world has changed. My life is here in London, it has been for a very long time. I shall serve God and Queen with my skills, for as long as I am able. Although, I shall not give up my love of pure Scottish whiskey."

Everyone laughs. Fiona stares at her notes and then looks to her peers.

"The world is changing. Men, learn to work side by side with women who might be as intelligent or even smarter than you. Women, you must learn to adapt and become more than what society expects. Our goals are the same. Are they not? To be educated, be an asset to those around us and to make a difference? Those are noble and hold true to that course for not just yourself, but lead the future generations by example."

Virginia Woolf feels for the first time as if she has given birth to someone. She imagines Fiona's journey from a secluded life on the Island of Mull, to Savile Row tailor shop, higher education, the challenging intellectual discourse and discovery life's options. She thinks of her own journey.

Fiona pauses in private reflection and closes her notes.

"I will leave you with five things to remember. One: Learn to be alone with your own thoughts. Even though you find love, have a family you still need to take time for yourself. Two: Get a hobby. Three: Don't live to work, work to live. Four: Prepare the next generation to be more than who we are today. Fifth and Final: Be Courageous. Your loved ones are watching this ceremony, they love who you have become. Under no circumstances shall you waste yourself into intellectual atrophy. Be curious about things around you and never stop learning. Good luck and God speed."

The roar of the graduates is loud and boisterous. Fiona and Alaya hear all the accolades graduates and guest alike as they take in Fiona's words as if there was a minister offering each a special blessing. A few mothers even mention how disappointed that their sons didn't court Fiona. Another questions who is Fiona's husband. Alaya smiled and turned to see her Mother Vastra smile through the veil, they are talking about our Fiona.

Once the graduation is complete Fiona looks around for her family. But each time she takes a step forward to be with her wife another graduate and their family come to offer congratulations with endless questions of her future. Fiona sounds like a broken record, "Thank you. I am heading to London Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine for Women." Fiona doesn't get uncomfortable when they ask of her marriage. These strangers ask of her husband, but Fiona responds with professionalism, "Yes, my spouse is here. Yes, my spouse is quite supportive. Yes, my spouse ..."

"Excuse me. Are you Mrs. Fiona Saint-Clair's family?" The three turn to see Virginia Woolf addressing them.

Vastra proudly addresses the question, "Yes, we are Fiona's mother-in-laws and this is Fiona's
spouse."

"You are a woman? How did you bypass the laws?" Curiously Virginia asks.

"Nothing like a desperate minister and stack of sterling notes."

"I see. Congratulations. I do have a rather quirky questions to ask about Fiona. Do you mind?"

"Please. I do not guarantee a suitable answer or even a answer."

"How did Fiona pay for college?"

Alaya speaks up, "She was a secretary for publishers. She has a portable typewriter and has a keen knowledge of shorthand."

"That is a magical typewriter to offer the gift of access to higher learning."

"It is more than that, it brought her to me."

"Please share with me how that happened."

Alaya proceeds to tell her how Fiona's bicycle chain broke and dragged it to repair in front of their home. She quickly told the story of correspondence to their marriage. Alaya purposely left out any discussion of John, April, Weeping Angels and Bethlem Hospital. She wanted to keep her wife's personal struggles and success secret for it was not her right to disclose. No matter who was asking.

"What an amazing tale."

Vastra curiosity is peaked, "What do you ask? Are you withholding something?"

Virginia Woolf in soft tones, "I am not to disclose anything to Fiona."

"You may trust her family to that secret. It must be a burden to be the sole carrier of information. We shall do our best to hold your information closed."

"I have a friend, a travelling friend, who told me to send a typewriter to a specific address on Savile Row."

"Did your travelling friend mention as to the reason for the gift of typewriter?"

"Something about someone has messed with my friends' future. This typewriter should fix that. Do you know what that means?"

"I am sorry, we are at a loss. It just adds to the mystery of our Fiona's life." Vastra loves a mystery, but this is madness. She attempt to relieve Virginia Woolf of this mess, "It must be a gift to you to see the result of your efforts."

"Yes, indeed. It is a gift. I shall leave you now as I am inspired and it is imperative I follow the creative process as it leads me."

Vastra nods and Virginia Woolf departs through King's College arch back to her room to write.

Soon all that is standing in the way of getting to her family is her study group. Fiona answers their questions, but this time her response is different. "Wait one moment." Fiona walks to her family, "Please meet some of my peers. These are the women from my study group. Do you mind?"
Vastra, Jenny and Alaya all follow Fiona back to the quaint little group of women.

"Allow me to introduce my Mother-in-Law Madame Vastra, my Mother-in-law Jenny Flint and my wife, Mrs. Alaya Flint Saint-Clair."

The women immediately surround the three asking questions about being a detective, what's it like to work with Scotland Yard, how do you fight in dresses and so on. Poor Jenny didn't know what to do. She just allowed Vastra and Alaya answer the questions without hesitation. Vastra answers as many questions possible as all the women who hang on every syllable.

It is now Fiona's turn to watch the Flint family being bombarded with accolades. It started to create such an energy that many others around started to whispers.

It was a great relief to Fiona when she spotted Louisa and Flora. She walked over to them.

"We couldn't be prouder if you were our very own."

"Sometimes, I feel that you both are my mothers. I hope you don't mind. You see I am without a mother. I do love Alaya's mothers very much, but I miss having my private world with my mother. There is a position available for two, my heart is open. Just think about it."

Fiona kisses Louisa and Flora on their cheeks before she spins around to return to her wife. She trips on a blade of glass before she at her wife's side.

"I am sorry ladies, but I would like to have my family returned to me." All the conversation instantly halts with all eyes on a smiling Fiona. "I would like to celebrate my graduation. I am sure your family would like the same. Stay in touch. Good luck."

After the study group women have freed Fiona's family, she asks, "There is cake I assume."

Alaya shakes her head no, "We didn't think you wanted us to fuss."

"Do we truly have no plans?"

"We have plans." Alaya smiles.

Fiona turns back around, runs towards the departing Louisa and Flora and taps Flora's shoulder. "We have plans, are you not joining us?"

"We don't want to impose," humbly replies Flora.

"My dears, please assume your place is by my side. Please lift the burden off me to ask again." Fiona pushes herself in between, locks her right arm with Louisa and Flora. The three intertwined walk back Fiona's small family.

"Where are we off to celebrate?" Fiona asks with excited eyes.

Alaya offers her Fiona's arms, which she accepts. "It is a surprise."

It was a surprise. It was a small meeting room in Alan's Tea Shop on Oxford.

All the privacy needed to celebrate another landmark in Fiona and Alaya's life, unveiled.
It was a brief bus ride and a quick taxi to Paul End. They are standing close as Fiona rings the doorbell.

The door swings open as Flora answers the door wearing a long pleated skirt and button down blouse. "Welcome to our home. Come in, come in."

Once the door closes not a second of hesitation Fiona drops her carpet-bag and pulls herself into Flora with a hug. "I have missed you."

Flora hugs back, "Hello there!" While still in the embrace she speaks to Alaya, "I assume it is you Alaya?"

"Yes, you are correct." Alaya touches her bracelet and turns into her normal half-Silurian self and takes her turn to hug Fiona.

"How was your trip?"

"How was your trip?" Louisa is asking from the kitchen. "Please follow through."

"I can put the bags into our room, please direct," Alaya asks.

"Do you need my help?" Fiona asks half-heartedly.

Alaya gives her a smile and wink. "I can hand two little bags."

"Up the first-floor the room is to the front. If you need to refresh, there are a pitcher and basin."

"Thank you. I shall be down directly." Fiona kisses her wife on the cheek and heads towards Louisa.

Alaya walks up the stairs and places the bags in the front room. She heads back down to the kitchen to join the others.

As she is walking along the wide landing, she notices the photographs along the chair-rail. There are pictures of Louisa and Flora on their holidays around the world.

She comes to a gap between two doors and that is when she sees the pictures. There are pictures of her from very little to the day she returned to 'Our London' after her education. There is a new row, it is the picture Mother Jenny took at Fiona's graduation; Alaya and Fiona are standing next to each other with Louisa and Fiona acting as bookends. She looked closer at her Fiona, her smile is different somehow. It is not a better smile, but a smile she hasn't quite witnessed before. She will investigate. First thing when she gets home she will ask her Mother for a reprint.

Alaya finally enters the kitchen, "My love I was moments away to send Louisa to find you."

"I was enjoying the photographs. There is an Alaya shrine of pictures between their office doors."

"I want to see them." Fiona starts to get up from the table.

Alaya holding up a hand, "Later, let's enjoy our hosts company first."

Fiona nods and sits back down to enjoy her cup of tea.
Alaya sits down as Fiona plays mother and hands over her tea with two sugars.

"Alaya is now here, so let get on with what you came all this way to discuss. You said it was serious and vital to your medical career."

"Tell me about medical school. What will be expected? Will I have personal time? We have anxiety about the commitment." Fiona asks while looking at her wife. Alaya nods while sipping her tea.

"It will be demanding. Do not expect any free time. Let me clarify, you will rarely sleep in your own bed at home. You will receive two days off a month, at the most three. You will be sleeping at the hospital just about every night. The nights you are home it will be short-lived as you will work a ten hour shift from seven in the morning through five in the evening. You will eat on the run. While you are working overnight at the hospital, you will be on call. Learn to sleep for four hours and drink plenty of coffee." Flora decided that was enough information and stopped for questions. She could not help smile as she sees both Alaya and Fiona in a state of shock.

"Did you expect something different?" Louisa inquires.

Fiona slowly nods her head no and yes. Not taking her eyes off her wife, "I knew it was tough. I have heard rumors, but I thought it was a weeding-out tactic." She turns her head to Flora, "Are you teasing me?"

"No, dear." Fiona in a soothing manner, "I would never lie to either of you."

Alaya is now looking down at her tea. "Is there anything I can do?"

"I entered my third year at London School of Medicine for Women when Flora started. Which meant I was alone for two. Looking back I was terribly lonely, but I focused on being a great physician and surgeon. When Flora entered my life everything changed. I do not understand how we managed. But we did develop a friendship. We never had the same day off, we shared one free evening a month and the only time we shared a bed was to actually sleep."

Fiona perked up, "Hidden romance?"

"I was also focused on my career path. I valued out friendship and was too terrified of rejection to do anything. It was not the right time." Louisa blushed at her weakness, Fiona grabs her companion's hand tenderly.

"We are happy." Flora adds, "But it was tough. Medical school dominated my entire life. After which I went on to Durham and then to Scotland."

"Scotland?" Flora smiled.

"Yes, I met someone and decided to follow her to Scotland. I was young, impressionable, the woman was confident and so sure of herself. It was appealing. But her dominating personality started to weigh heavy and I had to leave for my sanity. I returned to London."

"Then what happened?"

"Louisa became brave." Flora smiled at her companion with such devotion.

"We have been together ever since." Louisa

Fiona has gotten quiet and looks to her Alaya.
Alaya takes a deep breath. "I have a personal question."

"Oh dear, it sounds quite serious," Louisa looks into Alaya's eyes.

"When should we have children?" Alaya blurts out.

Flora quickly replies simply, "When you are both ready."

"Is there a bad time? Too soon? Too Late?"

"I am not you nor am I Fiona. That decision is yours make together." Louisa wants clarification, "Are you seeking advice as your Physician or a friend?"

"Both, please."

"As your physician. Please wait until Fiona has finished three years and half-way into her fourth. It will be stressful enough. Carrying a fetus will make changes to Fiona's body that is going to put undo stress in medical school. Also, the lack of sleep and poor diet is not healthy for the baby."

Alaya nods in understanding, "As our friend?"

"Wait until one year after medical school. Before even discussing the topic. Your relationship will be stressed enough."

Alaya now worried, "I ... is medical school that bad?"

"Not bad, but it a challenge. Fiona's brain will be stuffed every day with something new, lectures, dealing with diverse medical issues. It will be exciting and exhausting for Fiona. With you in her life there will be an added burden."

"I will be a burden?"

Louisa nods, "What would it have been like for you at University for six years with a wife back in London?"

"I would have worried every day. I would have to exhort more energy to concentrate on my schooling."

"It will be no different for Fiona."

"What can I do?"

"Prepared to be alone."

Fiona starts to tear up and puts her face into her hands. "We were married too soon."

Alaya becomes angry. "No! No! No! That isn't true." She turns to Louisa and Flora, "Please say that isn't true."

Flora stands behind Fiona and whispers, "My sweet dear. Do not think that. You married just right. You graduated with honor at King's College. Did you believe you married too soon then?"

Fiona shakes her head no.

Alaya stands up and walks around wringing her hands. "How do I fix this? Do I free her to grow?"
Fiona whispers, "Oh god. My heart aches." She slinks her body inward.

Alaya stands looking at her wife's face drain of color and eyes become bloodshot. "No? Then what do you suppose we do?"

Fiona continues to speak softly, "I do not know."

Alaya stands still looking at the floor.

"Unless this is too hard, unexpected. I understand. I truly do." Fiona offers her love a way out of suffering on her account.

Fiona and Louisa do not interfere. It is their lives. But if Fiona and Alaya looked at their friend's faces they would see support and unconditional love that comes with time. These two women are witnessing the defining moment of a relationship.

Alaya stands still daring herself to look into her wife's eyes.

Fiona is scared, her heart is racing and her chest is heaving in anxiety. She is trying to control her breathing.

Alaya stands still daring herself to analyze her wife's body. She has learned at University how to read body language. She sees the flushed face, the erratic breathing, the vein on her neck pulsating and her hands are trembling. "I … I don't want to be a stone in your life."

"Our life," whispers Fiona.

Alaya stands still going through her brain for any solution. "I lack life experiences to find a solution."

Fiona starts to cry.

"That doesn't mean there isn't one. What are you worried most?" Alaya trying to keep communication going, even if it ends to her disadvantage.

"That you'll be left alone, sleeping in an empty bed and days without companionship. What worries you most?"

"I don't want you to feel pulled, to chose between me and focus on your medical training."

"How can I not be pulled. You are my wife, but medical school is my future."

"Our future."

Fiona wonders out loud, "Are we still separate? We have used the term 'my' with the other correcting it to 'our'."

"Yes, I have notice that."

"It is our life, our future." Fiona bangs her fist on the wooden kitchen table.

The echo vibrates Alaya's teeth, and she smiles.

"What?"

"Just now, when you hit the table, it vibrated in my mouth."
Fiona smiles in return.

"We shall make a plan. Not that plans are easily kept, but we should talk about our life as I attend medical school."

Alaya nods and comes around to her wife picks her up out of the chair and holds her tight.

Fiona puts her arm around her wife’s neck and listens to the half-Silurian pounding heartbeat. She whispers, "I was scared too."

Alaya squeezes tight once more before she gently places Fiona back into her chair. "Do you have a paper and pen for our notes?"

Flora gets up and returns with the requested tools.

Fiona looks to Louisa and Fiona. "What do you suggest?"

For the next few hours, the four women talk freely about expectations and reality while Fiona attends medical school. Alaya and Fiona have many questions. Louisa and Flora answer honestly and without pardon.

Late at night both couples go to their separate rooms.

Louisa and Flora to their master bedroom on the second floor in the back of the house overlooking the rear garden.

Flora remarks as she turns to embrace her companion, "They did it, they found their way."

Louisa agrees kissing tenderly, "Just like we did."

Fiona and Alaya go to the front room on the first floor, with a stop on the landing to look at the Alaya shrine of picture. Fiona smiled brightly and imagined what their children will look like. "I wonder if they will have hair?"

"I have often wondered that myself. If they do, I hope it is like yours red and springy."

"Springy? I have springy hair?"

"Yes, it is not straight like anyone I know. When the air is moist, your hair expands and not easily tamed. Just like you."

"Is that so?"

Fiona sexually devours her wife until Alaya begs for her to stop.

Alaya makes a mental note before she sleeps from exhaustion, 'make sure I find a way to tease my wife's wild side'.
The Summer of 1913 is Fiona's last summer of her young adulthood and wants to take full advantage. She is also the most enthusiastic about moving to 14 Savile Row. Fiona closing the box of books in the foyer of 13 Paternoster Row, "I detest moving, but the sooner we complete the move the sooner I can do nothing. This is my last opportunity for laziness without consequences. At least half a day."

"What are you plans? I hope you have time for your wife?"

"I have a tall stack of books that have nothing to do with medicine. Can we move a chaise into your office? That way I can be nearby."

"We will be living a few floors above the shop, that isn't close enough?"

"No. I want to enjoy being near you before medical school."

Vastra walking down the stairs carrying a large travelling trunk, "I can't believe this will pass my lips, but I am jealous of my daughter's wife. I would love to add lazy afternoons to my daily schedule."

Jenny directly behind Vastra holding a smaller box, "I agree. I never got a summer break. Such luxuries."

Fiona starts to blush as she doesn't know how to respond. She whispers to Alaya, "Am I to feel guilty?"

"They are teasing you. Don't mistake they are playing with you for a reason."

"Yes little one, we are teasing for a reason," as Vastra takes the box from jenny and places on top of the truck.

Fiona looking up at her wife's mothers, "Please don't keep me in suspense."

Jenny teases, "The doctor needs a hint?"

"If it is good news please, please tell me."

"After all possessions are in our new residence at 14 Savile Row, we immediately leave for a holiday."

"Where? How? I need to pack."

"Our clothing have already been packed." Alaya pulling Fiona close, "I will tell you more on the train."

It was a good idea to move on a Sunday Savile Row as the street lies empty and no employees working. After all the boxes placed in their rightful room, Fiona works her way down to the ground floor stopping at the landing. She notices a tall, dark haired woman giving instructions to the receptionist, head tailor and general manager.

"... as we will be limited in communications Mr. Gardner will be the head decision maker. If there are issues no matter customer, client, billing or otherwise he will be the one to offer a solution. Miss Shaw, you have stepped up to the challenge for handling reception for both companies. Any
business for Vastra Flint Research and Investigations will simply have to wait until we return. I am sorry we are leaving alone during this transition. It is hard most on Fiona who has lost her mother...

Fiona quietly goes back upstairs and waits on the top step of the first-floor landing. Five minutes later the front door opens and closes. She watches the tall, dark haired woman touches her wrist and transforms back into her half-Silurian. Fiona patiently watches her wife glide up each step until Alaya notices her audience. They share a smile.

"It is difficult watching you being full human. I love my half-Silurian wife."

Alaya blushed and moves to sit next to Fiona on the landing, "As always, you please me with your wonderful words. I want to take a moment and talk about all these M changes."

"M changes?"

"Mother, moving and medical school. How are you doing my Samson girl?"

"Funny," Fiona begins to tear up, "I miss her terribly. I worry about her, us and our future. When I am busy am in the moment. It is the quiet times everything floods back and my heart aches."

"You know from experience those aches will slowly go away."

Fiona grabbing her wife's hand, "Yes."

"The taxi will be here shortly. We will talk on the train."

Vastra from behind, "Are you dears ready?"

The Flint Family and Flint-Saint Clair Clan leave Savile road for the Waterloo Railway Station.

Fiona asks Alaya in a whisper, "Southampton?"

Alaya giggles and whispers back, "No my sweet Fiona. We are not returning to Southampton."

Vastra leans into Jenny to tell her the conversation she just overhead. Jenny smiles. Once the women are in their private first class compartment the train departs the station. Fiona closes window blinds to her left as Alaya closes those to her right.

Fiona softly begs, "Where are we headed?"

"We are heading towards Devon to a place called Redlap. George V will be visiting the coastal area and might be staying a few nights at Redlap." Vastra pulls out her notes.

"How are we involved?"

"This home is rumored to have secret passages and illegal activities. We are to investigate the home for security and research for any validity to the rumors. That isn't all, there is a private beach only accessible from the house or by the sea."

Alaya is excited and interrupts her mother, "We will have complete privacy for two weeks! We shall have fun."

It was. For the first week, depending on the weather, it was reading, playing games or lounging on the private beach. It was heaven, at least for Fiona.
Alaya, Jenny and Vastra had investigations. Fiona offered to help, but she was immediately turned down.

The house came with servants, which Vastra sent away after breakfast. The only instruction was for a cold plate for lunch, dinner both be made and left in the kitchen as we will serve ourselves.

In typical Vastra Flint Research and Investigations fashion the job completed as quickly as possible and reports were written before the first week ended. Which allowed a week holiday for everyone.

The second-week every day was warm with the sun beams on the Redlap cove. After breakfast, a servant handed Fiona a large picnic basket as she headed to the cove. She would always be the first to arrive. Fiona would layout her blanket over the sand in the shade, change into her bathing suit, place the wine bottles anchored to a rock in the ocean and begin reading her books. Soon Alaya joined her and basked on the rocks taking in the sun. Vastra and Jenny would follow within an hour. The day would be on the beach and they would return to the house when the sun started to set.

It was hard to leave, but they did.

Returning to London was slightly awkward as their residence is now on Savile Row.

It was late Saturday evening when they entered 14 Savile Row and walk up to their residential floors. To their surprise everything is unpacked and put in its place. There was nothing to do. Vastra quickly panicked and ran into her study then to her laboratory ... everything was perfectly placed. Jenny went to her office and bedroom. Fiona calmly just watched as each member of her family ran around. She waited.

Vastra was the first to stomp towards to Fiona, "What did you do?"

Fiona's smile quickly disappeared and her eyes teared up.

Jenny quickly came to her wife's side, "Vastra, calmly ask."

"What did you do?" Vastra just stares at Fiona waiting for a response.

Alaya went to her wife's side, "No Fiona this is good. Mother Vastra is just not good with surprises."

Alaya returns a concerned look to her mother Jenny.

Jenny nudges her wife's side, "Vastra." Vastra just glares at Fiona. "Vastra!"

Vastra turns to Jenny, "My things have been touched."

Alaya asks, "Are they out of place?"

Vastra responds loud and angry, "No! How?"

Fiona hides behind her wife leaning into Alaya's should blades.

Alaya pleads, "Mother, please calm and be kind."

Vastra quickly snaps out of it and calms herself. "Yes, I am sorry little one. How did this all get done?" Fiona peeks around Alaya's shoulders with bloodshot eyes. Vastra melts, "Please don't hide. I am truly sorry."

Fiona comes around and holds her wife's arm for support, "I hired people to unpack. The same people who helped us pack."
"How did they know where to put everything?"

Fiona goes to the kitchen returns with a pile of tickler files and folders. She hands them to Vastra.

Vastra leads her family into the reception room and places them on the table. She opens the folder marked "Vastra Flint Office" to find a list of all her items, associated box numbers and even a diagram. "What of my private files?"

"They are not touched. The boxes are in the cabinets with the seals unbroken." Fiona response with pride.

Vastra runs down one flight and moments later she runs back into the reception room. She looked to Jenny, "She is right all is safe." Now looking at Fiona again, "What about my laboratory? It is as I work with everything in its place?"

Fiona grabs for the folder "Laboratory" and hands it to Vastra. Vastra opens to find a list of all the items, associate box numbers and this time multiple drawings. Fiona has tediously drawn each table and instructions for each item. Vastra's face is shocked, as much as a Silurian face is able to display shock. She just looks into each folder. "This must have taken months ... when? How?"

Fiona touches Mother Vastra's arm, "It is utterly devastating watching you and Alaya take injections. I wanted to show my appreciation. After you leave to sleuth, I write these documents. I was not invading your privacy, I was looking at things with the eyes of science." Standing a little taller and with a quiver in her voice, "I do not have much to offer. You are both very self-sufficient and my Alaya has minimal wants. It is very difficult to find a need or a place in your lives when you take care of each other so successfully. I know you might feel like your privacy violated. All personal items that are too delicate or too personal are in their rightful place in a sealed box. You will get over this feeling of being out of control. I hope soon. Good evening have pleasant dreams." Fiona leaves the reception room and runs upstairs to her master bedroom.

The three stand there gobsmacked and look over each room assigned folder. Alaya going through each folder, "This is amazing! All this detail."

"This I didn't know was possible in humans. This is generous."

Alaya beams with pride, "I am proud of her."

"Yes, I feel violated that she went behind our backs, took notes of our belongings and then strangers. I am angry." Vastra looks up to Jenny, "What do you think?"

Alaya smiles at her mothers, "One thing I know, my wife is wonderful."

Jenny joins in her daughter's happiness, "I had planned days of unpacking. Days!"

Alaya as she exits the room, "Good night mothers. See you in the morning."

Vastra and Jenny look to their daughter in unison, "Good night."

Alaya closes the door and goes up one flight of stairs to her master bedroom. She enters to see Fiona standing by the window and immediately walks over and holds her tight. "You did a wonderful thing. You saved them time and days of unpacking."

Fiona cries into her wife's chest, "You mothers are angry."

"As you pointed out, they will get over it."
A knock on the door. Alaya runs over and cracks it open, "Yes mothers?"

"May we come in?"

Alaya turns to check her wife. Fiona puts on her housecoat and nods.

Alaya opens the door. Vastra and Jenny walk into the room. Jenny speaks first, "What you did was unnecessary, because we do things for ourselves."

Fiona doesn't feel a bit tempted to comment and calmly listens.

Vastra, "You are correct we are self-sufficient. We are proud of our independence. We are grateful for your wonderful gift. It is perfect. We can focus on getting on with our lives instead of unpacking."

Fiona nods.

"We aren't going to stop being self-sufficient, but very open to you being in our lives. No matter what you have to offer. We are grateful."

Fiona doesn't know what to say, "You are welcome. You are my mothers there make the proper adjustments. Expect my generosity from time to time."

Vastra felt her heart beat a little differently and nods to Fiona. Jenny was moved to the point of hugging Fiona.

Jenny holds Fiona face in the palm of her hands, just like she does with Alaya, "I do not want any misunderstandings, you are a member of our little family. You will find your place. We will make every attempt be open."

Jenny and Vastra leave the bedroom and head downstairs to their master bedroom.

Alaya closes the door and goes to her wife, "How are you?"

"I feel a little stronger."

"Good, because I suspect tomorrow morning exercises will be tougher than usual."

"Why?"

"Mother Vastra loves my mother and I very much. Which is why we have always had a more difficult workout. I believe you we not receive any different treatment after I saw love in my mother Vastra's eyes. Let us get a good night sleep."

The next morning Alaya was right, Fiona's buttocks landed on the floor faster and harder.
It is a twelve-minute bike ride from Savile Row to the Hospital on Handel Street. It has been a rude awaking of how much Fiona's life is no longer hers, it now belongs to London Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine for Women and Miss Mary Postlethwait.

Miss Mary Postlethwait is in charge of schedules for all the medical students. Which means Fiona's free time and personal life is in the hands of Miss Mary Postlethwait.

Fiona's daily life in medical school is an influx of lectures, shadowing doctors, watching surgeries, studying and if she is lucky sleep. Thanks to Miss Mary Postlethwait all the students are on a five-night, three-day rotating schedule. Which means that five nights a week Fiona remains at the hospital, three normal working ten-hour days and one free day.

It the change Fiona and Alaya expected, Louisa prepared them well in advance. It was difficult for the first three months and then December came. Fiona wakes up from a long sleep and heads down to the kitchen for coffee. She is pouring her cup and hears a thud on the ceiling, she smiles and works her way up to the attic gymnasium. She slowly opens the door and just sits against the wall to watch everyone with their routines. She never thought she would miss this, but she does, it is a family affair.

Soon the first session is over and they all head down for breakfast.

Jenny takes a bite of her banger, "Today you have off? We didn't know."

"Yes, I do. Alaya, are you able to get away?"

"I am so sorry Fiona, you know how this business is around the holidays. Do you have plans today?"

"I do have studying to do, but I can allocate some free time. Do you need help Mother Jenny?"

"We need to decorate for Christmas."

"I can spare an hour or two, is that enough time?"

Jenny nods yes.

Vastra finishing a bite of raw meat, "I suppose we are going to bring a dead tree into this small space? As long as there is a concert, I will tolerate nature indoors."

Alaya isn't saying much. Fiona touches her wife's hand, "Are you feeling well?"

"I am feeling fine."

"May I assist in the shop today? Make deliveries? Something?"

Alaya still quite and replies almost in a whisper, "No, but thank you for offering. Do you know what your schedule is for the rest of the month?"

Fiona looks to her half-eaten plate of food, tears start to flow and nods yes.

Alaya softly asks, "What days do you have off?"
"I have the nineteenth and twenty-seventh."

"I see."

"I am sorry."

Alaya hands now holding her wife's as they both sit in silence.

Jenny goes to Vastra pulls her close.

The family is quiet just allowing the sadness to take its course.

"I appreciate your patience. Do you regret marrying me? We barely share a bed."

Alaya stands up, shoves the table aside, picks up her wife and holds her tight. Fiona puts her arms around Alaya neck and starts to cry, "I am so sorry. I miss you."

"I miss you too. I do not regret anything my Samson girl. We will get through this."

Alaya turns and walks out of the kitchen holding her wife into the drawing-room. She lays Fiona on the chaise and as she sits on the rug, "You are doing what every doctor must go through. When I was at NNYU working on my Masters I had no time. None. I didn't have to worry about anyone except myself. I can't imagine you having an extra burden to worry about me. I never wanted you to worry about me. My bed is cold at night without you and there is no Scottish breakfast to start my day. This is our life for the next four years. We will adjust. We will survive."

Fiona wipes away her tears and cups her wife's face, "Are you sure?"

"Absolutely."

Fiona just lays there looking at all the pink scales on her wife's face, memorizing every single line and design, "I always picture you when I am most fatigued."

Alaya teases, "Thank you very much."

"Your beautiful face inspires me to tread through. You have power over me. May I study in your office? I want to be nearby."

"Of course. I might put you to work if it gets busy."

The two just stay close to each other for over an hour. It was just the two of them, talking about their separate lives, challenges and proud moments. They decide to put up a wall calendar in the kitchen to coordinate schedules and agree that Alaya will take the same days off as Fiona.

Medical school will interfere many more times over the next four years and for now they curse Miss Mary Postlethwait.

The rest of the day Fiona and Alaya worked close. In the tailor shop Fiona assisted customers and took measurements. It made Alaya laugh as Fiona fumbles her hands taking inseam measurements.
Fiona is excelling in Medical School, as expected, but she doesn't understand why Miss Mary Postlethwait doesn't like her. Not that it matters to Fiona, although students have approved schedule changed while her own denied multiple times. It doesn't truly bother Fiona until she is suddenly given a day off, which she greatly appreciates, but upon returning to the Hospital she found out an important surgery was performed yesterday. Fiona was not pleased.

Fiona immediately telephones Alaya and vents.

"What do you want to do?" Alaya whispers back through the phone.

"Nothing. I just am upset that I missed the surgery. It was important."

"Why not talk to someone?"

"I am whispering because I want privacy, why are you whispering?"

"Because you are whispering." as Alaya giggles.

"I needed to hear that giggle. I do not feel obligated to confront anyone."

"I understand."

"I better go, see you in a few nights. I love you."

"I love you too."

Fiona immediately felt better just complaining to her wife. She continues on rounds, completed paperwork and late in the afternoon she joins her peers for a lecture on transfusions. A Belgium doctor Albert Hustin, had successfully performed the first non-direct transfusion. She took her seat and pulled out a book to study until the lecture begun. She looks up when she hears familiar voices.

It was somewhat, but not really, a surprise when Dr. Flora Murray and Dr. Louisa Garrett Anderson come for a special visit to the Medical School. They both had their medical training here, for Fiona it was too much of a coincident they visit soon after her conversation with her wife.

Fiona was getting up to greet them when she caught Flora's eyes and a subtle 'no' sign was given and settled into her seat to check her notes.

Louisa and Flora took their seats directly behind Fiona.

"... as I was saying I am here because we need women surgeons, I came to evaluate for possible candidates. Who are your brightest?"

Fiona is pretending to read her notes as she holds her breath until she hears "... Fiona Flint-Saint Clair and ..." she relaxes and continues to study until the lecture starts.

A next day the Medical Director's office summons Fiona. She sits outside, feeling childlike as if waiting for the principal in primary school. Soon she three other of her fellow medical students join her. They all soon are talking and trying to figure out why they are all there. Entering the waiting area is no other than Miss Mary Postlethwait. Fiona heart is pounding.

The door opens and the Medical Director calls everyone into her office, including Miss Mary
Miss Mary Postlethwait quickly stands to the right side of the desk as the four medical students all stand in front of the Medical Director's desk, like faire shooting ducks all in a row.

"As you know, this institution had developed the greatest medical minds in London. Many are active alumni members and come back to recruit for their own practices and organizations. We have Alumni looking for future surgeons, we gave them your names as potential doctors."

The women finally relax and all offer genuine smiles.

"Don't get too excited. We are talking strenuous schedules and added responsibilities. Your night shift will be post-op and you will be on call, even on your day off. Which mean your entire professional and private lives will be in the hands of Miss Mary Postlethwait. Any questions?"

Fiona is excited and curses Miss Mary Postlethwait with her mind.

One student spoke up, "What if we aren't interested in surgery? I am primarily interested in general practice and Pediatrics."

"Oh I see. Well then I will inform our generous Alumni of your decision. I assume the rest of you women want to take on the challenge?"

Fiona without hesitation, "Oh yes!" The other two quickly nod in unison.

The Director turns to Miss Mary Postlethwait, "I leave these three women lives and schedules in your capable hands."

Miss Mary Postlethwait nods to the Director, "Yes. Thank you."

Miss Mary Postlethwait leaves the Director's office with the medical student who rejected the opportunity while giving a disappointed look to the Director. It looks as if Miss Mary Postlethwait has a new victim.

The Director waits until her door is completely closed, "Please sit."

The remaining three grab a seat pull out their notebooks and pencils.

"I can see why you three are the best," the Director waiting for all ready to take notes. "You will have an office, shared of course. You will also spend time at the different facilities receiving special training with the following focus ..."

The Medical Director discussed new curriculum, schedules and expectations, "... Since there are no surgeries scheduled this evening you are dismissed for the day. Spend time with your families tonight. Share with them about the changes and good luck. We expect great things from this program."

The medical students turned to leave, "A moment Mrs Flint-Saint Clair."

Fiona remained standing.

Director standing up and put our her hand, "I must thank you." Shaking Fiona's hand.

"I do not understand."

"Why didn't you tell anyone you were a close family member to Louisa and Flora?"
"I want their support not influence."

"That is noble, but unfortunately unacceptable. Today women must rally together to make sure our full potential is reach and opportunities are opened to our gender in this male dominated society."

Fiona nods, because she understands. Her mother has used terms like network, human resources and synergy.

"You are young, but understand how our society works. Being a wife is much easier than an intelligent physician. Louisa and Flora has shared with me some information of your family. I understand it is non-traditional?"

"Yes. Non traditional is the best way to describe my family."

"Well you will find that, like myself, there are those here who are champions of all families."

"Yes Director, I do know. But it is so hard to tell. Sometimes friendship has a price."

The Director smiles, "I would love to meet your family. Discuss your future."

"I will talk with my family tonight."

"Excellent. Enjoy your night off ... while you can." She smiles and returns to her desk.

"Thank you for this opportunity, I will not let you or the institution down." and immediately leaves the Director's and bikes home.

She parks her bicycle in the storage room across from the basement entrance and heads up to the residence level. She enters the kitchen. Jenny turns, "I thought you were not home for another few nights."

"I will share with your tonight. A good opportunity came my way. Where is Alaya?" A large thud came from ceiling. Jenny and Fiona look up. Fiona smilies and heads to the attic gym. She opens the door quietly and sits in the corner to watch Vastra and Alaya in hand to hand combat. It is quite aggressive. Fiona enjoys watching the speed and grace of the Silurians.

Alaya is matching her mother with counter movement and trying to find an opening to attack. Alaya is frustrated and soon makes a mistake to find herself flat on the padding floor. Vastra extends her hand but Alaya stays down, "Why can't I win? What am I doing wrong?"

"You are allowing your frustration getting the best of you. What are you trying to do?"

Alaya with a devilish look, "To successfully put your buttocks on the padding."

"That is why I will always win."

"Clarify please."

"I already know what you want to do and that is my advantage. Change your goal."

"Interesting. I will." as she lets her tongue smell the air.

Fiona is astonished, she has never seen her wife tongue check the air. She only sees Alaya's tongue when they are intimate. She wonders if this is how Alaya found her in the hospital.

"I believe dinner will soon be ready."
Vastra teases her daughter, "Do you smell anything else?"

Alaya flicks her long tongue in and out, "I smell my wife."

"You do?"

"There must be something of hers in the attic, the scent is strong" She stands up and flicks the air and instantly sees her wife in the corner. She clasps her hands and is nervous.

"You found me!"

"I will always find you."

Fiona walks towards her wife, "You are beautiful and your amazing tongue." As she touches Alaya lips, "It pleases me seeing you being yourself. I find it absolutely marvellous. I hope you tell me, when you are ready, how your tongue works. What you taste or smell."

"Truly?"

"Of course."

Vastra interrupts, "Alaya is correct, it is time for dinner. I wonder what we are having?"

Alaya smiles at Fiona and licks the air, "Beef stew and brown bread."

Fiona kisses her wife, "I find your whole body fascinating."

They all work their way down to the kitchen and Alaya just realized, "You're not supposed to be here. What happened?"

As they all sat around the table Fiona described the day, including the new surgical opportunities. She turns to Alaya, "Can you add insight as to why Flora and Louisa showed up today?"

Alaya just ate her dinner and asked, "What will this new opportunity mean for your schedule?"

Fiona opens her notebook and goes what the Medical Director has explained and what the Director has told in private.

Jenny becomes protective, "We might be non-traditional, but it seems a bit vague. What does she know?"

Fiona agrees, "I didn't want to inquire or ask her to clarify. She is expecting to develop a friendship with our family. I am not sure what to do? What has Louisa told her?"

"I will call after dinner and get specifics."

Fiona turns to her quiet Alaya, "My dear I am grateful you contacted our Louisa. It has made me very happy."

Alaya looks up to her wife and smiles, "I am relieved."

Fiona grabs her wife's hand, "You are lucky, this time. Please talk to me before you take our problems outside the family."
With Fiona's new schedule, she is home in her own bed almost every night. The only issue is odd hour phone calls which are such a nuisance Vastra installed a new phone extension in her daughters' bedroom.

Fiona and Alaya worked out a system in handling the late night call. Fiona always answers the phone and informs Alaya of her destination. She then crawls out of bed gives herself a quick sponge bath. Alaya would call the driving service, go into the kitchen grabs a cup of cold coffee and sandwich. By this time Fiona is properly dressed, which she laid out before going to bed, and they both go downstairs and wait for the car to come pick up Fiona. Alaya would rush back to their bed to sleep curled up to Fiona's warmth under the blankets.

Both are equally enthusiastic at making these late night calls to go as smoothly as possible. Fiona is not getting the best sleep, but at least she is in her own bed a few hours a night. The alternative is to have her previous schedule where she slept most nights at the hospital without any quality of sleep.

The new schedule assigned Fiona to various facilities including Women's Hospital for Children on 688 Harrow Road, New Hospital for Women on 222 Marylebone Road, Belgrave Hospital for Children on 1 Clapham Road and The London School of Medicine for Women on 8 Hunter Street. Sometimes it is all four in one day. Fiona's favourite is Women's Hospital for Children where she would witness her friend Louisa perform surgeries, sometimes, when they are short staff Fiona would assist.

One early morning Fiona had to quickly go to Women's Hospital for Children. As soon as Fiona hangs up the phone she tells Alaya "It is at the Hospital for Children. Also please wake your mothers. I would like them to see this." Alaya quickly calls the driving service and wakes gets her parents up,

"No, I don't know. I am a messenger. We leave in less than ten minute. Hurry." In less than nine all four women are in a taxi heading to Women's Hospital for Children.

Jenny is laying on Vastra's shoulder, "Dear Fiona, will you please tell your family why we are in a cab instead of our beds?"

"It is a surprise."

Fiona sits her family down in assigned seating behind a glass facing an operating room, "Please stay calm, make mental notes and we will discuss later." All three nod yes. Vastra is the only one who is overly excited. They watch different staff come in and out of the room. One nurse lays out different types of knives, clothes and a roll of thread. Across from the room there is a similar window Alaya smiles as she sees her Fiona wave.

A pregnant woman is wheeled and placed on the operating table. Louisa enters the operating room with Fiona directly behind. Louisa smiles and offers comfort to the patient. She is slowly put under. Louisa is giving instructions to the staff surrounding the operating table. Request a certain blade, making incisions, carefully, in less than forty minutes, a healthy baby boy. Fiona with the guidance of Louisa the mother is stitched back up and wheeled out of the operating room.

A nurse interrupts the quiet stares to escort Vastra, Jenny and Alaya to a private room. Moments later Louisa and Fiona come into the waiting room wearing clean scrubs. Fiona dares to ask, "Well what did you think?"
Vastra can't help but appreciate the moment, "Quite interesting. What is that type of procedure called?"

Fiona smiles, "Caesarean section."

"Recovery time?"

"Longest has been a month of discomfort, but many are back to normal in one to two weeks."

Louisa adds a bit more information, "I urge one to two weeks of low-level activity and gradually becoming more active."

Alaya fully awake, "What reasons do women have this caesarean procedure?"

Louisa looks to Fiona to respond.

"Placenta previa, placental abruption, uterine rupture, breech position, cord prolapse, fetal distress, emergency labor, previous caesarean childbirth, Diabetes, preeclampsia, birth defects, multiple births ..." smiling, "...or fetus with Silurian blood."

The three women sit patiently listening to Fiona as she answers, when completed they look to Louisa for her reaction.

"Perfect. No one missed."

Fiona comes closer to her Alaya, "Louisa and I have talked that this might be a better solution, for when I am pregnant. It truly scares me and I would love to have more than one child. Of course, at the more proper time."

Alaya becoming concerned, "I see. Is there much pain?"

"There is pain medication, that do not affect the child. The mother will have horrible discomfort for about one week, but the body heals quickly."

"This is good?"

"This is magnificent."

Louisa turning to Vastra and Jenny, "My dear friends, do you have any questions on your future grandchildren?"

Vastra asks, "What is your oldest patient?"

Louisa, "I had a woman give successful birth after forty-five."

"Mother Jenny..." Jenny looks to Fiona. "What do you think? Do you believe that this would work for me? You are the only person in the world, the universe, that would have insight."

Jenny responds quite happily but there is a crack in her voice, "I just know that the Alaya's childbirth was too painful and it was months before I feel like myself. If this procedure were available to me, Alaya would have not been an only child."

Fiona quickly looks to Alaya, "You have gotten quiet."

"So how many children are you contemplating?"
"Possibly two or three?"

"Not twelve?"

Fiona smiles, "Do we own a farm? Starting a cricket team? My love, two or three. My body will go through enough carrying a partial Silurian child to term, I can't imagine more than three."

Louisa looks to the clock, "We hate to leave you my friends but Fiona and I have paperwork, rounds and doctor business to attend."

Fiona leans and kisses Alaya's cheek, "See you later tonight." Turning to Vastra and Jenny, "Thank you for coming, I hope it was informative besides unexpected."

The taxi ride home Vastra and Alaya discuss the surgery, the baby and both beamed with pride as they discussed the professionalism of the procedure.

Jenny leans against Vastra's shoulder while her mind is somewhere else entirely.
Fiona

After Vastra inquires into Louisa's revelation of her small family to Fiona's Medical Director it became clear, through Louisa's well-organized arguments, that for Fiona's sake a friendship is necessary. Jenny and Vastra decide to host a small buffet style dinner party at 14 Savile Row.

The doorbell rang as Fiona sprang from the bottom step and opened the door for her guests. "Please follow through ... " Fiona's heart stopped beating and she lost her breath.

Louisa takes a deep breath, "Do I smell pasta?"

Fiona snaps out of it, "Yes, we made pasta, pizza and curry. Good evening Director and Miss Mary Postlethwait you are both welcome."

Fiona lingers a bit as she stays behind to close the door and then follows the group of women to the residential floor on the second floor.

"Allow me to introduce Madame Vastra, Mrs Jenny Flint and Mrs Flint ... Saint Clair. You are familiar with our dear friend Louisa and Flora. They never need an introduction in our home. However we welcome into our home, for their first appearance, Medical Director Doctor Louisa Aldrich-Blake, and Miss Mary Postlethwait."

Jenny holds back laughter as she puts our her hand to shake, "It is a pleasure to meet you both. Welcome, spite Fiona's flair for the dramatics. Please call me Jenny." They all laugh as Fiona blushes. Alaya wanted to run to her side, instead she clasps her hands in nervousness.

Vastra extends her gloved hands, "I am comfortable being called Vastra."

Alaya extends her gloved hand, "Please call me Alaya."

Louisa informs her companions, "Flora and I have known Vastra and Jenny for over twenty years."

Medical Director Doctor Louisa Aldrich-Blake, "My friends call me Lou."

Miss Mary Postlethwait, "I am quite comfortable with being called Mary."

Each woman greeting each other and Jenny graciously poured drinks around. Fiona and Alaya head to the kitchen to bring out the salad and hot dishes. Fiona quickly whispers, "This evening may equally awkward and entertaining." Alaya agrees and they start the first trip of three and bring in the buffet food.

Lou looking at the food, "This all smells amazing. I have never heard of pizza."

"My mother was an excellent cook. It is my favorite food."

"Is your mother going to join us?"

"She is no longer with us."

"My dear I am so sorry. I truly am."

"This is my family, please treat them as if they were my flesh and blood. They were my mother's dearest friends."
Lou asks Jenny and Vastra, "Tell me, was Fiona's mother intelligent as Fiona?"

Jenny smiles proudly. "It was her mother's wish that she go into medicine. We promised to make sure Fiona stays the course. She is very important to us. April Saint-Clair has made difficult sacrifices to ensure Fiona would have the proper education and opportunities. This building and business was April's and given to our family as a wedding present."

Mary perks up, "Wedding?"

"It was a wedding present from my mother to sustain us after she ... she was no longer with us." Fiona is now blushing and anxious. All has gotten quiet and it is their home, her family ... she isn't happy with how uncomfortable the air has become.

She looks towards her wife and can't see her eyes.

She looks to Jenny who stands firmly next to her wife.

Fiona looks back to see Alaya with clasped hands.

Fiona is angry that her wife is anxious, it is time to be courageous. Quickly she stands taller, pulls Alaya close and says, "This is our home. My wife and her loving parents. Is there any curiosities you wish to understand before we have a pleasant evening?"

Mary speaks up, "Yes, there are two veiled people in the room. Please explain, do they have skin diseases?"

"No, they are wearing the veils for you. They want you to feel comfortable in their home." Fiona holds her wife closer.

"We have seen it all. Nothing will shock us."

"That is up to Mother Vastra and my wife Alaya."

Alaya quickly removes her veil and soon Vastra. Both Mary and Lou and are full of questions.

Fiona begs, "Please grab food while it is the proper temperature. We shall all starve if we hold off eating due to new discoveries of each other."

Everyone fills their plates with food while Fiona ensure their glasses are filled with drinks. For over an hour Lou and Mary ask questions. Vastra answers them calmly with basic details. When it came to the questions pertaining to Alaya ... Flora and Louisa took over answering questions.

Jenny, after deciding that her wife and daughter have been intellectually probed enough for the evening, "Tell me, what do you think of our Fiona's future in medicine?"

Lou, sitting back in her chair, "She can accomplish anything, if she chooses."

Vastra points out, "Anything is a burden in itself. How should she decide if everything is a possibility?"

"I suspect like your meal decision ... you try a little of this and that finding out what you like most."

Mary taking another bite, "I do love the curry. This is amazing."

Flora smiles, "I am a big fan of the pasta."
Louisa agrees, "Pasta"

Lou takes a bite of her food, "I side with Flora and Louisa ... the pasta is wonderful."

"I love pizza," as Fiona takes a bite out of her triangle.

Lou smiles, "There you have it, she will find out soon enough. Medical school is for her to learn for herself what she wants to do with her career."

"I do believe I have found what I like most and what I want to focus. Alaya and I had many discussions about my career."

All eyes focus on Fiona, she blushes. Fiona grabs Alaya's hand quickly. "I already know what I want specialize. It is not by obligation that I choose my speciality, but it is because I admire those around me. Forensic pathology and surgical specialist in women's health. I want to be a Physician as they come into the world and learn why they leave."

Lou dares to ask, "Does include Academia?"

"Yes. I feel it is essential to continue and sustain more women doctors. What do you think? Your words have the most weight."

Lou looking towards Vastra and Jenny. "She has found her way." Looking back to Fiona, "I believe you have the correct course. Curious may I ask your influence?"

Fiona blushes a little for the attention, "Someone told me that being a doctor is a curse and blessing. We see life at infancy and its conclusion. The only truth is we are powerless, we can't turn back time because time will go forward again. Death is there always, patient and waiting. The blessing is to have life and everything in between. I want to witness both ends. Those words have been my greatest influence."

Louisa quickly stands up, "I must get dessert."

Lou smile, "I do not know how to respond. Who, may I ask?"

"Louisa of course."

Louisa keeps her back to everyone. Flora quickly comes to Louisa's side and carries back the small plates filled with dessert samples. Louisa wiping a tear from her eyes, "Fiona, you humble me."

"You, my mother and Alaya's mothers inspire me."

Vastra and Jenny sit back in their chairs. Jenny, "Us?"

"I might not have detective skills or Silurian warrior abilities ... I can definitely want to know how someone died. I believe that is something, other than my typing skills, I want to offer the family business."

Vastra leaning forward, "That is marvellous. We thought we lost you to the world of medicine, but your education brought you back. We are very pleased."

"Have you ever doubted?"

"We worried you would take Alaya to a hospital in Scotland."

"Truly? It has been a personal quest to find a place in Alaya's life and in turn yours. I love my wife
with my heart and soul. Do you not know that my love flows deeply for my mothers? Do you not know how much I want to be in your lives?"

All the humans in the room have tears in their eyes, Vastra just pulls her wife close. "We have an amazing family." Jenny nods.

Alaya has Fiona's hand, "I think wine needs to be poured." She stands up filling everyone's glasses, "Fiona, my love, you know how to turn a room. Are you sure you do not want to change careers and enter dramatic society. Tonight our guest had a dinner and a show. You put our mothers in a state of shock, our friend Louisa has not even looked up from her dessert, Flora's smile will not allow her to take a bit of the custard pie ... and Lou and Mary are doing their best to keep up composure."

Everyone laughs.

Fiona whispers to her wife, "Yes, Alaya ... this is a good memory."
Vastra and Jenny return to 14 Savile Row with stack of documents. She goes to the drawing-room and lays it out on the table. Vastra talking to her family, "This is our connection to Great Britain. Without these we will never be able leave or return to our English soil again."

Fiona and Alaya get out of their lounging positions, place their reading material down and look over the documentation.

There are folders each with a label Madame Vastra, Jenny Vastra Flint, Alaya Flint-Saint Clair and even Fiona Flint-Saint Clair.

Jenny smiles as she flips through her folder, "Scotland Yard has been generous, we have birth certificates, documentation and other essential information to make sure we are servants of your majesty."

Alaya opening to the first dossier page, "What about our ages?"

"Upon our requests Scotland Yard and Torchwood will update our records. Only we will know our actual ages. There is a small technical issue Scotland yard requested. We need to be in human form in public."

Fiona stands upright, "I am human."

"No little one, we ..." pointing back and forth to Alaya and herself.

"You mean you have to wear the perception devices constantly?"

"Only outside our home."

"So it is truly isolation or adjust? I was hoping for tweaks and not drastic changes."

"Scotland Yard will need our pictures make adjustments as years go by but the issue of children ..."

"What issue?"

"There will be no more veils ... your children will have suppress their Silurian traits in public."

"That is horrible."

"I agree."

"How do you tell a child that she is beautiful but, please don't show your face in public?"

Jenny snaps, "We did the best we could."

"I am sorry, I was not," Fiona whispers, "I must return to my studies." and picks up her book off the chaise and moves to the club chair to study.

Alaya watches her wife coil, pushing back negative thoughts and concentrating on her books. Alaya to her mothers in a whisper, "I will fetch tea, Would you like a cup?"

Jenny and Vastra both nod.
Alaya is in the kitchen boiling water and Jenny comes in to help. "Your childhood ... was it wonderful?"

Alaya turns to her mother shocked at such a question, "Yes, I had the most wonderful childhood. Whatchild wouldn't want to fight crime in the middle of the night? The times Mother Vastra's carried me on her back as I watched her bring men to justice. Watching you from my perch as you knocked down men twice your size. Who needed friends when I have the greatest adventures? All the books I have read, all the places I have been ... my dear mother. You gave me such a life, why do you think I craved coming home? I wanted to leave New New York after three months. I hated the smell, the taste on my tongue, but I stayed because I wanted a life with you and mother. I want nothing more than to be a member of your team. Having Fiona makes my heart sing, but truly I was not unhappy once."

Jenny pulls her tall daughter close, "Share that with Fiona." Jenny hands the tea-tray to Alaya. "Let's go have some tea with our family."

Alaya brings in the tea and brings a cup over to her wife. Fiona doesn't look up, "Thank you, dear," as she continues to turn the page.

Alaya goes over to the fireplace, places another log and sits down in a nearby chair to taken in the warmth. She popped up quickly and started to go through the library shelves, looking for something specific. She pulls out a long leather binder, then another and soon she has a stack of five which get carried over to the table landing with a huge thud.

Fiona's concentration has been disturbed and looks up to see her wife offering a devilish smile. "My dear Alaya, what are you doing."

Alaya puts her attention to the binders in front of her as she points, "This is me playing hide and seek. I was terrible."

Fiona jumps up and can't help wanting to look. "You hid behind lace curtains!"

Jenny comes over to look at her photograph, "No matter how well she hid from us she giggled. I didn't need a Silurian tongue to find my giggling Alaya."

"What was her favorite spot to hide?"

"Under my desk." Chimes in Vastra who is standing behind Fiona examining the pictures.

"My dear Alaya, you are smiling in every picture."

"I had a wonderful childhood, my mothers insisted. There was a regular schedule for classroom studies, playtime, holidays, rambles, museums, the zoo and so much more. When we went out, I had to wear a veil." Alaya gets quiet, "Mother Vastra told me that my beauty was too great it had to be hidden. I was warned if I took off my veil my beauty would cause shock and jealousy. I believed her until I became a young woman."

As they flip through the pages of photographs each took a turn to tell Fiona a story.

"What about friends? Were you spoiled?"

"I had friends, just as you had your travelling friend to give you books and a Roman to teach you cricket. I had the same, but none of my own age. I never was lonely. Here I am with my wooden sword with my Silurian warrior outfit. As far as being spoiled, my mothers set standards. I didn't put too much of a fuss."
Jenny and Vastra both laughed loudly and started to describe a testy three year old who insisted everything was hers.

As the four looked at pictures Fiona just listened to each story, each adventure and each moment associated with each picture.

Vastra describes Alaya's first sword and tracking skills before she went to NNYU.

Jenny talked about her favorite books, how they would act out plays and went on outings.

Alaya talked of her great adventures being on Mother Vastra's back.

"I was just reminding my mother how my childhood was amazing. I was never bored, never lonely and all I wanted for myself was to be like them. I wanted to grow up to be a detective like my mothers. The thrill of deduction and the high of solving crimes is something I could not imagine my life without."

By the time Fiona went to bed she was feeling better and wondered if Vastra will train her children to handle a sword. Would she have the words to convince Vastra to use cricket bats instead?
Fiona dreaming of raindrops and slowly her body became aware that those were kisses from a cool half-Silurian's lips. She finally reaches full alertness to return the kisses. Alaya smiled.

"Good Morning."

"Good Morning"

"Come on we start exercises in five minutes."

"Not on my day off. No." Fiona shakes her head as if she is three years old.

"Sorry dear. You will join me. Even if I have to carry you myself."

Fiona knows her wife doesn't do idle threats. She pulls off the cover, puts on her glasses and quickly changes into her cricket outfit. As she is buttoning up her shirt, she notices the pants are quite loose. "Alaya am I loosing weight?"

"Yes, but we were warned by Louisa and Flora that this would happen. We need to seek nutrition advice from Mother Vastra. I can't have you withering away. She might have a book in her library that contains the right diet for your, no I mean our, situation."

"Fiona and I like the sound of that."

"Fiona walks to her wife and kisses her tenderly, "Yes, our. I like the sound of that."

They both exit their bedroom and into the attic gymnasium, they are the only ones here. "We beat my mothers? Do you want to stretch?"

Fiona comes from behind and pushes her wife against the wall, "Stretching? No, I can think of better things to do." She pinches her wife's ass and proceeds to nibble on the back of Alaya's neck.

"They will be here any minute."

"Let them see me kiss my wife. If they don't like it, they can stay in their room."

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"Let them see me kiss my wife. If they don't like it, they can stay in their room."

"They will be here any minute." Vastra and Jenny refuse to acknowledge them as they take their beginning stance. It wasn't until Fiona let out a moan that the Mothers stopped mid stretch and decided to watch. Mother Jenny asks, "How long will they go without any air?"

"I do not know. I guess we never measured Alaya's ability to hold oxygen. I just became curious, I will have to test her later."

Alaya opened her eyes and kissed her wife tenderly, "The mothers have arrived."

"Are they enjoying the show?"

"I think we have become a nature show for them. They are analysing our breathing capabilities."

Fiona turns around with a blushing face. She gathers herself, clears the moisture from her glasses, pulls Alaya with her and stands on the mat facing Mother Vastra. "Whenever you are ready, Mother Vastra. We have been waiting."
"Waiting? Is that what we call touching quail-pipe?" Mother Jenny inquires.

The mothers have a good laugh and soon settle down as Mother Vastra starts again leading her little family in exercises.

"What are you plans for the day?" Mother Jenny inquires while they are eating breakfast.

"I am too busy to make any sort of arrangements. I depend on Alaya." Fiona turns to her wife holding a mushroom on the end of her fork. "Here is a reward if there is an agenda for my day off."

Alaya pulls off the mushroom with her tongue and flips it into her mouth. "Yes, we have plans. Do you want to know of them?"

"I would," as Fiona holds out another mushroom attached to her fork.

Alaya extracts the mushroom similar as the first, "We shall be going to the British Museum to look at the exhibit of Chinese and Japanese prints. Lunch with a stroll in the park. We shall be back here for dinner. Is that acceptable. I didn't want to cram too much. At least one activity a day for your day off and the rest at our leisure."

Fiona nods in agreement as she takes a bite of her breakfast.

"I have wanted to see that exhibit." Mother Vastra adds, "What time shall we leave."

Alaya looks to her Mother Jenny for assistance.

"Vastra dear, I believe we can catch the exhibit another day. Let them go on their own."

Vastra looks to her wife and back to her daughter. "Understand. I forget that Fiona is not around."

"Is that a compliment?" Fiona is confused as to what Mother Vastra is actually saying.

"Individual scent lingers, just like Alaya and my Jenny's. I don't notice your gone until your scent dissipates."

"What do I smell like to you?"

"Family."

Fiona blushes, "What I mean is how can you distinguish our scents? What is particular with my scent? Do all Silurian's smells of scents the same or does it taste different to each Silurian?"

"There are multiple scents always flowing. I can choose what to block, like ignoring a certain sound. For example, we are having breakfast, coffee, Jenny, Alaya, you and even the soap for washing dishes is filling the room. I have taught myself to ignore the soap. Do you understand?"

Fiona nods and Vastra can see her mind soaking in her every word.

"Silurian's tongues are distinctive and how they interpret scents are personal. For example; Alaya and I differ in how we sense Jenny's scent. It is true of your scent. Understand?"

Fiona nods.

"To my tongue and brain your scent is like a candy store and an oak tree. My daughter's are close to that of ginger, flour and the sea."
"Interesting. Alaya, what is my scent to you?" As she looks towards her wife. Alaya blushed opens her mouth and nothing comes out. She closes her mouth and just smiles.

"What? I didn't hear you." Fiona teases her wife.

"Do you truly want to know?"

"I would not have asked."

Alaya blushes at the intimate conversation in front of her Mothers. She turns to her mothers to see them both being entertained. "Are there no boundaries?"

"What? I have to give up my hot breakfast for your privacy, I think not." Mother Jenny adds, "If you leave breakfast now your wife will be malnourished, she is already too thin. So just reply to your wife. Don't mind us." She offers her daughter a devilish smile as she takes a bite of her toast.

"You know how I give off scents … when … when … I am um … aroused?"

"Yes."

"Well, that isn't a scent I have when I am not aroused. You don't smell those particular fragrances on me right now?"

Fiona leans in to sniff her wife's neck and bottom of her wrist. "No, you smell more like a lock in Scotland and a savory pastry."

Mother Jenny yanks her daughter's arm and sniffs. "Pastry? I don't smell that. Does our daughter smell like a pastry?"

Mother Vastra lets her tongue leave her mouth, wraps around her daughter's wrist and back into her mouth for inspection. "I can see the interpretation. But no dear, only to our Fiona does our only daughter smell like a pond and a baker's shop."

"Ye must be joakin'." Fiona teases back with her strong Scottish accent. "I compared your daughter to the grandest body of water in the world and a glorious baked good. A pond? Ye must be mad. As far as me girl smelling like a baker's shop, I wouldn't mind it once in a while," as she offers a playful wink to her wife.

Alaya just shakes her head at the maturity level dropping. "When you smell the lock and savery pastry on my wrist, do you conjure up scents when I am … aroused?"

As Fiona sniffs her wife's wrist again, she lingers for a moment. She looks up to her wife with a softer tone, "Yes, it does. Are those scents still there?"

Alaya, "Only you can smell them. Not my mothers or anyone else."

"Why can I only smell them?"

"Because you were there when the scents were created. No one else knows that those are there. Nobody. Not the most sensitive Silurian tongue can even get a hint."

"Wait." Fiona's mind is going round and round. "All that I take in when … when … we are intimate, that which makes me feel as if I have a bottle of wine … only you and I can smell?"

"That is correct. But we do have scents anyone can smell, they just can't smell us. They aren't able to
drink our created scents."

Fiona looks to her wife and feels sorry. "I didn't know. Why didn't you tell me."

"Why are you apologizing?"

"Because we have this bond, this uniqueness … and you were the only one who knew."

"I knew you would ask soon enough when you are ready. I was prepared for your inquire, but without the audience participation." Alaya nods her head towards her parents.

"Do all Silurian couples have an exclusive scent? Does the scent ever change? If so, when? Do two Silurians have a more powerful combination?" Fiona holds her hand tight, "Do we have the same scent when you were with Daniela?"

Alaya heart felt like a bo staff hit her chest full force. She looked desperate, "I thought it was obvious. I must have not been clear."

Fiona mouth drops open, "Oh god! No! Did I just ask a question that I shouldn't have? I am not jealous. I am not asking to compare. I was just inquisitive. I am so sorry."

Alaya cups her wife's face, "No. When I told you of Daniela, I must have not been clear. Give me a moment to explain."

Fiona's hands are shaking, "I don't want to be the cause of any pain. Please forget I ask."

Alaya turning to her mothers, "How do I explain? I mean, what words?"

Fiona snaps her head toward Mother Vastra and Mother Jenny gently, "No. Her words only, please." She turns back to her wife and cups Alaya chin, "My love, help me understand. You told me you woke in each other's arms every morning, that you explored each other's body, and touching each other."

Alaya nods yes.

"What am I missing? I asked if our scent was the same as it was with Daniela?"

"It was not."

"How was it different?"

"There was none."

"Wait, I am truly confused." Fiona flaps her hands above her head. "I need another cup of coffee. Anyone else?"

Alaya shakes her head no while both Mother Jenny and Vastra hold up their cups.

"How can you enjoy this?" She asks the mothers as she fills their cups.

"This is fascinating. We know our daughter and she is fighting to find the words. We are here rooting for her to catch her tongue and explain so you will understand fully."

Fiona puts the kettle back on the warmer, sits down next to her wife, "I too am rooting for you to find your words." She sips her hot coffee and kisses her wife's cool cheek.
"There was no scent because …"

"Maybe if you tell it in cricket terms." Teases Mother Jenny.

Alaya ponders for a moment, "There was never scent because there it was never fully intimate. It was innocence and desire. My crown was dormant and my folds of skins were never investigated."

"When we shared a bed before we were married there was no scent."

"Correct."

"Are you telling me … wait." Fiona going through her brain to find the perfect word without being too vulgar. She gets up and runs to the other room.

Alaya looks to her mother who offer nothing more than shrugs. "You two are enjoying this way too much."

Mother Vastra and Mother Jenny just nod yes with smiles.

Fiona comes back into the room with Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary, published 1913 by C. & G. Merriam Co. She opens and find the word on page 1612, "Is this the word you are seeking, my love?" She puts the dictionary on her wife's lap, comes around behind Alaya's chair, leans over and points. "This meaning … here." Fiona stops, comes back around, sits down facing her wife and waits.

Alaya shakes her head yes.

"It was one-sided. Did she not dare look, taste, feel … she must have been curious?"

Alaya shakes her head no.

Fiona sits back and takes the dictionary from her wife's lap and places it on the table. "I do not know if I am sorry she left your desire unquenched or angry because she didn't dare even try to find out what might please you."

Vastra quickly turns the books towards her and her wife and point to the word 'virgin'.

Fiona looks at her wife so distressed at a memory she can't shake, "So when you touched my body for the first time … you were so confident … how?"

"I have studied anatomy. Louisa lent me books and she told me of human touches and similarities. Mother Vastra taught me of my Silurian body and its reactions."

"I see." Fiona's face is bright red and not able to look up from her lap.

"I did learn one important fact from both Louisa and Mother Vastra which gave me the confidence I needed for our marriage bed."

Fiona looks up to see her wife's beautiful brown eyes.

"That everyone is different. There are no two Silurians alike in taste, scent, pleasure zones and even the concupiscence; the same for humans. We had to discover each other, without books … and I believe we do quite well."

Fiona smiles, "My dearest I would like to know two things ..."
Alaya enjoys her wife's smile.

"What is my scent daily and what is my scent when we are intimate?"

"Your daily scent is a combination fall leaves and paprika."

"What is my scent when we are intimate?"

"Not now, especially with these two deviants around." She nods in the direction of her mothers.

"Damn," Whispers Mother Jenny.

Vastra just laughed, "I too was hoping for a reply."

"Sorry to disappoint. Go to the Cinema if you are so desperate for entertainment."

Fiona is still bright red, but her mind is buzzing with questions. She touches her wife's arm, "Let's start our day together."

Alaya places their dirty plates and empty mugs in front of both mothers. "The price for the entertainment is cleaning our breakfast dishes. Have a good day." Alaya kisses her mothers' cheeks and exits the kitchen holding her wife's hand.

After quick showers and a change of clothes Alaya and Fiona go on their adventure in London. First a twenty-minute walk to the British Museum for the exhibit. They do a bit of window shopping while walking towards Hatchards book-store, a stop for tea service and then back to Savile Row.

"I can't believe I left Hatchards without a single book."

The two walk with linked arms feeling the sun lowering in the horizon.

"Would you have time to read anything?"

"I miss that the most, the quiet time to read. Just you and I with a fire burning. I have to confess, I love you coolness."

"What?"

"Your body temperature, it is cool."

"Yes, please explain."

Fiona squeezed her wife's arm, "The house needs to be kept warm because of our Silurian blood dominated home. I depend on your body to regulate my temperature. Especially at night, I seek you out to cool my body."

Alaya smiles, "I seek you out when I am too cold."

"I am glad."

"Me too."

Later that evening, Fiona found out when she is aroused her scent is of a summer shower and freshly bloomed tulips.
Fiona comes home and heads directly into the kitchen, she knows that dinner will be ready soon. She notices her wife wearing something less casual, "You look lovely, what is the special occasion?"

Alaya turns around, "I just have one question, do we still have tomorrow off?"

"Yes we do."

"We have plans, go get changed into something formal."

Fiona face glows with a smile, turns and runs up to get changed.

Alaya finishes packing two sandwiches, places them in her small handbag and waits on the landing.

Moments later Fiona comes skipping down the stairs, missing the last step and falling into her wife's arms.

"You always catch me? I need you to come to the hospital, all those steps I run up and down. I swear my mind must figure a better way to communicate to my feet."

"You are fine. You rarely trip as you once did."

"Truly?"

"Yes, dear."

"Good night mothers!" Alaya yells into the kitchen.

"Good night!" Mother Jenny response back.

As they head out the front door Fiona dare to ask, "Am I to guess our plans?"

"We are to see *Pygmalion* tonight?"

"We already saw the play. Do you want to spend the money again?"

"It is the film at *Her Majesty's Theatre*. We can compare the two mediums?"

"Wonderful." Fiona smiles. "I should have grabbed some food. I am hungry."

Alaya opens her bag and hands her wife a sandwich.

"Thank you, you thought of everything." Fiona takes a healthy bite. "I was expecting a cucumber sandwich. Chicken?"

"Turkey. Mother Vastra said this a better sandwich which will help maintain your weight. Maintain not gain. What do you think?"

"It is really good." Fiona takes another healthy bite, "I want to catch up. How are you day to day? I know you told me not to worry, but when there is a quiet moment thoughts of you flood my mind. It takes me all my strength to stop myself from ringing my bicycle bell to have you running towards me."

"That would put me in a panic, please refrain my dear. We are not too far from each other, but if you
"I know." Fiona becomes quiet, "I wish I could just hear your voice. By the time I say hello I would be off again."

"Let's focus on our time together."

"Yes, you are right." Fiona looks up and notices the new Fortnum & Mason window display. "They have new whiskeys, maybe tomorrow we can see if any from Tobermory?"

"Of course."

Fiona runs up and sees a whiskey bottle, "Look! Tobermory!"

Alaya pulls her wife away, "I am sorry dear. We don't want to miss curtain call."

"Can we walk this way back?"

Alaya smiles, "Such a simple request, we will return home the same way."

Before they turn right on Regent Alaya lets go of her wife's arm, touches the device to turn herself human. "We will be in the balcony, not in a private box."

Fiona understands, "My dear please keep close." She grabs Alaya's wrist, brings it up to her nose and takes a deep breath. "At least you smell the same." She kisses her wrist before locking arms again.

They get into their seats and settle down. The atmosphere is electric and the two can't help being excited.

The lights flicker off and on. The empty seats are quickly filled including those around Fiona and Alaya.

Alaya shuffles in here seat.

"What's wrong?" Fiona whispers to her wife.

Alaya looks to her wife with her mouth almost fused.

"I am sorry dear, shall we leave?" Fiona knows that someone is irritating her wife's mouth.

Shakes her head no and touches her wife's tenderly.

The curtain goes up and darkness falls onto the audience.

Fiona times it just right and pulls her wife into a kiss. She thrusts her tongue in trying to locate her wife's tongue and plays with the tip. Seconds later she settles back into her seat before the stage light illuminate the theatre.

She looks back at her wife with a fused mouth, but this time she is not as irritated.

For intermission Alaya and Fiona head outside. Fiona pulls her wife across the street and buys an orange from the fruit vendor. She peels it quickly, "The citrus should help with the taste. If not I will get a something stronger."

Alaya takes the orange and smiles. "This is much better." She pulls her wife to the side for a little
more privacy. "I prefer your kiss solution. It made all the difference. I would love to kiss some more before we return to our seats."

Fiona looks around as she pulls another slice of orange for her wife, "I am sorry dear we are surrounded. Can you hold on till we reach home? May I suggest a taxi home?"

Alaya nods a she eats the orange. "My mother used to have a heavy South London accent. I am sure you noticed when she is tired or irritated."

"Yes, what happened? Was your Mother Vastra her Mr. Higgins?"

"No, I think she slowly lost the accent the more she immersed in their lives."

"My accent isn't as strong as it once was, but I am purposely trying to speak more like my mother."

"I do miss your Scottish way of words."

"Thank you. Maybe I will let my Scottish words fly if we get the Tobermory whiskey."

"Is that so?" Alaya looks to her wife and wonders how much of the bottle will it take to strip all the London out of her soul.

The lights flicker for the second half.

Fiona asks, "What are you thinking?"

"We better get to our seats."

Fiona holds back a second as the crowd goes through the doors. She quickly pulls her wife close and kisses her like she needs.

As they walk back into the theatre Alaya remains calm as her wife just pinched her ass again.

As Alaya and Fiona queue for a taxi they listen to everyone either rave or complain about the film. It was most entertaining. Fiona quickly left the queue to buy another orange for her wife just in time to get into the taxi.

"What did you think?" Fiona asks as she peels the orange.

"I personally like the play." She take a slice of the orange.

The taxi is going fast, knocking the two women inside back and forth.

Fiona smiles almost laughing at their speed, "I am not against the cinema. I find it quite interesting. But it lacks something."

Alaya steadies herself next to Fiona. "Pygmalion or cinema in general."

"Films based on literature or performing arts. It is as if the personal has been taken away, created for the masses. I just sat and watched being entertained. I wasn't moved."

"Do you think it is because we saw the performance?"

"Maybe, the next film we see it must not be literary or performed beforehand. It is only fair."

The taxi stops off in front of their home. Fiona fixes her hat and makes sure both her and her wife are
in one piece. Alaya pays the fare and tip. The taxi bolts away. Fiona laughs, "He is heading back to
the theatre for another fare. If he is that quick he might be able to eat well for the next few weeks."

The two head into their home and up to the residence floors. "Fiona, lets be in the drawing room
with the fire before we head to bed."

Fiona looks curiously at her wife, "Do you mind if I change into my nightgown?"

"That would be lovely, would you mind bringing my nightgown and housecoat when you return?"

"Of course."

Alaya watches as her wife closes their bedroom door and runs around gathering items from the
kitchen and placing them in the drawing room. She goes back to the kitchen and comes back with
small drinking glasses.

Mother Vastra and Mother Jenny look up from their books and watch their daughter go in and out.

Alaya comes back into the room and evaluate the contents on the table. She points to each one and
nods with a deep breath.

Mother Vastra leans up to say something, Mother Jenny gently keeps her wife from making any
noise. They both sit back, watch and wait.

Alaya exits and returns with a small bucket of ice and water, "Done." She then proceeds to put more
wood on the fire.

Fiona opens the drawing-room door. She sees the mothers, "Good Evening Mothers. Did you have a
pleasant evening?"

Mother Vastra, "It was quiet, peaceful and with little excitement."

Mother Jenny, "That is until our girls came home."

Alaya jumps up and comes to her wife. "Thank you." Alaya quickly gets undressed, puts on her
nightgown and finally her housecoat.

"My goodness. I should give you more oranges."

"What about oranges?" Mother Jenny is trying decipher Alaya's actions.

"Oh, there was a scent in the theatre. At intermission and at the end of the film we had an orange to
take the taste away."

"That's it?" Mother Vastra asked, with a disappointed look on her face.

"Yes, that is it." Fiona looks curiously at Mother Vastra and Jenny.

Alaya smiles brightly, "No, I was just running around back and forth from the kitchen. They want
answers, to which they will have to be patient."

Alaya grabs her wife's hands and leads her to the table and steps aside.

Fiona looks down at first it was subtle, but soon she was fully animated. "What did you do?"

"Does my wee lass need an education of Scottish food?"
"No! Explain yourself. There is a reason, what makes today special?"

"Actually it is not today, it is in a few weeks. You will not have that day off. Celebrating before has much more meaning."

"Do I get a hint?"

Alaya moves closer, "Together."

Fiona thinks, "My love will I disappoint you if my brain won't answer correctly. May I have another hint?"

Alaya picks off the table an envelope with the words "Mothers" written on top.

Fiona goes to hand it to Alaya's mothers Alaya gently grabs her wrists. "No this is for you to read."

Fiona opens the letter with a smile but it quickly turns sad and she finds a seat.

---

Dear Mothers,

Since I have started to be a fly on the wall for my dearest Fiona's therapy I found out a few things about myself.

First, I am terribly in love. There are no words I can express as to how much I love Fiona. It is like even whispering her name my heart beats faster.

Second, I owe you so much. My life has been amazing and you have been unquestionably the influence of my life. Now your generosity extends to to Fiona. There is not an ocean full of pearls that could repay your love and support.

Third, I am stronger. I know that I have looked to you for guidance for most of my life. How could I not. You are strong, independent and self-sufficient women. You make politicians and powerful men look like nothing more than ants moving in a line on an ant hill. You have been more that mothers you are inspirational leaders. I can do anything, go anywhere ... and I chose my life to be with both of you.

But ... 

My Fiona wants to leave. She is scared and troubled ... I have left with her. She will lead to where she will find peace. My heart must go with her.

My life, no our lives have been forever changed. You two will have each other and please look after April, help her understand.

I suspect our Fiona will go north to the Highlands.

I shall telegram as soon as possible.

Your Daughter

Alaya Flint

---

"W...what is this?" Fiona asks with tearing eyes.
"Together."

"Together!" Fiona looks up with a half smile.

"You woke up, put on your cricket outfit, studied on the floor and we stayed"

"We stayed."

"Last year we celebrated, but only I knew the reason. When we had our honeymoon I didn't tell you why I was overjoyed when we produced our scent. I keep certain moments to myself. We will celebrate together."

"Lovely. Show me what you have for us to partake?" Fiona stands and looks at the goods on the table again.

Alaya points to various cheeses from Edinburgh, chocolate from the Isle of Mull and Tobermory Whiskey. "Do you want to the honors?" as she hands the bottle to Fiona.

"I doont mind if I doo" Fiona pulls the cork and pours four shot glasses. She looks to the Alaya with a tilt with her head point to the patient Mother Vastra and Jenny. "Are ye mothers join' to join us? Or do they need a special notice sent?"

Mother Vastra and Mother Jenny come to the table and take a small glass.

Alaya holds her glass up to her wife, "We Stayed."

Fiona holds her glass up to her wife, "We Stayed."

Alaya sips her small glass and winces as the whiskey immediately touches her tongue.

"Aye, my wee wife and her sensitive Silurian tongue. I shall kiss and make it better." Fiona then takes her glass, takes it one gulp and slams it on the table. "Did yoo feel that vibration?" Looking at her wife as she pours herself another shot.

Mother Vastra follows Fiona's lead and with one gulp down the glass of whiskey. Mother Jenny watched closely as just one eye twitched as the Whiskey burned down her throat.

Mother Jenny sniffs first then bravely takes it one gulp. She grabs Vastra's arm to steady herself as she catches her breath. "Now that the theatrics have been completed, Alaya please tell us what is going on."

Fiona smiles as she downs her glass of whiskey, pours herself another and sits while holding on a hunk of cheese. "Yes, Alaya please tell us what is going on, Eliza Doolittle has asked a question."

"Oi! What's goin' on?"

Alaya and Fiona burst out laughing.

"Alaya please tell your mothers what we are celebrating. Let them enjoy our happiness; they have witnesses more pain than anyone deserves." Fiona stands up, pours herself another shot of whiskey, picks up a piece of chocolate and plops back down on the chair.

Alaya is smiling at her Scottish wife and back to her mothers. She tenderly asks them to sit and proceeds to tell them of Fiona's desire to leave. Alaya explains to her mothers how it shocked her in therapy and decided to do what is best for herself. She hands them the letter she wrote years ago.
Fiona comes over and sits on her wife's lap and whispers, "I am scared of their reaction."

Alaya gives tender kisses and whispers back, "We can handle anything, together."

Fiona smiles.

Now they watch and wait.

Mother Jenny takes the bottle of whiskey and pours herself a glass. She looks to Fiona and Alaya, "You stayed." In one gulp she downs the whiskey and her body shutters like a cat coming out of water.

Mother Vastra sits quietly. Mother Jenny pours her wife a glass of whiskey. Mother Vastra grabs the glass and looks to her daughter and her daughter's wife, "You stayed," and swallows the liquid whole.

Mother Vastra leans forward and looks directly into Fiona's eyes, "Why did you stay?"

"Everyone depended on me. I could not walk away."

"Why do you stay?"

"My life is with Alaya."

Mother Vastra shakes her head, "No. Why do you stay?"

"I don't understand."

"Why do you stay? You are an American girl conceived one-hundred years ago and born in Scotland. You do not belong to 'Our London'. You are out of time. You mother April is no longer with us. You have the world to live … peaceful without a Silurian in sight. You could be Edinburgh right now instead of tasting your Scottish Whiskey on special occasion. Why do you stay?"

"I love my life with my family. I cherish every moment and I ache when I am gone. Throughout the day I wonder if Mother Jenny will have new photographs to show me, what is my Alaya doing at that very moment and what interesting book you are reading. These thoughts consume my mind in moments of peace. I want nothing more to come home and hear about your days. Even though you might think it is trivial … love, family, our lives are not trivial. Besides, the only person here that belongs to 'Our London' is Alaya. She is the reason we stay."

Mother Jenny pours everyone another glass of whiskey, "They stayed."

Everyone but Alaya swallows in one gulp.

Mother Vastra looks to Fiona, "If you would have not stayed … our peaceful moments would be consumed with with thoughts of your daily lives. Even the books you read ... I might not say it, but you are very much a part of our lives. You are correct, Alaya is the only one who actually belongs to 'Our London' but only because I stayed, because Jenny stayed. We are utterly dependent. If you leave, we all leave. We go together. If I had known … Jenny, April and I would have followed you anywhere."

"To protect me?"

"Because, Fiona, you are loved. If the only person, who actually belongs to this time-line is Alaya and she follows you ... what is holding us, your mother here in 'Our London' ... it is nothing. We
remained for our daughters."

Mother Jenny adds, "Besides, Vastra would have tracked you down within twelve hours."

Mother Vastra nods, "I would have found your girls in four hours."
Fiona has become a skilled physician, compassionate and by far an excellent surgeon. By 1914, the end of spring Alaya and Fiona's life has developed a ritual.

They focus on getting a good night sleep which means no longer eat dinner with the mothers instead when Fiona comes home they will share a sandwich and go straight to bed. Vastra installed blackout curtains to keep the room dark while Vastra and Jenny did their best to stay quiet a floor below. The mornings Fiona is home she will exercise with the family and have a healthy breakfast. The new routine and diet has help Fiona be at a healthy weight and doesn't seem so tired all the time.

Louisa and Flora are jealous

The calendar in the kitchen has big red circles around two dates on May twelfth and twenty-sixth, there are x's marked from the first to the tenth. Alaya looks at the clock on the wall it is after six pm and paces the kitchen while her mothers eat their stew.

"My dear, she will be home soon. Doesn't she usually call?"

"Yes, but nothing." Alaya gets up and heads downstairs and she stops on the landing. She licks the air, 'she's here' and runs down to open the door. She looks down and sees her Fiona just sitting on the front step watching children play. Alaya sits down next to her, "Hi."

Fiona lays her head on Alaya's cool shoulder. "Hi."

"Bad day?"

Fiona nods.

"You want to talk about it?"

"Not yet."

"I have been worried. You usually call if you are going to be late."

"Sorry. A patient died today."

"I am sorry."

"The mother was beyond resolve, it was her first girl in a string of boys. I have seen it many times before."

Alaya grabs her wife's hand and they both sit in silence watching the children play cricket, hoops and spinning tops. The laughter was healing Fiona's pain.

Fiona continued, "She had over seven boys and then this girl. She cries and the husband comes to comfort her with words "we will try again". Louisa calmly told the husband that it would not be advisable to have more children that his wife could die giving birth. He told her to keep out of their family business."

"Why do they insist on having children?"

"You wanted twelve."
"Only if you health would not be affected."

Alaya shivered as the cool spring breeze blows down the row.

Fiona sits up, "Let's go inside. Besides I am hungry."

"I can tolerate a few more minutes."

Fiona stands, "No, it is too cold. I do not want your Mothers upset at me for letting their precious child out in the cold." She tugs at her wife's arm until Alaya stands up. "I promise when the summer nights are warm we will spend more time outside."

"Do you want to talk about today inside?"

"No, I didn't want to come home with the stress. That is why I was outside. I need to learn to keep hospital issues at the hospital. I mean I will share with you my day, but I must learn to stop bringing the hospital issues home. It doesn't belong in our lives twenty-four hours a day."

"That is going to be tough, but we'll figure this out."

They went inside, had supper and went directly to bed. Fiona holds her wife a little tighter before she willed herself to sleep.
The August calendar has two circles around the seventh and twenty-fourth and an added mark on the fourth.

Vastra holds her wife close to her body as they sit in the kitchen, "We will be fine. We are prepared."

Alaya nods her head in agreement, "I believe we did the best we could. We must be diligent and keep to our assignments. How you feeling Mother Jenny?"

"I have face criminals in the dark alleys, taken down men twice my size, fought Cybermen, slashed down headless Monks ... I have been in battle. This is more difficult. My world is different. I have you and Fiona."

Vastra nods, "It will be difficult watching the world change. We will be tempted to share our knowledge with people we care about and feel responsible for their welfare."

"I am tempted to have an employee meeting to help them survive." Alaya confess to her mothers, "I don't. I think about my Fiona and the Titanic. How she wanted to stop the ship from leaving port. This is much bigger than any passenger ship."

"It is not just about knowing. We must be anonymous, unnamed to the point of being invisible ... even from our own government. I fear the consequences of our disclosure."

"That is mine also." Fiona talks as she enters the kitchen. She comes over and gives her wife an affectionate kiss. "Greeting Mothers, are there any last minute tasks I may assist in completing?" She sits down next to wife.

Alaya pulls her Fiona close, "We were just going over our list. Many tasks will be ongoing."

"It is quite warm in the kitchen. Are my favorite Silurians cold?"

"I was making the dried meat," Answers Mother Jenny.

"How does it taste?" Fiona directs her question to Mother Vastra.

"Leather."

Fiona laughs, "I don't know how to react. Do you like the taste of leather?"

Vastra smiles, "I would watch your tongue, I know where the whiskey is hidden."

Fiona instantly becomes sober and looks straight into Mother Vastra's eyes, "Alaya?"

"Yes?" Alaya also looking at her Mother Vastra.

"Did you hide the tea?" Fiona is staring at Mother Vastra.

"Yes I did." Alaya smiles.

Mother Vastra's eyes widen, "Oh I will find my tea."

Fiona widens her own eyes, "Alaya, dear, did you hide them in the medically sealed container as per my request?"
Alaya nods yes.

Mother Vastra smiles, "The game is afoot?"

"Where's my Whiskey?"

"A safe place. Where is my tea?"

"A much safer place."

Mother Vastra sits back and looks to her wife, "We were warned by April. I didn't take her seriously. I surmise Fiona is a bad influence on our daughter."

"I agree. Our daughter would never hide our tea from us. Our only agreeable drink in 'Our London'."

Fiona flops back in her seat, "Are we being a bit dramatic? Alaya are you as entertained as I?"

Alaya laughs spite the serious look she received from her mothers. "I believe that the game is quite fun. Who shall find their bounty first ... the Scottish Ginger with the will of a thousand Highlanders or the Silurian woman from the dawn of time? What shall be the reward?"

Mother Jenny has decided to follow her daughters in the fun, "Oh yes. There has to be something at stake. What will please them both or shall we think more towards the loser?"

Alaya ponders a moment and perks up, "The loser will have loo duty."

Mother Jenny applauds the idea.

"How exciting!" Alaya looks to her Mother Vastra and her wife Fiona, "Whoever finds their bounty the other will have loo duty for one month. Now shake on the agreement."

Fiona stands up and offers Mother Vastra, her hand.

Mother Vastra stands and withholds her hand, "There must be rules. One, the hidden location must be located in our residence. Two, If the bounty isn't found, it shall remain hidden even after the other's bounty has been retrieved. Agreed?" She offers her hand to Fiona.

Fiona quickly shakes Mother Vastra's hand, "Agreed. Good luck, you'll need it."

Alaya smiles to her Mother Jenny, "This is going to be interesting. Side wager on our wives?"

Mother Vastra, "You are betting on your wife locating her precious Scottish Whiskey against my tracking ability to find potent tea?"

"Dinner for a month?" Mother Jenny quickly offers her hand to her daughter.

"Of course." Alaya quickly shakes her mother's hand in agreement.

"What an interesting turn of events." Mother Vastra smiles at her small family.

"My dear, I am hungry. Do you have our sandwich?" Fiona asks her wife.

"Yes, do you want to try to get some sleep?"

"I am sorry, but I can't. Not tonight. Can we get comfortable in the drawing-room? I want to be with our family tonight."
Alaya nods in agreement, "I am glad. I didn't want to isolate us. I request that you try to get a little sleep. We shall be quiet."

That night as the clock strikes eleven the London street become crowded with pedestrians. Alaya slowly wakes her wife, "It has begun."

Fiona sits up, gathers herself, opens a window to the streets, "Please good Sir, what is the disturbance?"

"A crier is at Piccadilly Circus."

The small family gets on their coats and head downstairs. Fiona makes sure her wife coat is secure as Alaya touches her device to transform herself human, "Remember dear, stay close, I need to feel your coolness." She smiles watching Mother Vastra transforms from a proud Silurian into an ordinary human. Fiona looks to her Mother Vastra and wife Alaya, "Your eyes are still the same. Beautiful eyes."

They exit their home and walk with the crowd to Piccadilly Circus.

A man with a loud voice reads to the crowd the details Britain's decision to enter the war German and its consequent declaration against Germany, popular enthusiasm for the government's stance, led by Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, was overwhelming.

The crier repeats his announcement five more times.

The crowd grows with each reiterate, no one is returning home. Some hope for a change while others stir up their emotions.

Vastra holds her wife close as she hears negative words against the Germans. She looks to her daughter holding tight to her wife, Alaya looks to her mother and offers a warm smile.

Fiona pulls her wife close and whispers in her human ear. Alaya catches her Mother Vastra's eye and motion to go home.

Once inside, the sanctuary of their home Fiona breaks the silence. "I am sorry. I must go to bed. Alaya you may accompany your mothers and discuss the current matter."

"Yes, I would like to spend more time with my mothers. Thank you. I shall not be long." She kisses her wife on lips and watches her wife go up the stairs into their bedroom before she joins her mothers in the drawing-room.
Come On

Everything change as Great Britain declared war on Germany.

As everyone gathered around Vastra as she read the evening news, the door bell rang. Fiona was getting up to get the door as Alaya licked the air, "Flora and Louisa are here." Fiona, "Thank you dear, that was wonderful" and kisses Alaya on her cheek.

Fiona returned with the guests.

Louisa beam with pride, "We have good news my friends and sad news. First the good, we have permission and funds to set up women hospitals in France as part of the Women's Hospital Corps. Rumors have circulated that it will be a test towards putting two more women staffed hospitals in London."

Jenny asks, "The sad news?"

"We leave for France within a few days. I am so sorry my friends and our dear Fiona, but this is an opportunity. If France is able to use our women surgeons, why can't England? But I digress. We have news that will affect you Fiona."

Fiona grabs Alaya's arm, "What is it?"

"You name is on the top of the list to assist and possibly perform surgeries here in London."

"What list?"

"The military required us to give all our staff names and qualifications. You were highly recommended."

"I am honored. I will do my bet."

The doorbell rang. Fiona looked to her wife to find out who is at the door. Alaya immediately became shy, due to company. Fiona kissed her on the lips, and teases, "You know they were the first to ever see your tongue. I will be right back."

The discussion returned to the Women's Hospital Corps in France.

Vastra pulling out her maps, "Where will you have the hospitals?"

Flora points to the locations, "Here outside Paris and there in Wimereux. We won't be too far."

Louisa turning to Alaya, "Now for a bit of business. We in need uniforms. Do you have the staff?"

"Yes, what are you thinking?"

The discussion goes into the design, cloth and even costs. It isn't a huge profit, but any profit during wartime is always welcomed. Since most of the men enlisted, Alaya can easily hire more seamstresses. Flora liked the idea of more women working on Savile Row. As they discussed the number of buttons, Alaya turned to ask her wife's opinion, but she has not returned from answering the door. She immediately panicked and ran out the door.

She stopped as she sees her wife sitting on the landing. "Fiona," Talking to her back, "Please come in and join us as we talk fashion."
Fiona nods "no" and holds up a telegram.

Alaya takes it and reads it and has to grab the banister to support her balance.

Fiona starts to cry. Alaya finds her inner strength, scoops Fiona up and holds her close. Fiona wraps her arms around Alaya's neck as they kiss.

Vastra and Jenny come out to the landing. "Is there a problem?"

Without letting Fiona out of her arms, Alaya turns around and flaps the telegram she is holding.

Jenny grabs it and begins to read it, "Fiona Flint-Saint Clair report to Edinburgh War Office by September fourth noon ..." She hands it to Vastra and she cries into Vastra's arms.

Alaya carrying Fiona walks past everyone and takes her up to their bedroom for privacy.

Louisa pulls Flora close, "We need to make a phone call." Flora nods and hugs Louisa close.

Vastra questions, "What can you do?"

Flora responds with anxious eyes, "I have an old friend who lives in Glasgow and Edinburgh. She has somewhat of a powerful personality and connections."

Jenny offers a suggestion, "We have a dear family friend that moved to Glasgow after Alaya turned into her teen years. I suppose we could ..."

Vastra shaking her head no, "I do not think that is wise. Fiona would not understand our Turkish friend. Flora and Louisa you may use the phone in the drawing-room. She has medical school and obligations. This is madness."

"What are we going to do? Our family is being torn apart." Jenny goes into the kitchen to make tea.

Vastra follows and pulls her wife close.

Jenny can feel Vastra's heart beating fast with anxiety.

Louisa slams down the phone, "That damn woman. She can't do this!"

Vastra and Jenny with haste return to the drawing-room, "Do you have information?"

Flora holds Louisa close, "I used to be in a relationship with someone in Scotland. She is controlling and quite demanding." Fiona goes into details of her ex-lover and what has transpired over the past few weeks.

There is no solution. Their Scottish citizen must report to the Scottish war office.

Alaya and Fiona lay on the bed. Fiona is full of tears while trying to kiss her wife. "I don't want to go. Can't we just leave? We can go to an island somewhere and live out our lives?"

Alaya, "It seems there isn't a safe place to hide, my dear. The whole world is at war, we do not have anywhere to go, means of income ... it is not time yet for us to leave 'our London'. You need to finish your education."

Fiona, "At what cost? The price is too high." she dives into her wife's chest and cries.

Alaya holds her tight.
Fiona finally falls asleep of exhaustion around midnight. It is not a calm sleep as she has a nightmare after nightmare, each time Alaya wakes, kisses her and comforts her wife back to sleep.
Edinburgh

Dearest Alaya,

I am safe and will be working at the Edinburgh School of Medicine for Women. As the train came through Scotland I remember our honeymoon, our amazing time together. I hold on to that memory, your face and your cool touch.

I know how difficult it is to stay home. I was mentally prepared to deal with you following me. I will be fine. We know that this is just the beginning and we shall survive, if we stay the course.

Tell me, has Mother Vastra found her tea?

I live in a military dormitory with three other women. There is a table in the middle, a fireplace and two large windows to a cobble-stone courtyard. The first night I could not find a peaceful position to sleep, I miss your coolness. So in the middle of the night I rotated my bed against the wall, the wall was cool. It is a poor substitution and I finally did fall asleep.

I have three room-mates, but I must confess I do not want to make any close friends or allies. I want to keep to my books, do the expected work and come home. I become accustom to associate with strong independent women, two are crying every night. It is annoying.

On my first day it was twelve hours with paperwork, reading policy and sitting through lectures all in a wool itchy uniform. I miss my cricket outfit.

Tell Mother Vastra I found a private area for my morning exercises. With each move I close my eyes and imagine our gymnasium, I find peace. I will attempt to wake up at six to exercise, this way I know at least we are doing something together.

When you write Louisa and Flora tell them thank you, Doctor Elsie Inglis has been quite helpful and I am treading carefully. Elsie is a personality no match for Vastra.

All my work here will transfer to the London School of Medicine for Women, which means none of my education is on hold. Doctor Inglis has asked many questions about Flora and Louisa, too many for me to wonder if there was a previous relationship. I believe she was in a relationship with Flora.

In fact, Doctor Inglis offered to volunteered with Louisa and Flora. Louisa rejected her because "they had enough volunteers". I suspect a ruse to keep a friendly distance. Now Doctor Inglis is raising funds for her own military hospitals. I will keep you updated.

The lunch Mother Jenny packed I have carefully rationed everything, especially the sweets. I shall hold off until my heart can handle the tastes of home, I started to eat a custard pie when my eyes flooded with tears. Maybe you are right, I should quit medicine and go into dramatics, I would be home with you.

I have five minutes before the post goes out. I will write again soon.

Your Fiona

PS York is halfway between London and Edinburgh which is about four hours by train.
From London

My sweet Samson Girl,

Our home is not the same without you. As I read your letter over and over I wonder how I can make your time more pleasant. If you have any idea please let me know.

We are busy here in London. Your mother would be proud how we have hired more workers to meet the demands of our contracts.

I have enclosed a sketch Mother Vastra drew of us, she made two copies. Keep it safe.

I too have taken measures to make ensure I have an adequate night sleep as your replacement includes hot water bottles.

As far as your room-mates. I would be crying nightly, if I had ducts. Instead, I am in the gymnasium until my body protests.

Mother Vastra wants me to remind you to watch your stance make sure it's balanced, it is your weakness. I am just the messenger.

Also, Mother Vastra has not found the tea storage ... she is enjoying the hunt. She has looked throughout the house, and now is trying to analyze your habits to deduct it location. I am confident she will not find the container, since it is sealed her tongue is almost useless.

Six in the morning has become my favorite time of the day, I grab a garment to smell your scent. I look silly exercising with your green winter scarf around my neck. I am not going to wash anything worn by you.

Mother Jenny said you were correct as Flora and Elsie were a couple before Louisa came into the picture. Louisa said not to get too close, Elsie is demanding and short-tempered. I will write more details.

I am proud to let you know ... I have allowed Mr Gardner to take over the day-to-day tailor business as I have joined Women Police as most of the police officers have enter the military. I have taken on routine patrol work and a detective position. It is only temporary, as I am just a female.

Our Mothers have also taken temporary full-time positions with Scotland Yard. These day-to-day criminals are petty and the crimes are too easy to solve. Mother Vastra has taken the supportive role and allow Mother Jenny to lead most investigations. We have wonderful dinner conversations, but we miss hearing your voice.

Mother Vastra said your scent has dissipated and the family scent is all wrong.

Please enjoy this new challenge in your life, we shall be together soon enough.

I have enclosed five pounds. I know you didn't ask for any money. But my dear, please tell me of anything you might want or need. What if I was away from home, how would you take care of me? Please.

Your Alaya

PS York sounds like heaven.
What I Must Face

My Dearest,

I am very proud of you and your position of Detective. How do you like being on the force? Do you have a uniform? If so, describe it in detail, please.

I am sure mother Jenny and mother Vastra are taking great pride in their new positions. Mother Vastra taking a backseat? The world is changing.

Mr Gardner is an excellent candidate, he has been loyal to my mother for many years. I know he has three daughters, if you need any more help my mother mentioned one of his daughters having skills in accounting. It might be useful, since your detective work takes president, as it should. You have worked very hard to become a detective. I could not be more proud.

You will have to wear the perception device longer. Are there any side effects? What if the device gets damaged, do you have a backup?

The picture mother Vastra drew of us is always with me. I have a request, a leather pouch. Something small enough to hold the picture safe from moisture. It is more precious to me than money, it is my lifeline to you. I have spent one pound on more paper, stamps, one bottle of whiskey and the rest I am saving. I fear that my free time will come unexpected and will send a telegram immediately. I ache to see your beautiful brown eyes.

I have calculated it takes almost three days from the post office here in Edinburgh to reach Savile Row in London. I assure you I take our correspondence seriously, my heart aches as I write these words down ... I beg for your patience due to my limited energy. I do not tease or want to deny you my words, it is a matter of coming back to my room and choosing between sleeping against my cold wall or writing with tired eyes. I love you with all my heart and I hope you understand.

Today I witnesses the horrors of war as a man's facial skin melted. I assisted in the surgery to make sure the young man of eighteen could have vision, ability to breathe and mouth opening to eat. We worked diligently. I was angry when one of the nurses, Lucy, commented that he would never find love looking inhuman. "How could anyone love someone without lips or simply a face." My anger burned deep, but I calmly remarked under my mask, "Love is amazing. It can withstand the horrors of scars, it can see the beauty in the most uncommon places. I find, that at least in my life, a human face doesn't make the person." I found my boldness take over and I quickly recoiled. I felt like I unveiled something sacred.

Lucy became quiet. Elie said under her mask, "Hear! Hear!" and we continued on the surgery. After which I followed Elie out to the waiting room to update the family. The father and mother sat there holding hands listening to the Doctor describe what we did and what to expect. A young woman stood and demanded to see him as she is his fiancée, Cadha. The doctor ready Cadha for all the horrible things this man has gone through. The parents offered her exit out of their engagement to Brice. Cadha stood firm and demanded to see him. The doctor and I led her to his recuperating room where he was still in pain, but awake.

Lucy was there checking his pulse and watching his fluids. Brice opens his eyes as wide as possible and demanded that Cadha leave and never see him again. Cadha asked him (I write it in London's english, There is a close translation), "Do you deny me your love? I do not deny you mine. If you believe me a superficial woman who only loved you for your looks I am afraid you were not much to look at before this accident. I fell in love with you the moment you chased that ewe all over your land
finally to realize it wasn't yours. You didn't hesitate and we both walked that sheep two miles to McEwen's land. We talked about everything under the sun. The way to McEwen's you held the rope attached to the sheep but on the way back you held my hand."

Cadha grabbed Brice's hand tight and bent down kissed his healing lips. He flinched with pain. She quickly apologized, "You'll be well enough to kiss again. I can wait." She sat down and pulled book out of her bag, The Mysterious Island by Verne, and began reading to him. I kept calm all day. After of over six more hours of surgeries I went back to my bed, laid down with my back against the cool wall and cried into my pillow. I thought of you with my shaved head and in a million pieces. Your love is great for me and I shall never let you go.

I am better after my cry and I slept six hours straight with wonderful thoughts of my Alaya.

I am a hot water bottle? How easily I am replaced?

Tell Mother Vastra I am doing my best to support my balance, it is difficult to train without her leadership. Ha! I agree, she will never find the tea.

Elsie is travelling soon towards the front-line hospitals in Serbia. Rumour has it more are going overseas to work in the hospitals. They need doctors when the injuries are fresh, by the time they come to us the healing process has taken place and we are unable to fix anything without breaking the patient all over again.

I miss you terribly

Your Fiona

PS My schedule has been continuous with long days and sleepless nights. I do my best to take care of myself, but my mind will not rest. I worry about my family in London and miss just being in the same room with you. Please tell me how you survived New New York University for six years being by yourself. I am desperately scared of my loneliness.
My Dearest Fiona,

You are not easily replaced, the hot water bottle leaked on to the bed. I had to move to the drawing-room and slept near the fireplace to keep warm. Come home soon, I need my personal hot water bottle. Besides, you replaced me with a plastered wall!

Mother Vastra is taking great pride in mother Jenny’s skills. I have never doubted my mothers’ love and support of each other.

Being detective is very satisfying. I shall share stories, if there are any exciting to share. Mostly I sleuth theft and stupidity. I have conflicted desires: one for ‘our London’ to be safe and the other for me to have juicy crime to investigate. For now I will carry on and be ever diligent.

Thank you for advice on Mr Gardner’s daughters. Miss Alice Gardner is quite good with sums and accounting, we hired her directly. Miss Shaw and Miss Gardner became friends immediately. Which pleases me, I need my employees happy. I can't stop the war but at least when they work their minds can take a vacation from the loneliness, stress and even the loss of the war.

When I was at NNYU my Professor Snyder would, once a month, have an open office for students to gather for casual conversation - he called it "shooting the breeze". What do you think? Have such socialization with the women of the shop or is that too intimate?

I must wear the perception device while I am out of the house. Mother Vastra and I have developed headaches after the device is active longer than five hours. We learned to take breaks every four hours and turn off the device in private. I use the station loo, it is most embarrassing just sit on the cold seat waiting for my body to recover. I believe my Commanding Officer thinks I have poor bowels. I have started to bring book with me, I can usually read one chapter before turning on the device again. The headaches have subsided. I do carry a spare perception device, for when damage occurs. I appreciate your concern.

I hope the small pouch is suitable. I didn’t know how small. I tested it with my picture. Let me know immediately if it is not what you need and I shall send a new one with my next reply.

Three days? That is scandalous.

You chosen sleep over writing, the right decision. You must keep up your health and I understand my love. Take your time in writing. I believe if you must communicate urgently it will come in a form of telegram.

Tonight at dinner I shared your story of Brice and Cadha, we drank a toast in their name. I think of you with my veiled face and my scaled body. Yes, our love is great and we shall never let go.

I will do my best to help you cope with the loneliness.

It was difficult, especially as I sat in my dorm studying while my peers were laughing and playing in the halls. I wanted to join them but I reminded myself this time in NNYU was temporary. I focused on those things that would make my permanent life better. Everything was about something greater, your mother April understood that better than anyone I have ever known.

April knew the future and focused on your survival.
When I felt lonely I thought of my Mother Jenny disowned from her family, living by her wits and completely alone.

When I felt lonely I thought of my Mother Vastra stranded here alone without her family.

My mothers found each other, rescued and love each other ... what greater hope for me to hold to knowing that mother Vastra and Mother Jenny exist in this world. This crappy, hateful world even amazing wonderful things happen ... consider me, look towards yourself and think of us. We are the product of our family's misfortunes, love and ambitions. I would never be a detective without my mothers' influence, you a surgeon without your mother's influence and there would not be a Flint-Saint Clair Clan if our family raised us as the typical timid Victorian woman.

Hold on to hope. Hold on to the love your mother April offered freely. Cast all loneliness aside and make room for an amazing future. We have much to enjoy, many reasons for happiness and above all we have each other. Dare to be brave.

Don't let the loneliness win. You are my Samson girl and you can take it from here.

How is Elise? Will you be sent overseas? They can't force you to go.

I miss you terribly

Your Alaya

PS The tea is safe and secure.
Hostage

My Dearest Alaya,

I miss you.

Our dear Miss Shaw has been receptionist for my mother from the age of 12 starting out as cleaning up after the tailors. Mother sent her to night school for secretary. I hope she is pleased with her growing responsibilities. Do have a small chat. Also, do keep her heart safe. She suffers as you and I do with Adhesive love.

I think that it is wonderful to being social with the women at the shop. It is morale boosting at the simplest form. Tea, sandwiches and gossip always cures Mother Jenny. Go to her with the idea, I am sure she would enjoy the challenge.

My poor Alaya with that damn device. In many middle eastern cultures women have to hide behind a niqab as their face is only to be seen by their husbands. I find it deplorable that you must hide behind a costume, you are beautiful ... your body is much to be desired by me. Oh how I miss our marriage bed. Retortum ad nates!

The small pouch is suitable is perfect, I keep it safe.

You write of dinner, how much I miss our shared turkey sandwich. Food here is limited and I rarely have an opportunity for anything other than broth and bread.

Your words of wisdom and sharing your NNYU experience was exactly what I needed to read. Yes, my dear, this is only temporary and I shall focus on those that will make our permanent life better. It has added the desire to be successful here even though I am held hostage academically by Elsie.

Oh do I detest that Elise woman more and more. She is absolutely obscene and has the most scurrilous language. I find her unacceptable as a human. How did Fiona ever fall for such a woman. She is constantly given to filthy and abusive speech to the staff. She loves to argue and is constantly trying to rouse me into a debate about the world. I pretend to be inept in the skills of disputation. She becomes frustrated and seeks out a a new target.

Elise is holding our future hostage. She has threatened time and time again that if I leave or do not do as she requests professionally I will not qualify as a doctor ... she is holding my credentials hostage. I went directly to the nearest store to purchase a bound diary. I will keep a daily log of all my medical activities including surgeries, patient interaction, pre-op and post operation monitoring. I will serve Our Queen with dignity and respect, but I do not trust Elise with our future. The diary, pencils and sharpener has left with me little funds which have been spend on the postage. Please send a few pounds with your next letter.

There are women here that go to the pub and return to their beds passed out. I would like to join them, but I have no desire to be in a stupor and then perform surgeries the next day. I want my skills to be pushed. I am the first to in line to handle the serious cases, not just the simple amputations. I want to repair, not just cut and move on. These are living beings they have my full attention.

I am very pleased our mothers did not raise us as the typical timid Victorian woman. What a dreadful thought to be a clone of everyone else ... I have decided a few years back that I do not want a "normal" life. It has been my second most freeing moment. The first, was when I lived with my Mother April and I woke up from my studies to find the message cylinder with your confessional
response, Oh how I wanted to be your Verena. I wanted you to be at my window every night. Little
did I know what surprises I found in my Verena. I have no regrets of the past ... the terrible things I
have witnesses, gone through and suffered was the shortest distance in having your in my life. Oh
how I love our life and our future will be just as adventurous.

I will hold on to hope, your love and our mothers' unconditional love. I will be brave and I will do
my best to find moments of happiness.

My heart aches for you.

Your Fiona

PS I have been thinking, you only drink sweet wines and tea. Is your tongue that sensitive? Take the
challenge to try new drinks ... go to the books store and buy for us Straub's Manual of Mixed Drinks.
See which mixture fits your palette better. I wonder if there is a drink that would be perfect for each
literary escapes. What would go well with a mystery? How about which drink will be best for you
when we watch a cricket match? Play cards?
Dear Fiona,

I had my first social gathering after work. I served tea, punch and small sandwiches. It was enjoyable. It was such a good experience for mother Jenny and I believe we shall do it again next month. I believe mother Jenny enjoyed the gossip the most.

I decided to ask Miss Shaw for tea. I took the opportunity to learn how he came to work for April, her training and where does she see herself in the future. It seems she would like to travel and see other parts of the world, especially when the war is over. She has been saving her earnings, living frugally and limits her expenses. When I asked if there was anyone special in her life, she responded no. Her body language suggested protecting otherwise. I told her of our dearest friends Louisa and Fiona, and told the story of how Louisa became brave. She lit up and asked, "How did she know when to be brave?". I answered honestly, that I didn't know.

Miss Shaw asked if I had someone special in my life. I replied that I have been lucky in my life where someone else was brave, all I needed to develop patience. She asked who became brave for me. I didn't want to give up our autonomy, but I felt this young woman's pain. I confessed our love, but never unveiled my true half-Silurian self. She smiled. I asked why the smile? She replied, "I suspected." She promised to keep our secret. I thanked her, but to be sure of our privacy she must confess a secret of equal value. Miss Shaw fancies Miss Alice Gardner!

I need to know, honestly ... are you eating? I have enclosed twenty pounds, please go to the bakery and butcher for proper food. I beg of you.

We all are in agreement, Elsie is not a person we would want in our lives. Louisa said a personal journal is an excellent idea. The medical school will type your logs into your official file. Keep your diary safe. When we see each other we can swap it out for a new diary. I will make sure Miss Shaw types everything before I hand it over to Louisa. Elise will not hold your career hostage, period.

I went out to buy the mixed drink book but put it back on the shelf. I decided to wait until you are home to do such a fun project.

Are you worried if I happy (under the circumstances). How happy are you? Don't you get caught up in your surgeries? Do you know feel stronger achieving something? Do you see sadness all around, but think of me and smile. I am the same way. I come home from from a rewarding day and feel like I have accomplish something. You do not have to worry about me.

I know we shall be together soon. We are amazing women who have achieved so much, your mother would be proud. So if part of your brain thinks I sit in the corner waiting for you to come home ... erase that thought immediately. I feel your love all the way here in London and at night I dream of you. The most traumatic time for me is morning. My bed is cool and my dreams ends. I am lucky because I have my mothers and daily exercise. What do you to face your day?

Our tea is safe. Mother Vastra is frustrated.

Your Alaya

PS When do you have a few days off?
Alaya is looking into each cabin window as the train slowly comes into station. She desperately attempts to locate her special redhead in a sea of olive uniforms. "Alaya!" She quickly turns to her left and gently fights the crowd towards the voice, "Fiona!"

A hand waving a hat is bobbing up and down.

Alaya weaves in and out of the crowd, moving towards the waving hat and soon there she is ... her wife. She quickly grabs Fiona's hand and leads her towards a waiting taxi. "The Golden Fleece 16 Pavement, Please." Fiona and Alaya sit in silence for the entire five-minute cab ride. Alaya gets out, "Remain here, please." Fiona listens and sits back into the taxi.

Alaya returns to fetch Alaya and pays the taxi with a generous tip, "Who shall we call when we return to the station?"

"Paul Miss, just tell them at the pub. They will know to fetch me."

"Thank you, Paul, for taking care of my sister and I." After the taxi leaves Alaya offers a smile, "I have two rooms, we must keep up the charade for our safety. I hope you do not mind."

"Not at all. It is good to see you."

Once Fiona in her room she waits patiently as the adjoining door opens. Alaya instantly scoops her wife up and holds her tight. Fiona breaks instantly crying in her arms. It is the one place Fiona finds safe enough to allow herself to fall into pieces.

Alaya carries her wife to the bed and sits holding her as she cries. This is when she notices how thin Fiona has become and is pleased with herself for ordering a feast when she checked-in.

Alaya hears a knock on her room's door, "I will be but a moment." She gets the room service and leaves a handsome tip, "My sister and I have a single night for R&R please respect our privacy. Is this enough to secure our request?"

The bellhop looks down and nods.

Alaya brings the food into Fiona's designated room and sets up dinner on the small bistro table. "Fiona we must eat. I have not eaten for almost seven hours. Please join me."

Fiona wipes her tears away and sits down to feast. It pleases Alaya as Fiona eats healthy portions. "Do they not feed you at the Hospital?"

"Supplies are limited and funds are low."

"Is there a store to buy more food?"

Fiona nods yes.

"What do you do with the money I sent with each letter?"

Fiona looks down to her plate of food. "Please I am not upset, just curious."
"I do what I can."

"When do you eat?"

"When I am able."

"When is that?"

"The woman worked in terrible conditions, often working themselves to exhaustion and going without food, sleep and regard to their own safety. I barely have time to sleep or for a proper meal. The whole organization is poorly managed."

"Fiona, what can I do?"

"There is nothing. I would buy food if there was time to buy food." Fiona opens the leather pouch and pulls out the folded picture and over twenty pounds.

"We must find a solution."

Fiona whispers softly looking at her plate of food, "Of course, but I have to return tomorrow evening. We can bicker in our letters. Unless I am too thin you don't find me attractive."

"Please eat Fiona. We have all night."

Fiona smiles, "I must tell you, I find your detective uniform fetching."

Alaya blushed, "What do you want to do now? We can go for a walk. Sit and read."

"Would a hot bath be too boring?"

"Not at all."

Fiona soaks in the tub with steam filling up the room. Alaya sits down the side of the tub enjoying the humidity.

"Tell me, any news concerning Miss Shaw and Miss Alice Gardner?"

Alaya lights up, "At first I wasn't sure. Then there were a few signs."

"For example?"

"Miss Gardner started to keep her office open, even when the shop becomes noisy. Miss Gardner lingers when she enters enters the establishment. I have never seen anyone take off their coat so slowly."

Fiona laughs loudly at the image in her mind.

"Your laugh, it warms my heart." Alaya continues, "When I managed the business, at the end of the day, Miss Shaw would bring the daily registry for me to go over and put into the safe. Now that Miss Gardner is in charge of accounts, Miss Shaw delivers them only after everyone else has left. Miss Shaw waits at her desk until Miss Gardner is completed her work. They always wish each other a good night. Miss Shaw pretends to be busy to make sure Miss Gardner doesn't stay too late. Their dance begins again the next day."

"That actually sounds quite cute and sad at the same time."
"Patience Doctor. Someone became brave."

"Miss Shaw?"

"Yes! Good Guess."

"You are stalling, please tell me." Fiona splashes her wife.

"Okay, okay ... One morning Miss Gardner was doing her slow waltz removing her coat..." Alaya shares how Miss Shaw became brave.

"Oh, you will keep me updated."

"Finding a spark of love when the world is forever changing. We shall keep an eye on them."

"What of Mr. Gardner? He is an astute man. He seems kind, but you can never tell what someone is like behind closed doors."

"Miss Shaw doesn't know how to handle the situation. For them the war is an opportunity of independence. If this was any other time it would have raised questions."

They stay awake as long as possible enjoying being together as friends, family and lovers enveloped in their scents. It is not until three in the morning they finally fall asleep in each other's arms. Alaya barely sleeps as her heart breaks into tiny pieces as she feels her wife's heartbeat reacting to nightmares. She does not dare wake her, sleep even if restless is better than none at all.

Soon the sun is shining and they have to leave the comforts of their private room. Paul is waiting for Alaya and Fiona to emerge from the Golden Fleece, "Thank you Paul. Please take us to the Rail station, but first can we stop off at a local bakery?"

Paul nods and quickly goes to bakery down the street.

Alaya gets out, "Fiona wait here, please."

Fifteen minutes later Alaya comes out of the bakery with a large bundle and gets into the taxi, "To the rail station, Paul."

They have just a moment as Fiona train is first to arrive, Alaya, "I have brown breads, ginger breads, whole oats and other essentials. This should last you more than week, even if you share with your room-mates"

Fiona nods and takes the large bundle. She hugs her wife, grabbing tight as she pulls in the coolness and whispers, "I love you with all that I am."

Alaya whispers back soaking up her wife's warmth, "I love you too."

Fiona gets on the train after the last warning whistle and waves good-bye.

Alaya stands there watching the train slowly disappear around the bend.

Fiona settles down in the train. She reminds herself be calm, she will see Alaya again. She didn't have the heart to tell her she leaving for Belgium in two days.
Miss Shaw waited until the coat was successfully hung, "Miss Gardner do drink coffee or tea?"

"I drink both." Miss Gardner’s feet have not moved from the coat rack.

"Do you have a preference in the mornings?"

"I do like coffee to start the day."

"How you like your coffee?"

"Cream only, please."

Miss Shaw nods and leaves the entrance.

Miss Gardner finds her footing and goes to her office to begin her day.

Miss Shaw knocks on Miss Gardner’s door frame.

"Please come ..." Miss Gardner smiles as Miss Shaw has a tray with biscuits and two coffees.

"I always have a cup of coffee with a small breakfast before I leave for work. I would like you to join me."

"That would please me."

"I do not think it would be respectable if you come to my humble flat for breakfast ..."

"Why not?"

"Miss Gardner! What would people think?"

"Does it matter?"

"Yes. No. You would not feel more comfortable here?"

"I don’t know how to answer."

"What is holding back a response?"

"What is your reason behind the intimate socialization?"

The front door bell rings. Miss Shaw with haste exits Miss Gardner’s office.

Miss Gardner drinks her coffee with a smile. She notices that Miss Shaw has not taken her cup with her. She takes 1/2 the biscuits and places her cup on her desk. She carries the tray with the remaining biscuits and coffee mug to Miss Shaw's receptionist desk.

"Here is your coffee and biscuits."

"Thank you. Sorry for the interruption. It was a delivery." Miss Shaw takes the tray and places it next to her.

Miss Gardner smiles and examines Miss Shaw for hints of further conversation.
Miss Shaw simply offers an intimate smile but remains composed as the tailor shop and investigations agency starts to buzz the noise of business.

Miss Gardner returns to her office, this time she quietly closes the door.

Miss Shaw is her usual efficient and professional self all day. Yet every time she passed by the accountant's closed door has her heart became distressed.

It wasn't until the last employee left for the day Miss Shaw grabbed the daily registry and knocks on the accountant's door.

"Come in," Miss Gardner give in an authoritative tone.

"Here is today's registry." Miss Shaw hands it over to Miss Gardner.

Miss Gardner takes it without looking up, "Thank you Miss Shaw."

Miss Shaw then walks out the door back to her desk, her bravery has been completely lost. She is planning another night of cheap wine, buttered bread and a well written mystery.

Miss Gardner passes Miss Shaw with determination to put on her coat. "Miss Shaw."

Miss Shaw stands and offers a genuine smile. "Yes Miss Gardner."

"Is your work day completed or are there other duties?"

"All is done."

"Today is Friday and the end of our work week, what are your plans tonight?"

"I unwind with a glass of wine, humble supper and a good book."

"That sounds delightful. Are you a good cook?" Miss Gardner lifts her head to notice that Miss Shaw has quietly walked across the room and is now putting on her coat.

"Oh dear me, no I am a terrible cook. I do what I can. What are your plans?" Miss Shaw is genuinely interested.

"I usually go home, supper with my family and then read in my room," Miss Gardner blushes and talks in a whisper, "But ... I ... " Tears start to build up in Miss Gardner’s eyes.

Miss Shaw heart is cracked instantly and fights pulling Miss Gardner into a hug. "Please, Miss Gardner ... I do not want to cause any undo stress." She gathers herself, "I am sorry if I offended you, trying to become too familiar. I am sorry."

"I am not." Whispers Miss Gardner.

"W ... What did you say? Your whisper is so soft I could hardly hear." Miss Shaw needs to hear those three words again, to be sure.

Miss Gardner looks up with soft wet eyes, "I am not offended."

"You are not offended?"

Miss Gardner shakes her head no.
"No you are not offended?" Miss Shaw is clarifying a second time. It might seem like she is double checking, but Miss Gardner can understand her need to be certain. Miss Gardner is an accountant.

"Truly?"

"Truly."

"You said that you usually go home and have supper with your family. What are your plans tonight?"

"I told my family I will not be home tonight, as I have plans."

"What are your plans?"

"I actually do not know."

"My goodness Miss Gardner, you have my head spinning. Do you have plans or not?"

"I have plans, but they are dependent on various outcomes. I could still be heading home. I am not quite sure."

"Miss Gardner I am truly trying to follow you. I want to understand. If you are cautious to avoid hurting my feelings, please don't."

"I am trying to explain," Miss Gardner looks directly into Miss Shaw's eyes, "What could I say that would hurt your feelings?"

"Oh Miss Gardner."

Miss Shaw is completely exhausted and resigns herself to believe is all a terrible mistake. "You are a breath of fresh air of wonderful innocence. Go home to your family. I will escort you out." She opens the door to exit their place of employment and head to their individual homes.

Miss Gardner replies in harsh whisper. "Miss Shaw I thought we understood each other."

"Miss Gardner?" She closes the door and whispers back, "I am not a young child. I am almost nineteen and you are eighteen we are grown woman with responsibilities. I am tired and now emotionally drained beyond my expectations. Please release me ..."

"N ... n ... no."

"... from this conversation."

Silence.

"I am hungry. I have not had a bite to eat today. Please let us go home."

Miss Gardner walks through with Miss Shaw following and closing the door behind. Miss Gardner walks to the pavement and halts.

"Miss Gardner?"

"I do not know which direction to turn."

"Which direction do you regularly take when heading to your parent's home."

"I am not heading to my parent's home."
"You said you were hungry and going home."

"I am, but I didn't say I was heading to my parent's home."

"Good evening Miss Gardner. I wish you success in finding your destination and please don't starve." Miss Shaw feels like her mind is going in circles and heads to her flat. She heads north on Savile Row and begins to go through her morning, the plan she has carefully acted out has failed miserably. Left onto Clifford Street she mentally chastise herself for making any attempt at being brave. As she turns right onto New Bond Street she is resolved as to end this pursuit. By the time she puts the key in the door at number 47, she argued Miss Gardner probably doesn't have any desire to leave London, let alone to see another country. 'It is all for the best'.

"Miss Shaw?" A soft voice comes from the right.

She knows that voice. It is the same voice that haunts her dreams. "Miss Gardner, I didn't know you were going in my direction. I am sorry. I would have accompanied you, at least this far."

"I do not know the directions home."

"Good night Miss Gardner. You have me so confused." Miss Shaw whispers as she enters the through the now open door.

"Then we are at the same mental state. I have been confused since our coffee." Miss Gardner softly admits and steps directly behind Miss Shaw into the entrance.

"Miss Gardner, please ... explain yourself." She gently inquired looking straight ahead feeling the woman presence behind protecting her from the cool breeze flowing in the doorway.

"Miss Shaw, I believe that we should continue this discussion in private." She gently encourages Miss Shaw to continue as usual.

She takes a deep breath, turns, goes around Miss Gardner, closes the door and returns to take lead up to her flat. She feels obligated to explain her humble dwellings but decides to remain quiet.

They reach the fourth floor to flat four-d, the rear of the building, Miss Shaw unlocks the door and continues inside.

With the door closed. Miss Shaw takes off her hat and coat and places them on hooks along the wall. She removes an umbrella to make space for Miss Gardner’s things.

"Thank you." Miss Gardner decides to slowly take her coat off, as she does every morning. To linger near Miss Shaw has always been her quest, now it is a private dance. She blushes.

"You said you were hungry. I do not have much, but I can make something."

"I thought you said you couldn't cook."

"That is true."

"What were you going to have for dinner?"

"Buttered bread, a glass of wine and continue to read a mystery."

"Oh. Is there a grocery store nearby?"

"Yes, at the end of the block, towards Saint George. Why?"
Miss Gardner puts back on her coat. "I shall be back. I shall ring when I return." She exits the flat leaving Miss Shaw standing dumbfounded.

She wakes from the stupor. She looks around her one room flat and starts to organize things, fold clothes, clean up the kitchen and cleans the shared water closet in the front of the building. She is grateful that her floor is women only and that the residents are neat. She returns to her flat and quickly dusts. Once satisfied she opens a bottle wine and lets it breath, pulls the two glasses out of the cabinet and holds them up to make sure they are clean.

The bell rings. She goes down to the ground floor and opens the door to find Miss Gardner carrying a small box.

"I hope you are as hungry as I am."

Miss Shaw leads Miss Gardner again to her flat, she remains calm even though her heart is beating loudly in her ears.

Once inside flat four-d Miss Gardner takes over the small kitchen. "I see you have let the wine breath. Thank you. Also, I forgot to ask if you were religious."

"Miss Gardner I was raised Catholic, but I do not follow any sort of religion in my personal life."

"I decided to it would be safe to buy fish and vegetables. I do not want to force meat on Friday."

"Miss Gardner, are you religious?"

"I am not religious. My name is Alice. Please call me by my first name." She cuts a leak, puts in a bit of butter in the pan.

"It is too informal. Miss Gardner."

"May I ask a few questions, as I tend to dinner?"

Miss Shaw goes over to the wine, pours into the two glasses, hands one to Alice and responds, "You may, Miss Gardner."

Alice takes a sip of her wine, "MMM ... nice. Why did you bring me coffee today?"

Miss Shaw walks to the other side of the small flat looking out the window. "I wanted to share breakfast with you and I was hoping it would be a regular daily activity."

"I want that too. We were interrupted after I asked for your reason behind the intimate socialization. May I have a response?" She takes out a fish fillet and places in the butter pan with the soften leaks. "I have to watch the food. Therefore you can avoid eye contact for a bit of privacy in your lovely home."

'My lovely home, she said I had a lovely home' Miss Shaw takes another sip of wine, a deep breath and opens her mouth to have nothing come out. Miss Shaw talks to herself 'Alice, that is a lovely name. But too many women are named Alice because of either the princess or the book ... she needs to be called something more appropriate nickname. Al is too masculine, it is not appealing to fall from my lips. Allie is nice. I like that, it is feminine and awfully cute. I shall be brave and call her Allie, at least in my private thoughts.' She finds her voice, "I wanted to court you." She takes another sip of her wine and is prepared for Allie to leave instantly out of her life.

Allie doesn't stop watching the dinner cook. She takes a sip of her wine, another and then another.
The glass is empty. "I thought we were. We have been acting like my sisters and their beaus before they were married. I just assumed you felt the same way." She goes to sip the glass of wine to notice it is empty. She takes the pan off the stove and transfer the food to the two plates. "Please fill our glasses for dinner."

Allie places down the two plates next to the already set table and sits in a chair waiting for Miss Shaw to return with the wine.

Miss Shaw sits across the table looking at such a plate of food. "This looks amazing. It smells delightful. Thank you, Miss Gardner." She dares to look at her Allie. 'Yes, she is her Allie. I am going to be brave.' "You are correct, I do feel the same way. You are my Allie."

Allie smiles from ear to ear, "Please eat and enjoy. What is your name please?"

"Victoria."

"Victoria, after the queen?"

Victoria nods yes as she enjoys the first bite of dinner. "Oh my dear this is delicious. How did you ever learn to cook?"

"My mother said that if we are good cooks we shall have our choice of husbands. Little did she know that I was learning to cook for my future wife."

Victoria coughs a bit.

"I am sorry I said too much."

"No, my Allie, you just caught me off guard with your frankness. You are not this open at work."

"I am not at work. Are you reserved in your home as you are at work?"

"I don't think so. I have lived alone since I have been twelve."

"Twelve?"

"Yes, my parents died and I came to work for Mrs April Saint Clair cleaning up after the tailors and worked my way with education to a stable position."

"I am sorry for your loss. I am grateful for Mrs April Saint Clair was there to watch over you."

"You keep a clean home. Much better than my shared room at my parent's house."

"You share a room?"

"I share with my siblings. There is no privacy, quiet moment or ..." Allie starts to turn bright red. "I like that you call me Allie. It is nice. Nobody calls me that."

"Good."

"Do you have friends that call you anything other hand Victoria?"

"No."

"My dear, do you have friends?"
"No."

"What do you do with your free time?"

"I go to the park, museums, and the library."

"I enjoy all three of those things."

"Good."

"May I give you a nickname?"

"I do not know ..."

"Tori?"

Silence. Victoria is thinking.

"Please share your thoughts out loud. I want to hear. I imagine being alone you must ache for your voice to be heard."

"Tori is very uncommon."

"That is a good thing."

"Tori? Please use it in a sentence. I will close my eyes and listen." Victoria closes her eyes and waits for her Allie to utter the nickname. She is waiting. Warmth. 'I am being kissed. I should kiss back.'

Allie stops kissing and leans over to Victoria's ear, "Dearest Tori, I want to spend the rest of my life with you. I am home."

Allie goes back to her seat and eats her food.

Tori's face is flushed. "I ... I like Tori. It is acceptable."

"The rest of my words?"

"We have much to discuss."

"What do we need to discuss?"

"The future. I have plans and dreams I do not want to give up on pursuing."

"Tell me."

"To leave London when I am older and spend the rest of my life seeing the world."

"Wow! Leave Great Britain and never return?"

"Yes."

"When do you plan on leaving?"

"Ten or twenty years. It depends on my savings."

"Have you always wanted to leave?"
"Yes. I have read books of places, viewed pictures but I want to see the world with my own eyes. I want to feel the sand of Egypt between my toes. I want to watch the monks of China. Listen to the music of the Americas. There is a wonderful world and I want to see as much as possible."

"That takes money and health."

"I have been saving since I have been working. What of your future?"

"It is with you. I thought we established that." Allie gulps her glass of wine, gets up and goes to where her coat is hung. She opens her handbag and pulls out a ribbon bound diary. She returns to her seat, "What if I told you that I never wanted to leave London."

Tori looks down at her empty plate, drinks the last of her wine and pours Allie and herself the last of the bottle evenly. "I have thought of that. I would be damn to choose."

"My Tori, please open this." Allie hands her the diary.

Allie gently unties the ribbon and opens the diary to see headings of different countries. Under each are book titles, associated check list of things to see in that country and food to taste. She flips through and goes back to the front. "What is this?" as she point to an item of food listed under Bahamas.

"Yucca, the 'Y' sounds like a 'J'. It is a root that is a favourite food boiled or fried."

"Thank you. You are more organized. I just have been pointing to a map and find books on the subject. How long have you kept this diary?"

"I started when I was eleven years old. Of course it was transcribe and organized alphabetically later, but the concept has always been the same." Allie can't help smiling.

"Have you been saving?"

"My dear Tori, my job is accounts." Allie rolls her eyes. "I have been frugal with my choices. Even tonight dinner was inexpensive."

"What did it cost for our meals?"

"5p divided by two that is less than 2.5p for us individually. It is cheaper than the slice of bread with butter you would have had and healthier."

"How is that possible?"

"Patience. The mongers were leaving the square. It would not have been profitable to have day old fish. The leek was less than 1p and I bought a carrot 1p. We will make soup tonight so that we can eat well again tomorrow night with your bread. How does that sound?"

"Tomorrow?"

"Yes my Tori, tomorrow."
Alaya arranges home and discusses the issues with her mothers.
"She was thin as my finger ..."
The doorbell rings.
Jenny, "I will get it."

Vastra licks the air and informs her wife and daughter, "It is a telegram."

Jenny returns shortly and hands it to her daughter. She pulls her daughter close as Alaya reads to herself.

Alaya stands shocked, "Why didn't she tell me?" She hands the telegram to her Mother Vastra. Begging to understand she looks to her Mother Vastra, "Why didn't she say something?" Desperate for an answer she looks to her Mother Jenny, "Nothing, not a hint. Why?"

Alaya collapsed back into her seat, sitting stunned.
"She didn't want to ruin what little time you had with sad news."
"She held the burden herself."
"She held the burden so that you could have hope for a moment."

Alaya sits there, staring out the window.
"Would you like to head to the gym?" Mother Vastra asks as she is prepared to stand.

Alaya shakes her head slowly no. Mother Vastra returns to her seat.
"Would you like some tea?" Mother Jenny offers for comfort.

Alaya shakes her head slowly no.

Jenny makes tea as Vastra sits by her daughter's side. Once the tea is done Jenny places a cup in front of Vastra, her daughter and takes a cup for herself.

They sit for an hour, waiting for Alaya to wake from her thoughts.
"Together. We are supposed to go together." Is finally uttered from Alaya's mouth.

"Not this time." Mother Vastra attempts to adjust her daughter's train of thought.

"Why not? I could be of use. I would tend wounds, I have the ability. I know how to clean. I don't need much."

"You would have to wear your perception device everyday, all day." Mother Jenny offers as an counter.

"I would find privacy."
"Not during a war." Mother Vastra offers information based on reality. She needs her daughter to
think realistically not decide on some romantic notion.

"I can." Alaya looks to her Mother Vastra.

"You won't have opportunity."

"I will make an opportunity."

"Not during war. There is never privacy."

"I am going to be with her." Alaya gets up, walks through the door and up the stairs to pack.

Mother Jenny, from her knotted throat, speaks to her daughter, "Dearest Alaya. If this is your choice, I wish you a quick death."

Mother Vastra runs to her wife's side, holds her close and feels her strong human wife become utterly weak. Mother Jenny cries into her wife's beating chest.

Alaya is at the kitchen entrance. "Why would you say such a thing?"

Mother Vastra pulls from her her inside pocket a sealed envelope. "Read this and be educated. Your mother just verbalize the words from her nightmares."

My Lovely Wife,

I have talked with your mothers intensively and we both agree that the best course of action is to speak of this only if it is completely necessary. Which means it is a dire situation.

If you and your mothers are able to leave for safety, the do so immediately. Leave a note in the safe-deposit box and I shall follow directly.

If you are tempted to follow me, don't. I know we said we would face life together, but this war will not allow that possibility. You can't follow me, it is imperative that you remain with your Mothers no matter what happens. This is not a negotiation, it a demand.

My biggest fear is that you come find me during this war. You have given me reason to believe you will let your emotions dictate your actions. I find your passion amazing, it is something I cherish in my memories. I feel your passion when we are sitting in the drawing room reading side by side. When we are in the bedroom ... the sounds you make, the scent we produce and that magical tongue. My dear, your passion is our greatest asset when we are together.

It also can be a curse.

If you knew that you could bring me home without consequence I would absolutely be grateful for the rescue. But that action will leave a residue and possibly ruin my career, your life, your mothers lives and our future.

What do you think happens when great scientific minds or military leaders find out about a woman who has the secret to fountain of youth in her blood?

They will use your Mother Jenny's body and drain her blood like a farmer does with milking cows. They will drain her blood within a inch of her life and then start again once her body naturally replenishes itself. They will repeat the process until she is dead and then dissect her to analyse each of her organs, like when I dissected a frog in primary school.
What do you think they will do when a half-human half-Silurian is the key to a super army?

They will do the exact same thing to you. They will cut your tongue to figure out how it works. They will cut our your ears to produce a military with sensitive hearing. They will cut you open, without pain relief, because you aren't human. They will force your body to stay alive and use you until your die of old age. After which every single part of you will be catalogued, recorded and stored in jars. Even your scales will be taken off one by one.

What do you think they will do if they find a Silurian warrior with strength of ten men?

You Mother Vastra's bacteria will be used to produce the ideal race of super humans. They will not care how tender your Mother is to you. They will not care how her sisters were accidentally murdered. They will not care that your Mother is a loving person. They will not care about her service to the crown. Dire times of war all sacrifices are expected, your mother's would be most significant.

You three are a prize.

You are a gift, a weapon to their survival and superiority.

You must not let that happen.

I am afraid my Mother April is correct, the world is changing. We must be cautious of our identities at all times.

A hasty decision could have been the beginning of the unravelling to the detrimental of us all.

Stay with your mothers.

I love you.

Your Wife Fiona Flint-Saint Clair

PS Think of our future. What shall we name our first born?

Alaya collapses on to the kitchen floor.

Jenny runs to her side, "She has fainted. Please get Fiona's medical kit from the cabinet. It is small zipped bag with the red cross symbol."

"Silurians do not faint."

Jenny calmly corrected Vastra while tending Alaya, "Your daughter is half-Silurian."

Jenny brings herself to hold Alaya's head on her lap. Vastra hands her wife the medical kit.

Jenny pulls out a small tube and breaks it. She passes it under Alaya's nose and nothing happens, Jenny looks up to her wife, "She needs to smell this."

Vastra nods and carefully takes the tongue and dips it into the small white tube.

Alaya eyes pop open.

"You fainted dear."
Alaya sits up, "Silurians do not faint."

Vastra looks to her daughter, "You are half-human." She offers her daughter a hand to stand.

As she is finds her bearings, Alaya looks to her mothers, "Do you agree with this letter?"

"My dearest Alaya, yes. That is why we are always cautious." Mother Jenny confesses.

Jenny and Vastra are arm locked.

"From the moment we were in each others lives, before we loved freely ... we knew the cruelty of the universe. You have witnesses most by being on the side of the victor. You have seen the ugliness since you were a child, but we always defeated and won in the end. You have never seen the earlier days, before you were born, our scars, our wounds ..."

Mother Jenny interrupts, "Your mother Vastra almost died too many times to count."

Vastra continues, "Weapons became smaller and easily hidden. I ... we had to become cautious and more diligent. We are more important than our enemy. If I die in a fight not only does the enemy lives another day to cause havoc, but my Jenny will be alone for a very long time."

Mother Jenny becomes instantly sad and adds, "If i die on the streets of London, your mother will curse this world and will outlive her enemies alone. We decided a very long time ago, we would not let that happen. You have to make that decision for yourself and your wife."

Alaya stands taller, "I see. You are correct. I have never been on the losing side."

Mother Vastra corrects her daughter, "You can be a scientific wonder, dissected, tortured and be on the losing or winning side. The world has changed and both sides are willing to do anything to have victory. But we have the advantage."

"How is that?"

"We know their goals, that is our advantage. We can't change their goals, but we can tweak our lives to keep ourselves from inquiring minds."

"Will we ever be safe?"

"No."

"I am sorry."

"For fainting?"

"For bringing my precious Fiona into our lives."

"Fiona is not. Besides you don't have a choice when it comes to love. Keep yourself safe, you both have a future to plan. This is an excellent question ... What is a good name for your first born?"
Leaving Edinburgh

My Dearest Alaya,

I just left you at the station in York. It was wonderful to spend time with you, you are my favorite person in the world. It was such a temptation to just not get on the train to Edinburgh to return to our home in London.

As soon as I get into Edinburgh station I will send a telegram to say I head to Brussels in two days.

I felt guilty not telling when were together, but I didn't want to talk about me leaving when we just arrived. I wanted to focus on us being together, in the moment. Please do not be mad or upset. I concentrated on listening to your voice, kissing you, being near and it brought me such happiness. I didn't want to think about anything else.

I will be heading to Brussels, I wish I could give you more details.

Please know I have played scenario after scenario in my mind and each end up me no longer being a physician. It is unacceptable result. I will never work in Great Britain again as a doctor. A black mark will be left next to my name.

Bribery? Absolutely. What do you suggest I do? Not be a doctor? Join the family business and be a typist?

Would you ask Mother Jenny to become a photographer and nothing else?

Would you ask Mother Vastra to stay home to become an artist and nothing else?

I would not ask you to start a business to make custard pies.

I have more skills than a typist. You could not tame my skills as a surgeon.

From now I will write updates and send only when I have safe delivery.

The bodies line up outside the hospitals waiting family claim. Let me be direct ...

If something should happen to me keep to your plans. Keep your mothers safe. Also include updates to the safe deposit box let my mother know I was brave and strong.

Most importantly allow yourself, my dearest Alaya to heal, and be open to love again. You shall find love again. I do not want to pursue this conversation any longer, it makes my heart break. We know the possible outcomes of war and we are not immune.

Your Fiona
A short large woman enters the tailor shop at 14 Savile Row. Miss Shaw greets her, "May I be of service?"

"I am Mrs. Godfrey, I have a letter for delivery to the residents upstairs."

Miss Shaw, "Thank you. Currently the only staff here is for the tailor shop. I shall give it to a family member as soon as they arrive."

Mrs. Godfrey, "I am sorry. I have to hand deliver this without exception. When shall I return?"

"I will get someone on the telephone immediately. If you do not mind, can you tell me the recipient or place of origin."

"Why?"

Miss Shaw becoming bit frustrated, "This residents are a very loving family whose daughter is a surgeon serving overseas. They have not heard from her in many months. Please do not tease these good people. If it from Fiona, I will retrieve a family member by phone immediately."

Miss Gardner comes to stand nearby as she can hear the agitation in her Tori's voice.

Mrs. Godfrey will not give out any information, "I will wait for their arrival."

"Please have a seat. Someone will get your refreshments." Miss Shaw proceeds to make a phone call in hushed tones and asks her Allie to tend Mrs. Godfrey.

Fifteen Minutes a taxi cab screeches to a halt and in runs Alaya. "Miss Shaw is our mystery delivery person still here?"

Miss Shaw nods to the now standing Mrs. Godfrey, "This is Mrs. Godfrey."

Alaya spins around with clasps hands, "Mrs Godfrey. You have a delivery?"

"It depends, what is your name?"

"I am Alaya. Do I need to clarify more information before you will hand over the letter?"

"I am to ask a specific question."

Alaya now completely anxious, "Please ask."

"It is an odd question."

Alaya trying to stay calm, "I understand Mrs. Godfrey. Please anything to hear from Fiona."

"What is her substitute?"

Alaya smiles at her wife's sense of humor, "Hot water bottle."

Mrs. Godfrey hands the envelope to Alaya.

Alaya quickly runs towards the stairs, "Miss Shaw and Miss Gardner please see if Mrs. Godfrey is in need of anything. Also, call my mothers and tell them of our delivery." Turning to Mrs. Godfrey,
"You marvellous woman, thank you."

Alaya sits in the drawing-room re-reading the letter five times over. After she writes a response. Once completed she puts it aside with the others, bound by a blue ribbon, awaiting an opportunity for delivery.
Dearest Plaster Wall Substitute,

I found a quiet place to write on the upper deck of the ferry. We just left the port of Edinburgh.

I am headed to Antwerp, Belgium.

The highlands I so missed of my youth has left me feeling like I am Elise's cyprian. Dr Elsie Inglis is hard-headed and quick to anger. She argues constantly with the other physicians who question any decision. It is madness dealing with someone like that and having authority makes it all the more difficult. I pleaded for a transfer to Fiona's hospital, but it ignited a fire. I am not pleased.

She has have my education in control. If I leave I have nothing. If I remain my studying will be complete, submitted for evaluation and upon approval, which is certain, I am an approved surgeon and physician by Great Britain. Do you understand? If I stop and come home all my studying, my education everything is for naught.

Patience my half-Silurian wife, I will be home soon as possible.

While I was watching Edinburgh disappearing into the horizon two physicians were talking about France and how they will work with Louisa and Flora. I interrupted their conversation and asked if I may seek them out to deliver a letter to our dear friends. They said yes, I quickly wrote a note telling them where I am headed and wish them well.

I will continue to write this letter until I can ensure its delivery. So my letters might be short or long, depending the time in between deliveries.

Update: I had my passport examined as I changed ship, Dresden, to take me to Antwerp, Belgium. The rules allow only daytime arrivals, so we sat the first night on the seas bobbing up and down. I didn't get sick, but there were many who spend the night hanging their heads over the railings. A few had green faces, I wonder if our children will have green tinted scales like your Mother, they would be the most beautiful children in the world. I believe my daydreaming of green scaled half-Silurian children running around our home brought a smile to my face.

Update: We were ready to leave our place, but the anchor would not be undone, we had to spend a second night on the water. I feel sorry for those who are quite ill with little relief in sight.

Update: We arrived in Antwerp after two nights at sea. Carriages take us to L'Harmonie, Anvers, Belgium. It is a beautiful concert hall, with beds for over 130 patients. We eat a humble meal, at a nearby convent, but sleep at the Hospital. I do not have privacy. I keep my undelivered letter folded with our picture inside the leather pouch. The leather pouch is kept on my person. Can you guess where? Hint number one: not there.

I received a shot in the arm to protect me against typhoid and other diseases. Ouch! I do not make a good patient. I thought of you and your mother taking monthly injections. Please grab something of mine to at least pretend I am near, even if it is a hot water bottle stuffed in my nightgown.

Update: We have limited lighting and emergency surgeries completed by candlelight. All other surgeries begin at first light. Which means I rarely receive enough sleep. I have even missed meals due to surgical responsibilities. I am grateful for the bakery bundle. I do not share with anyone. There are too many sick. Even though I have been given shots, it is not enough. I must maintain my health. I shall come home, slightly thinner ... but I am determined to come home as healthy as
possible.

Update: Today bombs were dropped by German aeroplanes on the city. There are rumours of German invasion, but the Belgians tell me the city is well protected. I refrain from making remarks, we know nothing is unsinkable, allowing hope to flourish over facts. Nearby cities are being bombarded by Germans and many refugees have streamed into Antwerp. Reports are saying Germans are 10 to 20 miles away. If Antwerp is held siege, there is food for two years for the entire city population.

Update: The city might have have plenty of food but they did not plan for water. The Germans successfully shelled the pump of the waterworks and now the water is now salty. I boil what I can, soak my tea leaves longer and I still get sick. Cannons are heard nearer every day.

I wonder, with a smile, if Mother Vastra has found the tea supply. I hope not. If she did, please make a note of how long it took. I shall beat the record.

Update: More and more wounded come in each day. An aeroplane dropped a bomb near the hospital and a backfire from a shrapnel case fell through our roof, we are lucky no one was hurt. The Germans are ignoring the Red Cross Flag! The water supply is still salty and no longer can drink well water. The only solution is beer. My dearest Alaya I am drinking beer! I fear this is one small step toward becoming a lush. I hope you love the new me with gin blossoms. When I return I shall find the Whiskey!

Every inch of space occupied. It is a carpet made up of men crowded together ... sick, wounded, men with a limb amputated, those infected by typhoid, dysentery, some waiting to die and the dead. It is a complete grouping of war. I constantly go outside for fresh air, looking west towards London. I miss my plaster wall.

Update: We are to evacuate the hospital. Mrs Godfrey, the cook, is leaving on the first boat back to London. She has agreed to deliver this with strict rules of who accepts the letter.

Update: Evacuation cancelled.

Always Your Hot Water Bottle.

PS. The answer: I keep the leather pouch inside my right socks down by my ankle tied tight with the boots strap.
My Plaster Wall Substitute,

I think of you every moment of peace. I close my eyes, lay against the cold marble column and image I am leaning against you. It is my only comfort, except the beer. I have gotten used to the taste. I imagine Mother Vastra upset at my palette being ruined for quality wine. Please assure her that my taste buds crave a hot cup of tea ... and one of Mother Jenny’s sweets.

I hope you are doing well, better than well.

I think of York and your detective uniform, which is absolutely stunning, something I want to see again.

My uniform, this heavy wool weight is nothing I would want to wear again. I suspect in the future, far future, I might have pride in what we are accomplishing here in Antwerp. Right now war sickens me and the damage it brings. I wish the Germans would just go back to their own land and leave well enough alone.

Update: Lights are out earlier and earlier as the bombing has become habitual. Surgeries come with new difficulties. The plaster keeps falling and a makeshift covering from sheets protects the patient and staff but hinders our light. Therefore, we use more candles which captures heat. I imagine you and your mother would find the warm table quite gratifying.

Once during an extremely difficult amputation I pictured our family at Redlap Cove lounging on the beach. The nurse saw my smile and inquired. So I told them of my family’s holiday in the private cove, the detective work and talked of the history of Redlap. After tell the story I looked around and saw an audience has formed. A solider asked if my family found any treasure or hidden passages. Tempting to tell the truth, but looking at their faces I began to invent a story where the Great Detective found hidden passage that leads to underground caverns. The family traverse the cavern to overcome many deadly traps set by an infamous pirate, One-Eyed Willie. Eventually arrive at a large underground lagoon where Willie’s ship, the Inferno, lies waiting. I told them we reported our findings to Scotland Yard immediately and rewarded with a week on the beach.

You are right, I believed I miss my calling for the dramatic arts.

Update: Forts around have fallen and bombs fall on the hour. The Hospital remains full as we take out the healed or dead an influx of new wounded come to take their place.

Guess who visited today? Louisa! My heart sang. We took to hugging immediately. The happiness only lasted for just a moment when aeroplanes flew overhead dropping messages that bombardment will begin at midnight. Orders received to evacuate the hospital and all patients move to Ostend. Louisa and I worked together to handle the last few surgeries and then head to Ostend ourselves by ambulance. She remarked how my skills as a doctor and surgeon has excelled past her expectations. I shared with her how my education is being held hostage by Elsie. She shook her head and said not to worry.

Louisa offered a position in Paris or Wimereux. I asked which site will benefit most of my services. She said, Wimereux.

Update: I am in Wimereux. Flora is here. Flora and Louisa introduced me to the staff and put me on surgical rotation. Since I am the last hired I am on the night shift. I welcome the challenge. I had a
good day sleep, once I move the bed against the wall and closed the blackout curtains.

Louisa and Flora are heading back to London shortly. Louisa has already contacted the Scottish Women's Hospital Committee. Flora and Louisa instructed me and the head surgeon that I stay in Wimereux. I am not to leave until I either hear from the Scottish Women's Hospital Committee, Women's Hospital Corps, Flora or Louisa. Flora whispered if Elsie becomes bossy tell her you answer only to the WHC or SWH. It will make her angry, but she knows it's true. I stood a little taller.

I love you. If I stand at the shores of Wimereux with my head of hair untamed, can you see it from Dover?

Your Love

Fiona

PS Please make sure you remove all the hot water bottles from the bed before I return. I'm concerned you have developed a fetish which I will not take part or encourage.
Fiona has just finished the last surgery of the evening shift and heads toward the showers. There is a short supply of hot water during the day, but the late shift always has a few more minutes before it goes cold. She enjoys the clean sensation while she works her way back to her assigned quarters. Since her other room-mates have already woken and started their day this is always the best time to write an update to her Alaya.

She sits back on her bed, feeling the cold plaster on her back her imagines it is Alaya hugging. There is a knock on the door. Fiona's irritated for a brief second, because she was in the middle of a wonderful memory. "One moment." She gets out of bed and makes sure she is decent.

A staff member is holding a box, "Fiona Flint-Saint Clair?"

Fiona, "Yes and show her the badge around her neck."

The staff member, "This is for you."

Fiona, "Thank you very much, have a good day."

Fiona puts the box on the table and opens it to find bread, sweets and a stack of papers wrapped in a blue ribbon. She gently picks up the papers and unties the blue ribbon as if she went to fast it would disintegrate into tiny threads. She picks up the first envelope with shaking hands and tears in her eyes.

_Dear Hot Water Bottle Substitute,_

_Louisa stopped by and left me your most recent correspondence. I didn't have time to write a response you deserve. Wrapped below are all the letters I have written to you but unable to deliver. I hope it fills your heart to know I think of you constantly._

_Mother Jenny enclosed sweets and mother Vastra made another sketch of me. Keep it close to your ankle, it is for your eyes only._

_Your Plaster Wall Substitute_

Fiona took the box and brought it over to her bed. She took the stack of letters and placed them aside. She didn't know which to eat first, and decided to eat the food that would spoil the quickest. She then closed the box and placed it under her bed for another time. She takes the stack of letters and begins to read. After each finished letter she takes a bit of the custard pie. After three hours and reading each letter twice ... the custard pie is gone. All that remains is the blue ribbon and one unopened envelope.

She cleans her fingers and opens the envelope. It is a picture of her Alaya, in a white night-gown standing in front their bedroom window with the moonlight shining through. It is perfect. Nothing disclosed but everything she remembers. Her stomach fills with butterflies and loves the feeling. She misses that feeling. She puts the picture standing up against her alarm clock while putting the letters in the inside flap of her carpet-bag. She takes the leather pouch out of her sock and gently places the new picture and ribbon inside. She ties the leather pouch back around her ankle.

She gets into bed with her back against the plaster wall and falls sleep instantly.
Alaya turned left on Savile Row and sees her mother Jenny entering a cab with a large box. She runs yelling, "Mother! Mother!"

Mother Jenny stops herself midway, "I must hurry."

Alaya, "Where are you going?"

Jenny, "I have to get this to Fiona."

Alaya steps aside and watches her mother leave.

She runs inside and there is Mother Vastra waiting. Alaya goes right up to her mother, "Where is mother going? Is Fiona safe? ..."

Vastra hands Alaya a telegram

---

LEAVE IN TWO DAYS
SWH SENDING ME TO SERBIA
LOVE YOU

---

Alaya grabs her mother's arm as she catches herself from falling to the floor. A sound bellows from Alaya's chest and screeches out of her mouth. Vastra pulls Alaya entire body into her arms. Alaya just screams in agony.

Miss Shaw stands up. "Let me get some water."

Miss Gardner exits her office with a white face. She asks her Tori, "I heard a cry."

Miss Shaw whispers, "A telegram came, our dear Fiona is assigned to Serbia."

Vastra attempts to calm her daughter, "Your mother has packed up more bread, oatmeal, heavy clothing and your latest letter. The telegram just came and we acted quickly. Your mother is going to cross the channel and hand deliver the package to your Fiona."

Alaya attempts composure, "Please, can we look at map. I want to see exactly where is Serbia located."

Miss Gardner coughs, "I am sorry but I could help overhear. I might be of assistance. Geography and travel is my speciality, outside accounts for your business, of course."

Miss Shaw hands Alaya a glass of water, "It is true. Our Miss Gardner has hidden talents of global information. I also would like to point out her credentials of confidentiality and her loyal personality. She is of course, in charge of your business' finances."

Vastra nods in respect, "Excellent. Please join upstairs in our residence. We have questions."

First thing Vastra does is pull out the atlas and brings over the globe. "Where is Serbia?"

Miss Gardner points on the globe and map Serbia's location.
Alaya looks at the locations, "This is too far, too far."

Vastra turns to Miss Gardner, "Please, tell us about Serbia."

"Where would you like me to begin? That is like asking me to tell you about England. Please clarify your request for information." Miss Gardner humbly requests.

"Ah, yes. I see it is my mistake." Vastra ponders what information she would like to know. "From the beginning, please."

Miss Gardner sits down and begins, "First think we need to establish it its proper name, it is 'The Kingdom of Serbia'. The Kingdom is or has been ruled by two dynasties: the House of Obrenović and the House of Karadordević. King Milan Obrenović ruled from 1882 to 1889, when he abdicated the throne. He was succeeded by his son, Aleksandar Obrenović, who ruled from 1889 to 1903, when he was deposed by a group of officers. I was too young to remember, but the slaughter of the the King and his wife Queen Draga change the region drastically. Which places in the current Sovereign Petar Karadordević on the throne starting 1903. The significance of the change in politics gives the Black Hand exclusive to the region. Any questions?"

Vastra, "You are a wealth of information. I have a few, but please continue. I will have questions at the end of your dissertation."

"I do not mind talking, but there is a question of health. Miss Shaw and I have our supper around this time. Shall I make something, we can continue this in the kitchen?"

"My apologies. Alaya's Mother has made a stew, it is already in the kitchen. You surprise me Miss Gardner. Also am wrong to surmise that you and Miss Shaw are familiar?"

Miss Gardner blushes, "What is the consequence of my answer?"

Alaya jumps in, "I am so sorry. Mo ... Madame Vastra has difficulty with social courtesies. Please, let us eat."

"I am a small but brave woman. I will answer Madame Vastra's question, if you answer one of mine."

Alaya and Miss Shaw take the roles of serving the food.

Vastra sits down, "How about we play a game. You seem like the intelligent sort."

Miss Gardner take the seat directly across from Vastra's, "How do we play?"

"We only answer questions using one word. Truth is singular. Are you ready?"

"Yes."

Vastra smiles, waiting for the first question.

"You and Alaya wear the same bracelet. Are you both related?"

"Yes."

"What is your relationship to Alaya?"

"Mother."
Miss Gardner smiles, "What is Alaya's relationship to Mrs Jenny Flint."

"Mother."

"Is Alaya adopted?"

"No."

"Did one of you give birth to Alaya?"

"Yes."

"Which of you?"

"Jenny"

"Was she married?"

"No."

"Was is a stranger?"

"No."

"A male friend?"

"No."

"Was she inseminated by a male?"

"No."

"How was Alaya produced?"

"Naturally."

"What is your genetics based?"

"Evolution."

"Evolution from Apes?"

"No."

"Are you the Wadjet Goddess of Egypt?"

"No."

Alaya puts down her spoon of stew and interjects, "I am sorry. Please who is the Wadjet Goddess of Egypt?"

"She was said to be the patron and protector of Lower Egypt and depicted as a snake-headed woman."

Alaya gets defensive, "Why would you ask such a thing?"

"Because I had a glimpse. I came to visit once with my father, before I came to work permanently."
Vastra wore a veil, she has a beautiful green scaled face. I immediately thought of the Goddess Wadjet. My father said that you had a skin disorder and not to stare. I assume you received medical help with the skin disorder. Miss Shaw has also seen your beautiful face when you would visit Mrs April Saint-Clair. "Miss Gardner turns to Vastra, "Did you receive medical help?"

"No."

"How do you keep hidden?"

"Bracelet."

"If you remove the bracelet does your skin disorder return?"

"No."

"Do you have a skin disorder?"

"No."

"Am I allowed to see your proper face?"

"Yes."

Vastra concedes and turns off the perception device.

Miss Gardner is please. "Please to meet you Madame Vastra."

"Where do you live?"

"London."

"With whom do you live?"

"Tori."

"Is that a nickname for Miss Shaw?"

"Yes."

"Do you have a nickname?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"Allie."

"Do you have separate beds?"

"No."

"What is your goal in life?"

"Travel."

"Where would you like to go?"
"Everywhere."

"Does your Miss Shaw share in your travel desire?"

"Yes."

"Why do you know so much about the world?"

"Research."

"Thank you. That is all for now. I can see that my daughter is anxious to learn about Serbia, as I."

As the three sit at the kitchen table eating while Miss Gardner shares information about Serbia. After supper was over Vastra had a few questions but it was getting late.

"We are at your service, for any reason." Miss Shaw and Miss Gardner let themselves out.

The doorbell rings. Alaya licks the air, "Telegram."

Alaya runs downstairs. Vastra listens as her daughter returns running up the stair skipping more than two at a time. Alaya hands the telegram to her mother.

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CROSSING CHANNEL NOW
RETURN TICKET TO DOVER NOON
STAY

---

Vastra sighs, "We both wait."

Alaya licks her mother's cheek and tastes worry, love and fear. "I understand worry and love. What do you fear?"

"You will do something rash."

"I want to get on a boat and pull her back. I want her safe."

Vastra gets up and goes to her drinking cabinet and pours two drinks. She hands one to Alaya while sipping hers. "Humans are resilient. Time and time again Fiona has surprised you. These times expect greatness. Take a chance. Believe in her humanity and her abilities. They look like if you touch them they will crack into pieces, but I was wrong they are strong. Equal to my sisters, your Aunts. We are to stand by their side and allow them to wield what ever weapon they choose. We have fallen in love with two women that make all others nothing more than little girls."

Alaya sips her drink, "Yes, you are right."

"Lets continue our Serbia research. Mother Jenny will want to know what we discover."

Alaya smiles, stands and quickly hugs her mother Vastra. Vastra holds her daughter tight and appreciates her half-human side, the hug tight like her mother's. Alaya looks up, "I love you. Thank you for everything."

Vastra melts and pulls her daughter back into her arms. "You are loved so purely it aches to feel how much. I have been lucky. I am sorry you suffer for your love."

Alaya pulls back and sits down to the books. She looks up, "Mother, we both suffer for our love."
Vastra sits down, opens the book in front of her, "My Alaya, you speak truth."
The Reunion

Jenny passes through each check-point without issue. She has explained each time what she is doing with the food, clothing and other miscellaneous items. "My daughter-in-law, a surgeon, is leaving for Serbia. I wanted to make sure she has these things before she leaves."

Now Mrs Jenny Flint finds herself on France soil and immediately goes to someone of authority. "Excuse me, I need to arrive at Wimereux as soon as possible. Can you direct me?"

The female police officer quickly responded, "Ah yes, you want to get to Woman's Hospital?"

"Yes, please."

The female police officer points to a small taxi with three nurses entering. "These women are also heading there. You may join them."

"Thank you." Jenny quickly walks towards the taxi and tells the nurses of her destination.

The taller nurse, "We are headed that way. Please share the journey. Who is the lucky staff member getting this package?"

Jenny sitting in the cab holding the large box, "Doctor Fiona Flint-Saint Clair."

"We heard. How terrible for her, she is such an asset here. Her work is clean, never complains and is intelligent. Not snobby or stuck up."

"Yes she is quite the woman. She is my daughter."

All three nurses sit up straight and quickly compose themselves.

Jenny looks at their posture, "What did I say?" Looking around to see if someone of authority has walked in their view. "Why have you all gone stiff?"

"Are you one of the detectives?"

Jenny sits a little taller, while trying to hold the box on her lap. "Yes I am. We work for Scotland Yard."

Quickly all the nurses move their legs and adjust. The blue eyed brown curly hair nurse finally speaks, "This is too long of a journey for you to hold that box. Put the box here and I can put my short legs over."

Everyone adjusts quickly and soon Jenny places the box on the floor. "Thank you very much."

The taller nurse, "Tell us a story of how you solved a mystery. It would be entertaining and we would very much love to hear the story in your words."

Jenny blushing, "I am not much of a storyteller or have the dramatic flair of my daughter."

The taller nurse laughs, "Nobody has the flair for dramatics like Doctor Flint-Saint Clair. If she wasn't such a terribly good surgeon I would pay to have her read me the phone directory."

The other nurses nod in agreement. Jenny laughs out loud, "That would be an interesting career change. What are you names?"
The taller nurse, "I am Rachel."

The blue eyes curly hair nurse, "Molly."

The quiet one with glasses, "Abbey."

"Good to meet you ladies. Give me a moment to gather my thoughts." Jenny goes through a list of adventures. "This is a recent mystery ... it all started with Military equipment disappearing ..."

By the time they reach Wimereux Jenny adds the last touch, "... all because the military boots they wore under their cuffed trousers."

All the nurses applauded Jenny's climatic story. Each just thanked her over and over. The taxi pulled up to the make shift hospital and Jenny began to pay, the driver turned to her, "There is no charge for delivery. It goes on the account for the WHC."

Jenny, pulling the large box out the back-seat. "How do I get back to the port? I have to return before noon tomorrow."

"Someone will be here at ten in the morning to take you. If not me, someone else. Have a good visit and thank you for the story."

Jenny walks through the front door and goes to the administration desk. A nurse looks up, "May I help you?"

"I am here to see Doctor Fiona Flint-Saint Clair."

"One moment" as she dials a number up on the phone. "Please inform Fiona Flint-Saint Clair she has a visitor. Yes? Thank you." The nurse looks to Jenny, "She is now in her room. You can go through those doors and make the second right, up a to the third floor and she is in room 326."

"Thank you." Jenny follows the nurse's directions. She hold the box and taps the door with her foot. She hears a meek voice inside the room, "One moment."

The door opens and Fiona's ask. "May I help you?"

Jenny puts the box on the floor to face Fiona.

Fiona's eyes open wide, she falls back and grabs the chair for support. "Mother Jenny!" She grabs Jenny like a lost doll and pulls her close. Jenny hugs just as deeply.

Fiona pulls her inside as Jenny retrieves the box. "What are you doing here?"

"We received your telegram. You need provisions." Jenny opens the box up

Fiona touches Mother Jenny's hand and softly, "I miss my family."

Jenny pulls Fiona close with as much compassion as possible. Fiona starts to cry and it breaks Jenny's heart. The two stay in the embrace for over thirty minutes as Fiona slowly brings herself to composure.

Fiona goes over to her side of the room, "May I make tea?"

"That would be wonderful."

"I am sorry. I have been without human contact. I fear the next assignment will leave me stranded."
Jenny sitting down and taking things out of the boxes on the table.

"How is my Alaya?"

"She misses you. She understands, but misses you."

"How is Mother Vastra?"

"She misses her little one."

"How are you?"

"I will feel whole when my family is intact."

Fiona nods and tears up as she pours the tea into cups. "This is not the best tea in the world, but it all I have."

Jenny nods takes a sip and fights it down her throat, "It is not bad, I have had worse."

"Mother Jenny, lying is not becoming."

Jenny smiles, "Here is what I brought ... " Jenny shows her the different types of oats she has packed, a bit of black bread, cornmeal and other sort of hearty grains. "Vastra insisted you have a jar of 'leather'. This is a jar of dried fruit and peanuts. Alaya shelled these herself." She holds up a heavy cape, "This will keep you warm at night. Vastra insists you have her old sleuthing cape. She is almost twice your size, but she is right it will keep your warm and dry. Also, here is some tea."

"Vastra found the tea?"

"No, this we had to buy"

Fiona laughs, "Poor Vastra." She takes one of the new tea bags and pours new cups for Mother Jenny and herself, making sure Mother Jenny has the first steep.

"Anything from Alaya?"

Jenny pulls out the few letters, "I rushed out of the house to make the Dover ferry ... I grabbed what I could."

Fiona sips the tea with ease and starts to read the first letter, she smiles and continues. She leaps up! "What she ... was shot? Where? How? ... " She continues to read the letter, flipping it over and grabbing the other letters. "Mother Jenny, it is not finished. Is she OK?"

"Alaya is fine, the bullet went in the shoulder. It was a man back from the war, he was angry because he lost his leg. He was angry and he was creating havoc when he drank. Store windows smashed, prostitutes beaten. She located him and tried to apprehend him, but he just pull his weapon and shot her. The perception devices have a flaw, it doesn't show damage. Therefore when Fiona took the bullet into her shoulder, it looked as if nothing happened. Underneath the perception field our Alaya was bleeding. Alaya said it stunned the man when it looked as if his bullet didn't touch her. He looked down the gun barrel confused and that is when she pulled him down. She dragged him all the way to the police station. She could not document that he shot her, but he was found guilty on many other charges ... "

"... once inside the police station Alaya stopped the bleeding in the loo with a makeshift bandage. But it needed to be properly tended. She walked all the home, she barely made inside the door. Miss
Shaw grabbed her before she collapsed onto the floor. Miss Gardner came to get us directly. We didn't know what happened until we looked down at her bloody footprints. I immediately switched off the device and saw nothing but blood from her shoulder to her blood soaked socks. Vastra took her upstairs. We put dressing on the wound, cleaned her up and let her rest."

Fiona, putting herself in a physician role, "How did you handle the blood loss?"

"She healed quickly and luckily the bullet went through the scales out the back."

"Is she truly fine?"

"Yes. She took a few days off to heal and was back to work with vigour."

Fiona looks down at the letter and begins to tear up. "If she gets shot, harmed ... and you are not around. I shutter at the thought. Does she not understand?"

Jenny quickly brings Fiona back to her, "We gave her your letter."

"Why?"

"She was going to Brussels to be by your side."

"What was her reaction to the harsh information?" Fiona looks down at her half empty cup of tea.

"Our brave Alaya fainted and fell to the floor. Vastra needed to dip her tongue into the smelling salt to revive Alaya."

"She is scared, but now she'll be cautious."

Jenny nods in agreement, "She has also become more protective of her mothers. Her and her mother are working on a thin bullet-proof vest. So far the ones they have tested are too heavy to wear. At least they are busy together."

"I am here until ten tomorrow morning. Do you have surgeries tonight?"

"No I have none scheduled. We depart close to the same time. Do you want to spend it together?"

"Do you have a spare bed?"

"Oh yes, two of my room-mates have left as they return to serve in London."

"Why not you?"

"Dr Elsie Inglis. " Fiona pauses and starts to breath a little harder, "I will miss Christmas and now I am sitting here doing nothing because of an ego maniac. It has been too long since I have been home. Why won't she let me be? Now I am pushed further into harms way, further away from London. Serbia?"

"I do not like this woman."

"Very few do, I still can't image Flora being intimate with this angry woman."

"From what Flora tells me, she wasn't always like that but developed into harshness the more education she received. She found that even though she was more qualified it ate her inside as men with lessor qualification received positions and opportunity. Elsie became so bold it drove Flora away."
"That is very sad. But that doesn't give her a right be mean. There have been many requests from Women's Hospital Corps to the Scottish Women's Hospital Committee to continue my service with Louisa and Fiona. Each time denied with a line item that if reject my service my qualification for a physician are null. I honestly do not believe my mother intended me to be held hostage by studying medicine." Fiona goes silent.

Jenny patiently waits a few moments, "It seems you developed a reputation for the dramatics ..." and proceeds to recount her taxi ride from the docks.

The two spend the rest of the evening together catching up and having a meal together in the cafe.

Once Mother Jenny was asleep Fiona wrote to her wife.

It was difficult to share a taxi ride to docks and now as they separate into different directions. Fiona throat is caught. She pulls mother Jenny close. "It was wonderful to see you again. I do love you and Vastra like my own mother. You need to know how important you both are to me. Tell Alaya I love her and I am well. I will do my best to eat. Here is my latest letter and my medical logs. Alaya knows what to do with this." Fiona steps back. "Tell Fiona to stop getting shot."

Jenny heads to the ferry. Fiona watches Jenny go up the ramp, into the bowels of the ship. She watches and looks ... she found Jenny and starts to wave like it is the last wave she will make in her Mother Jenny's direction. Fiona pulls up the hood to her cape, checks the straps on her backpack of food, picks up her carpet bag and heads towards her assigned ship. Her ship is opposite side of the docks from Mother Jenny's, further away from London and her family. Tears are flowing down her cheeks.

If Fiona had eyesight like Vastra she would have noticed Jenny too was crying. Jenny purposely let them fall down her cheek so as not to let Fiona see her wipe them away.
From Wimereux

My Dearest Love,

Seeing your mother was absolutely a treat, second to being with you in York.

You have gotten shot! What happened to that quick Silurian movement? What did Mother Vastra say, "she knew your objective" and that is why her buttocks never landed on the floor. Just assume all criminal want to do you harm. Please be in once piece when I return home.

So I have been thinking about our future family. I would like to somehow ensure our daughters have a bosom friend through their youth. What if Mother Jenny had another child? Delicately discuss the matter.

Fiona and Louisa advised that I hold off childbirth until one year after medical school. Honestly, medical school is child's play compared this horrific war. I want to come home and after a bit of time ... we should stop your injections. Let nature take its course.

What do you think? Would Mother Jenny be open to having a larger family?

You and your Mother Vastra are trying to make a bullet proof vest.

So far, I have performed more than my share of amputations. My log files will show I have successfully completed Auriculectomy, Keratectomy, Laryngectomy, Mandibulectomy, Maxillectomy, Myectomy, Necrosectomy, Nephrectomy, Neurectomy, Orchiectomy and even one or two Penectomy surgeries. Louisa said I have done more in four months than I would have done in furing my four years in medical school. So please have Miss Shaw type up my log files and submit them to London Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine for Women and Miss Mary Postlethwait. One less finger of Elise's grip around my future.

One of the surgeries I took a small square of the soilder's epidermis from a section of his upper thigh and used it to replace a section of skin around his nose. The patient is healing nicely. The small square is noticeable, but preferable to a hole that will be infected.

How about converting your bracelet into a device worn under your scales? When I count your scales on your back and trace the patterns I can't help feel as if there is an option utilizing your own natural body. If you can take bacteria out with an injection can't the same technology somehow be embedded? Does the device have to be so large? Does it have to be worn on a wrist? What about a faux panel or a faux scale? When I return I will investigate your skin in detail. I shall do a very in-depth visual record of your entire body with kisses.

The latest image of you, it embarrasses me to write, brings butterflies to my stomach. The picture is perfect, thank goodness for moonlight. When I look at the picture I can actually smell our scent, it is forever on my brain. Do you store our scent on your tongue or as a memory?

Serbia is a long way off, too far. I am not pleased, but I will surpass their expectations. I shall do my best.

It is soon a new year, 1915! Our lives have been through so much ... I sometimes wish we would have met after I finished medical school. That way I would be less desperate to go home rather than a medical martyr. There are women, of all ages volunteering to work at war hospitals. Many are for the opportunity to work, being active ... none, that I can tell is held hostage. Each time a new set of volunteers come to my attention I hold my breath and look at their wrist. I beg the gods of war that
my Alaya is home safe in London.

Once a woman walked past me who had a thick bracelet peeking out of her sleeve, my heart pounded. I purposely went up to her, offered my hand and introduced myself. Her hand was warm. My heart calmed.

You have been given a letter I wrote for you to read in a dire situation. You fainted? I am so sorry my dear, it was necessary to write those horrible words. It pained me to write of a world so disgusting. To use my wonderful words to describe how my wife and family will be nothing more than pawns towards victory in war made my stomach sick. You must be diligent. You are my life, my dreams and my future.

I am grateful for the supplies and the backpack. You know that this will end our irregular correspondences. Serbia is a way off and over 2060 kilometres.

Be safe, be good and be a dear stop getting shot.

Your Love Fiona.

PS What do you think of the name April Jennifer for our first born?
Leaving Wimereux

It was the third Sunday in May when Vastra, Jenny and Alaya are spring cleaning.

The doorbell rings. Alaya tastes the air, "Telegram". She quickly climbs down the ladder, runs downstairs and swings open the door.

There is a young handsome man in uniform with a cane and an unusually perfect lighter coloured square on his nose, "Are you Alaya?"

"Yes, I am Alaya."

The man pulls from her inside jacket an sealed envelope, "I need to verify with a question."

"Yes of course."

"What is her substitute for you?"

Alaya quickly answers with a gaping smile, "Plaster walls."

He hand over the envelope with a smile, "This is yours,"

"Thank you, so much. Have you seen Doctor Flint-Saint Clair?"

"I was a patient, twice. She fixed my leg and my nose. I have to walk with a cane but the alternative would be without a leg. She is amazing."

"May I have a bit of your time?"

"I have just returned myself. I would like see my family, I am quite anxious." He looks into Alaya's pleading eyes. "One question, but then I have to head off to my family."

"Is she well?"

"She is a spirited woman who has risen above swine. She is the only one who talks to us, entertains us with stories of the Great Detectives and even touches our hands. Many men have professed their love to her but she responds the same ... 'my heart belongs to one with a magical laugh and powerful brown eyes'. The other staff and doctors just go about their daily work and treat us as if we were nothing more than furniture. When one dies they are carted out like trash, She is only staff who pays reverence with a bowed head and silence before doing her duty. We call her the Red Doctor of Scots. She said that my scars on my face will heal, it is the mental scars of war that will take more time to mend. She is making a difference, but we all notice her desire to come home. When anyone inquires anything personal she simple smiles not wanting to burden anyone. If there is anything we could do ... please let me know."

Alaya clutches her hands. "She would love to be home to practice here in London. It is the Scottish Women's Hospital Committee that demand she serves Scotland while Doctor Flint-Saint Claire heart wants to serve the Queen and Country. She is a English subject by heart and marriage. When the war is over she will be home with her family in London. Thank you so much for your time. Please allow yourself to heal physically and mentally."

"Thank you for your honesty. Know that I might not be able to do anything, this war has torn families apart and scattered them around Europe. Good day."
Alaya nods and closes the door and with a burst of energy she runs upstairs to her mothers. "I have a letter. It is from Fiona!"

Mother Jenny asks, "Will you read it out loud? Or do you feel more comfortable reading it alone first?"

"I am too excited it has been so long. Do you want to read it?" looking at Mother Jenny who quickly dusts off her hands, "You will have to keep cleaning. If I read something personal you will have to deal with the consequences."

Alaya nods and climbs back up the ladder cleaning the bookshelf.

My Dearest,

I just left Mother Jenny at the ferry to return to home. I can't tell you how much her visit meant to me. We spent a wonderful afternoon, we stayed up and caught up on our lives.

I have no idea when I will see you again. My heart aches with the distance between us.

I have kept warm with Vastra's cape. It is unusually light but keeps my body heat inside. Too warm, luckily I have my back to cool walls to regulate my temperature.

It was a very long journey but I have comfort reading your letters over and over.

When I am alone, positively alone I take out the picture of you eclipsing the moonlight. My heart pounds for you, only you.

I have a mystery to solve. Something I do not understand ... Why am I held captive?

The sea air isn't as enjoyable in December as it was in September. The cold slaps my face when I go above deck so I stay in my cabin, read and think of being home with you.

Update: I have landed in port and found my unit we are in Skopje.

Update: The Serbia hospital has over five-hundred men in beds dying of typhus, many with septic wounds and bed sores. I only operate on the who will survive, there isn't one I can save. They are too far gone, they have been abandoned long before we stepped into the hospital. I am am constantly doing surgery on the new wounded. I sleep for a few hours and then work for over eight. It is a cycle that never stops.

Tell mother Jenny the tea is much worse here than that brown water in France. I try to get ten cups from one infuser. I long for a good cup of tea, my goodness I do sound like a typical Londoner.

I have been teased about my soft Scottish accent and my British ways. I like that. Nothing wrong with being half-Scottish.

All of the staff are Scottish and there are many with deep highlander accents. When I eat meals with them, which is rare, it is nice to just hear them talk to each other.

Update: The death toll is too high, this typhus is a serious concern. When I do surgeries I keep a small staff. I am not taking any chances. Why hasn't Elsie require typhus inoculation shots?

Update: I am the only surgeon remaining and two nurses who were smart enough to get shots before boarding the ship.
Update: I have kept my distance from the hospital and wait for someone ask for a surgeon. It is the safest action as I am not going to put myself in harm’s way. A dead surgeon is a worthless surgeon. I have taken to clean the surgery area myself, checked machinery and updated my medical log.

I have completed more than enough log hours to meet Great Britain's surgical qualification. Maybe all this running around the globe will have its advantage when I return to normal life. This made me smile, to have a normal life.

I started to laugh out loud, a normal life is not what my Alaya and I have to offer each other. I am counting the days before I am home with you.

It is a bit over a two months and the staff is failing. Not enough supplies to support the living and not enough food to feed the staff.

I have not felt obligated to share my food rations. Yes, I have been rationing, who knows how long I am here. I do not want to see my Alaya's sad brown eyes if I grow too thin.

Update: It seems that March we are expecting reinforcements.

Update: Three weeks into March two nurses and a second unit has arrived and we work together to get this typhus epidemic under control. This team was held at Malta to tend the wounded, which explains why they were late coming to our aid.

I supplement, what little meals the SWC offer, with my rationed supplies. I am hoping it will help me build up my strength.

It is good to have more staff and supplies. I just wish the war would give us a moment of peace.

One of the hardest is the young men who come to my surgical table. I have to take a limb, a hand or even at times an eye. Their lives will never be the same.

One of my patients was a footballer and now without a leg he became depressed. We talked each time I checked his wounds. He was quite clever and a way with words. I told him get a typewriter and become a writer for football, they have long careers and fans. He is slowly getting back to better spirits.

Update: I was told by the lead Doctor I am being sent back to Edinburgh and will telegram on my arrival.

Update: I am not leaving, no funds. I am truly disappointed and went back to my cot and pulled out our picture. It made me feel better. Thoughts of you keep me sane.

Update: Finally more staff, and they're inoculated. Things are looking up and spring is in the Air. I want to send word but there isn't anyone heading back. They are all dedicated to seeing this through. I see no end in sight.

Update: April Guess who just showed up? Yes, Elsie! I waited for her inspection around the surgical rooms. She called me into her make-shift office. She asks if there is anything I can do? I asked to go home and finish up my education. She quickly called me ungrateful and that I gifted a lifetime of experience in just a few months.

I told her I appreciated her help in my education, but I truly would like to go home and work there.

She questioned if I was going to work with Louisa? I reply, "That has always been my hope and wish."
She started to yell at me making no sense at all.

I calmly waited until she calmed herself. I went to her desk and look softly into her eyes. "I am Mrs Fiona Flint-Saint Clair, I want nothing more than to be a surgeon but allow me to continue my education in London.," and I walked out of her office and back to my room.

A few minutes later someone knocked at my door and said to come in ... It was Elise's personal secretary. She warned me to keep my distance from Elise and she will find the funds to send me home. I told her that my distance from Elise is my most highest priority. I asked her what I did wrong. She said nothing and walked away. Oh my dear Alaya, I wanted to take my cricket bat and slap her ass to leave a mark. But instead I closed the door and thought of you.

All these soldiers are far away from their home, a mother, a wife, or a lover ... their hearts ache. Some not so much. I have had three marriage proposals. I have turned them down with a soft smile and let them down easy.

Your Half-Scottish Fiona

One of my patients I had before in Wimereux (skin replacement on his nose) is now a patient in Serbia, this time it is his leg. I did what I could to save the leg, but he will forever be dependent on a cane. I told him the cane makes him look distinguished. He is heading home to London. He will deliver this to you with instructions. I do hope my instincts are not wrong and you are reading this letter. I shall not make this rash judgement again. I regret allowing a stranger to act as messenger to carry my precious words to my love. I am too anxious.
Elise's Obsession

Only a few residents of 15 Savile Row are enjoying a warm July summer evening.

The windows are open with warm air flowing instigating purrs from the naked Alaya lounging while reading her book on Serbia.

There is a naked Vastra draped over the chair arms as she reads to her wife The Rainbow by D. H. Lawrence who is sitting in a chair wearing a very thin but respectful pink underwear step-in knickers camisole, drinking ice tea with an electric fan blowing directly on her body.

They are interrupted by the doorbell. The two Silurians lick the air. Vastra interprets first, "It is Louisa and Flora with friends."

Both Alaya and Vastra look to Jenny. "Oh no! I will get dressed you decide which one of you will turn on their device to answer the door."

Vastra gives her daughter a look. Alaya touches her bracelet to transform into her human veil. Vastra goes to the bedroom to get dressed.

Alaya answers the door with a positive tone, "Greetings friends. I do hope you are enjoying the summer."

The four women grumble. Louisa, "Are you mothers home?"

"Yes, they are getting presentable for company. Come up to the residence. Would any of your like cool refreshments?"

All four offer a definitive 'yes'.

"Make yourselves comfortable in the drawing-room and I will get the drinks."

When Alaya returns to the drawing-room with tall glasses of iced-tea she notices the air is still warm but there is something else filling the room. She places the tray on the table, "I will be back in a minute to change."

Fiona, "Just turn off the device."

"If I turn off the device I will be disclosing my body to two more people. The other two were at my birth." Alaya exits the room, runs up and changes to the lightest clothing possible that isn't a night gown.

When Alaya returns her mothers have joined the group.

Louisa, "Now that you all are here. There is something to discuss."

Alaya quickly stands next to her mothers. "Is there something wrong? How is Fiona?"

Louisa, "She is fine. Please, I have been voted to be the one to explain. It started back last summer. Elsie asked to join Louisa and Flora's hospital concept, but was denied. Elsie isn't a team player and always has to be in command." She takes a sip of the iced-tea.

Louisa continued, "We were going have Elsie set up a hospital in France but she immediately became argumentative. I told her to go home to Scotland and do what she can for the war there. She
did. Then it came to qualified candidates. Fiona's name on top of the list. I told the committees Fiona would be working with me assisting at the hospitals here in London to complete her education. All would be well, but Elsie has allies ..."

Lou, "Spies."

Louisa, "Yes, you are correct, spies. Elsie was informed of Fiona's abilities and wanted to take her for her own war endeavours, even though financially it was not supported or could be maintained."

Jenny leans into Vastra, it is a great comfort to Jenny that Vastra's heart is beating fast too. "Vastra I believe we should sit." Vastra nods and both sit on the small love seat. Alaya has remained standing. Mother Jenny taps her daughter's leg, Alaya drops a hand and Jenny holds it tight.

"As I was saying, Fiona's name on top of the list and Louisa told the committee Fiona would assist at her hospitals. We didn't know Elsie has spies reporting back to her. She demanded Fiona for the SWH, as Fiona was born in Scotland and England has no claim. Louisa pointed out that Fiona was a medical student at The London School of Medicine for Women and Fiona is not something to be claimed. It was quite ridiculous, Elsie wanted to just make issues and conflict where none existed."

Lou spoke up, "The two hospital committees were sick of dealing with Elsie and wanting to end the huffing and puffing. It was agreed Fiona would serve as a medical student with the Edinburgh School of Medicine for Women. Louisa and I both pleaded to have Fiona speak for herself but it landed on deaf ears."

Louisa, "It was sickening seeing Elsie look so smug after the decision. She wants us all to hurt and have unhappy lives. Which means she needs to be in control no matter the cost, irrelevant of the humans she affect. It is not fair. It was out of our hands. It wasn't until we heard of the mismanagement of Antwerp we finally could do something. I went to visit, with commanders and gracefully pulled Fiona out of the situation. Elsie found out, demanded Fiona returns to her position and hastily puts a team together for Serbia. The staff was not ready, trained or even given proper medication before deployment. All but two nurses and Alaya from the first Siberia unit survived."

Alaya looked down, "I know."

Louisa, "Serbia! It is a complete mess, no proper housing ... it is too far to manage and send supplies efficiently. Fiona made a plead to go home, but it was denied time and time again. Elsie was determined to keep Fiona."

Alaya, "Why? Why Fiona?"

"We first thought it was connected to her ego wanting to have the best and brightest at her disposal. Then it became something more personal. She wanted to hurt us and what better way is to draw funding away. The only way to achieve that is by making sure she succeeds with more daring and dangerous locations. The front line needs medical team, but it is not worth the risk. A dead surgeon is worthless. Then Fiona became Elsie's obsession."

Alaya stood angry, "To what end?"

Alaya started to pace, "I will not ask again. Please tell me what end is Elsie's obsession with Fiona?"

Louisa calmly answers, "To take her as a lover or if Fiona rejects Elsie will be damned ... she will force matrimonial offense."

Alaya runs up to Louisa, builds herself into a tall frame, looks down into Louisa's eyes, "How do you know all this?"
Louisa kisses Alaya's cool forehead, "Elsie has created many enemies. Besides Elsie drinks to her own stupidity and brags of her conquests like a pirate on the high seas. It is absolutely disgusting, very few tolerate her socially. She has been talking about a conquest of a redhead. Talking about killing two birds with one stone by hurting us and taking Fiona."

Louisa takes a deep breath knowing the pain she is causing such a special woman, "A second unit went to Siberia in January to relieve Fiona but Elsie argued that a surgeon this good should be rewarded with service. The committee insisted that if Elsie would not allow Fiona to come home, Elsie must go to Serbia to serve at Fiona's side."

Lou spoke in a mile tone, "Elise got what she wanted ... an isolated Fiona."

Louisa, "Once Elsie landed in Serbia she must have hoped the situation would create a dependency. Which Fiona would want to serve by her, become heroines together. Your Fiona made it very clear she was not interested. Fiona did her work, exemplary I might add, and kept to herself. Fiona socially isolate herself. Elsie took it as a challenge. She started scheduling Fiona to assist in simple operations, even though Fiona just finished a long shift and needed sleep."

Gently Mary spoke, "Elsie wanted to weaken Fiona to become emotionally dependent on her. She wanted to be Fiona's strength. The problem is Fiona did not falter, she worked until every patient was tended and collapsed in her small room, locked, leaving only when a surgeon was needed."

The bodies shifted, the tension of the room has gotten worse. Alaya, "What?"

Louisa cupping Alaya's face, "We know once, after a long shift Fiona went to her room. Elsie entered, we don't know how, into Fiona's room for a visit. Fiona asked her to leave, but Elsie wouldn't. She knew Fiona was fatigued and tried to take advantage. Fiona kicked and screamed. Her secretary and two nurses had to pry her off. From all accounts Fiona stood her ground. Saying things like 'I have a family', 'I am married', 'I am loved' and so forth. Elsie convinced herself that she would be better suited for Fiona."

Alaya standing smaller and just whimpering, "Oh god. My Fiona."

Louisa pulls the gentle Alaya in her arms, "During surgeries Elsie would make inappropriate comments to Fiona. Fiona would laugh them off or gently remind Elsie that she was a married woman. It was very uncomfortable for the attending staff. No matter what Elsie did, Fiona was absolutely amazing. Elsie finally stopped bother Fiona and soon the surgeries were completed without chide or improper remarks. We are not sure exactly when ..."

Louisa looked directly into Vastra's eyes, "... during surgery Elsie ask Fiona if she had any pets. Fiona said no. Elsie created a elaborate falsehood about her childhood pet. When one nurse asked what kind of animal did Elsie have as a pet she replied, lizard. The whole staff started to laugh and ask why a lizard. Elsie described the lizard's long tongue, long life and the ability to have partners for life. Fiona was quiet and concentrated on her patients. After the surgeries were completed bother Fiona and soon the surgeries were completed without chide or improper remarks. We are not sure exactly when ..."

Louisa looked directly into Vastra's eyes, "... during surgery Elsie ask Fiona if she had any pets. Fiona said no. Elsie created a elaborate falsehood about her childhood pet. When one nurse asked what kind of animal did Elsie have as a pet she replied, lizard. The whole staff started to laugh and ask why a lizard. Elsie described the lizard's long tongue, long life and the ability to have partners for life. Fiona was quiet and concentrated on her patients. After the surgeries were completed bother Fiona and soon the surgeries were completed without chide or improper remarks. We are not sure exactly when ..."

Vastra now standing, "What was in that folder?"

"It was documentation of sorts with information on the great detective, a marriage certificate and other information disclosing your family."

"Where and how?"
"We have no idea, we have done our research but ended up with nothing. No trail. Now that you know, you can investigate."

Vastra nodded and sat back down pulls Jenny close, "I am not pleased. Someone has endangered us."

"Fiona was brave."

Vastra, "Please how?"

Lou, "Our research has proved that Fiona has never mentioned a wife, a Silurian or anything personal to staff let alone Elsie. She handed back the folder and asked what this had to do with her? We don't know who could want to harm this family. Could it be related to the same who put Fiona in the Bethlem?"

Jenny jolts up and looks to Vastra, "Could it be? How could it? This doesn't make sense."

Vastra, "We must see what we can find. You are correct Jenny dear, this doesn't make sense."

Louisa, "Elsie had the upper-hand and knew it. She stalked Fiona like her prey slowly and deliberately. Elsie gave Fiona an ultimatum, bed with her or she will hand the documents to Germans for a good price. Fiona remained calm never flinching. Then it got bad for our Fiona. On one of Elsie drunken nights she came to Fiona’s room and demanded to bed her or leave. Fiona packed her things and left. That was a little over three weeks ago. We didn't know where she was. We were going to contact you, but then two week later stories of a caped red haired physician healing wounded for food and a safe night sleep."

Lou stood up and went to the table, pulling a small stack of telegrams, "The first report from a solider who was from Durrës Albania. He said a red-headed doctor was working for ferry money to Italy. Another of her giving birth to a small family in Albania. Then two weeks later Bari, Italy at a hospital where she is doing surgeries, the administration called to confirm her qualifications. She is trying to coming home."

Alaya reading the telegrams. "Why hasn't she sent us a telegram?"

Vastra, "Cross country telegrams are not only expensive but monitored. We need to get her money and support immediately. Would you call the Bari hospital to keep her there for a week or two?"

Alaya smiles, "We need to send someone who is good in geography and country information be able to find Fiona."

Louisa, "The hospital is keeping her safe. She was told to stay put by Detective Alaya and Doctor Anderson. We came directly after we hung up the phone."

Vastra smiles and nods to her daughter. Alaya leaves the house at once.

Louisa, "Where is she going?"

"To get a guide and specialist."
Go Team

Alaya rings the bell for four-d at 47 New Bond Street. She waits as she can feel the rumbling of someone coming down the interior stairs.

The doors open. It is Miss Shaw with Miss Gardner standing behind with an umbrella to be used as a weapon. Alaya thinks to herself, 'how adorable'.

"Your services are needed. Please come to the office, after you are properly dressed."

Miss Shaw nods.

"We need you both. So please do not leave your Allie at home alone."

Miss Shaw smiles, "We shall be there shortly. Good evening."

Alaya heads back home. As she follows the pavement to Clifford Street her senses are on standby. Her scales have clamped down on her body like armour. Someone is following me. She casually turns on Cork Street and then again on the mews. That is where she runs, she runs to the end of the mews and climbs the wall. Runs along the rooftops to see who is following ... she look down and see four individuals turning into Cork Street Mews running.

She remains in the shadows from the rooftops. When the four come to the dead end they look around ... she is trying to hear, but no one is talking. She waits and watches. The four head out back to the main streets. A car pulls up and all four get in and drive towards the Thames.

She waits and then climbs down at the dead end. She licks the air and studies the ground. She decides to not do this alone and will return to the spot with her mother. She climbs to the rooftops and heads home.

She enters the drawing-room as Vastra and Louisa update the two.

Mother Jenny looks to her daughter with concern while Alaya can offer no response. She leans into her wife, without a thought Vastra puts her arm around her Jenny and pulls her close.

Alaya comes to stand to the other side of Vastra to catch up on the conversation.

Miss Gardner, "The transportation options are limited between here and Italy. The war has dominated the seas and the rails."

"You will have to go by your wits." Vastra responds honestly. "I would go, Alaya would be halfway across France by now. We are putting all our confidence in the two of you. Which means if your instincts are triggered ... follow them. Trust yourself. When you get our Fiona, come straight home by what ever means necessary. You will have funds at your disposal."

Miss Shaw, "Would you like regular communications by telegram?"

"No! Only under dire circumstances ... and they truly must be dire." Alaya's words just spilled out of her mouth with thought. She can't wait to get her mothers alone to discuss those four men.

"Any questions?" Mother Vastra asks the two young adventurers.

"Just one." Miss Gardner smiles, "When do we leave?"
Late in the evening, after all guests have left, Alaya remained behind in the drawing room. She looks to the map on the wall, re-reads each telegram and re-plays the information in her head. She speaks to the map, "My wife is too far for me to feel. I want her home."

"She will come home, she is doing her best." those soft words come from her Mother Jenny who is standing in the doorway.

Alaya puts her finger on the map at Bari, Italy and looks carefully as she follows the roads winding through mountains, small cities, around lakes and keeps going up the map, crossing water to Dover and finally to London. "It is a long way."

"Yes, she is coming home."

"I have hope, Mother. I am worried because of the unknowns."

"My dear Alaya, there is a war going on... everything is an unknown."

"Mother, have you ever thought about having more children?"

"I have."

Alaya moves to be within a few feet from Mother Jenny. Alaya glides her tongue up and down her mother's cheek. I taste, "Love and curiosity."

Mother Jenny lets out a soft laugh, "I guess curiosity is the best way to explain how I feel."

"What do you feel?"

"I am not sure myself. Thank you for asking. You never asked what your Mother and I about our feeling, it is usually advice you seek."

"Truly? Have I been that insensitive?"

"You have not been insensitive, you are our daughter. It is a rarity to have a child concern with the emotional feelings of a parent."

"I am your daughter, not a child."

"You will always be my daughter and a child. Even when you are a hundred year old half-Silurian, you shall be my child."

Mother Jenny pauses, "You returned late when you went to retrieve Miss Gardner and Miss Shaw. Why?"

"I was being followed."

"Vastra!"

Mother Jenny rarely uses that tone. It made Alaya's scales tense, she doesn't want her mother to worry, 'I need to learn not to be so blunt'.

A light noise is heard through the residence and poof there is Mother Vastra standing in front of Mother Jenny, protective. "Alaya was followed."

Alaya explained what happened and the four individuals.
"Let's investigate and go to the alley."

Alaya nods yes and moves to go upstairs to change herself. She passes by her Mothers, "Fiona would like to start a family, after she is settled back into our lives. She want our children to grow up with friends. Fiona would like me to, delicately, inquire if Mother and I stop injections after she returns home."

Both mothers are still and speechless. Vastra pulls her wife close, "I love my family ... I have the capacity to love more or just our grandchildren. It makes no difference to me. It is your body's burden." She kisses her wife's forehead, "Although, this time around it would be different."

"How would it be different?"

"This time I am prepared for the mood swings, weird food desires and I will always be wrong."

"Oi, was I that bad?"

Vastra pulls away from her wife and teases, "I shall just say I love you." She then leads her wife into their master bedroom. "We need to get ready for the hunt!"

Jenny follows asking again, "Was I that bad? Mood swings? Answer me Madame Vastra or I will show you mood swings."
Miss Shaw and Miss Gardner are looking forward to a peaceful rest. They have been doing their best to sleep in their third-class seats, but the war has made it impossible. Connections are sometimes it is hours in between while other times it is a race to catch a train.

After leaving Paris instead of going through Switzerland the train diverted along the German border, the two kept their heads. In quite tones they agreed to keep calm and stay the course. The train stopped seven times. Each stop a German soldiers would request passports, papers and ask questions.

"There is a war going on. It is not a good time to take a holiday. Why are you going to see such things?"

Miss Gardner simply replies, "That is why we want to see it now. A bomb could turn everything to gravel." Miss Shaw would nod her head in agreement with her excited puppy dog eyes.

Each one would respond in their native tongue verrückte Frauen, dummes Kind even törichte Mädchen. It irritated Miss Gardner and Miss Shaw would simply remind her Allie, "Let them think of us as idiots instead of an enemy or item of desire."

"I don't mind them calling me stupid, nobody calls my Tori dumb or a child."

"I feel the same way. What you think of me is more important than any man, woman or soldier. Unless secretly you feel I am just a child?"

Allie blushes at the comment and responds in soft tones, "You are not and I love your mind."

Without looking into her lover's eyes Tori smiles, "Good, now let's rest before the next reizt soldat bothers us again."

They kept to their roles the entire train ride along the German border.

Saturday evening Miss Shaw consults with the small Innsbruck parish for camping permission. They set up their tent using the canvas, walking sticks and rope. Finally the two take a breath of familiarity to gather thoughts, agenda and expenses.

Tori explains as Allie writes in the travel journal. "We have given the parish a 10p donation. I was told we can't build a fire or leave any rubbish. At least we have privacy. A room at the inn would have cost us over ten sterling. The wine, bread and butter cost us 50p."

"The only issue is ... I am not interested in carrying a half bottle of wine. We will need to drink it all before Monday."

"I am up for the challenge," Tori offers with a smile.

"How are you holding up? Is travelling everything you expected?" Allie looks into Tori's eyes to evaluate her words and expression for a full understanding.

"We are working, but all this rushing through countries. No stopping, appreciating or sightseeing ... it is quite frustrating." Tori replies with a bit of sadness.

"I must confess I am also frustrated..." Allie takes her Tori's hand. "In the future we shall take as much time as you want in each city. We shall read every notice, visit every site and take as many
tours as you desire."

"It is knowing how close we are to artwork, statues and other cultural items ... yet we need to keep moving."

"Tori, have you ever been out of London?"

She shakes her head no.

"Neither have I. Why don't we see the sites within reach. There is Ireland, Scotland and Wales." Allie flips through her travel journal, "In Ireland there is a stone, according to legend, kissing the stone endows the kisser with the gift of gab."

"Oh dear, I better keep you away from the stone. You might end up buzzing like a bee."

"Would you rather I be more quiet?"

"You are so quiet at work and then you come home like letting air out of balloon."

"I am sorry, I didn't know."

"Don't change. My home, our home, has never been so alive. Besides, just like a balloon, all the air leaves and you give me peace and quiet. I do cherish our reading together."

"I do too. I promise when we get back home I will be courteous with my zealous conversations."

"Please be patient with me. I have been prepared to live a spinster's life alone with my books and travel. Now my life is changed ... and the improvements are most amazing. I find you not only refreshing but I shall never grow tired of you speaking to me. It is not as if you are talking for the sake of hearing your own voice. You truly want to share with me, why would I want that to stop?"

"I take your needs seriously." Allie smiles, "I suspect I shall never change, but I can tweak my personal habits. I have given up many years ago to have my parent's eyes. There are too many siblings who fight and claw for their attention. Now I have someone who sincerely and freely pays attention to me ... why would I not take advantage? I shall be more cautious."

"It is getting late and soon we will shall have only the moonlight. We better eat and get to sleep. Tomorrow we might explore. I want to take full advantage."

"Yes, but let us make sure there isn't a train going to Italy. I want our exploration to be guilt-free."

Tori nods as she thinks to herself, 'my Allie is the best mixture of adventure and responsibility. I am lucky."

"Tori." Allie touches her hand, "You can share with me."

"I was just thinking how lucky I am to have you."

"It wasn't luck that brought us together. You, as you say, became brave. I am the lucky one."

They slept through the cold night with the help of wine and keeping close.

Sunday morning came with cloudy skies and the constant threat of rain. It didn't matter to the travelling duo after being assured, by the ticket office, there will be no train travel south until Monday morning. They took in as much as their intellects and eyes were able to register.
Monday morning they were back on the rails, zipping through town after town. The further they travel towards Italy the more stressful the train ride. "I fear going back might be more difficult. What are our options?"

Allie opens her notes and small map. She lays it down for both to see.

"If we go to western shore of Italy we have more options. Catch a boat ..." as Allie points to the map "here ... here or here."

"That is plenty of walking."

"We can do it!" Allie looks to Tori with confidence.

"The question is; how fit is Mrs Fiona?"

After leaving 15 Savile Row Miss Shaw and Miss Gardner were excited at the prospect of seeing other countries. Tori and Allie look over their shared bed covered with items to pack.

"Oh my dear, this is too much. We need to figure this out."

"Essentials only? But how do we decide?"

"Food we can split between knapsacks. Shall dress like Heidi?"

"I don't believe that is a good idea. We are not heading towards a destination. We are returning, we don't know if Fiona can carry her own things."

"What do we do without?"

The two aggressively removed redundant items, trimming down to bare necessities and evaluating single purpose items. The stand back and look at their work.

"I believe we have nothing left to discard."

Tori pulling her Allie close, "I believe so."

The next morning they arrive at 15 Savile Row with one knapsack a piece with a rolled item on the bottom and each have a rolled canvas on the top.

Now the two at standing on a crowded station waiting for the southbound rail. "Allie, please stay close. I don't want to lose you."

Allie quickly tethers herself to Tori's knapsack. "I will always be behind you."

The train enters the station, the doors open and instantly the crowd descends into the rail cars. Tori is doing her best to lead, the rope isn't enough. She puts her hand out and waits, soon the familiar warmth is locked and they bully through until they find two seats next to each other.

Tori leans in and whispers, "Yes, we need an alternative. Everyone is going south. We shall certainly stand out returning the way we came."

Almost two days later, they arrive ... Bari, Italy.

The only expense is the taxi ride to Ospedale San Paolo. They go through the front doors and ask to see "Dr. Flint-Saint Clair" the administration just offer blank stares. Allie tries another approach, "Scottish Capelli Rossi Dottore".
"Ahhh! Capelli Rossi Dottore" The lead nurse makes a phone call as she points to empty seats. Miss Shaw and Miss Gardner sit and wait.

Thirty minutes later the Scottish red-haired Doctor exits through double doors carrying a carpet bag and a big smile.
Our Lives

Alaya drags a chair and sits down four feet in front of the map tacked to the wall. She stares at the points, telegrams and travel markings. She is looking for something, she isn't sure. She is transfixed, it has become her obsession ... any-time she is home she looks at the map. It is her only connection she has to her human wife. Fiona's scent is gone, not a trace is found anywhere in the home.

"This is not healthy." Mother Vastra speaks as she goes to the shelf to return a book.

"I know, I don't care."

Mother Vastra just shakes her head in disappointment while looking for her next literature selection. "You know what happens with unhealthy obsessions."

Silence.

Mother Vastra leaves the room and few seconds later pulling her wife by the hand. She points to Alaya whispering, "Look. She is at it again. This must be her human side, a Silurian doesn't obsessively brood."

"Oi, you too sulk. Don't blame this on humans." Mother Jenny looks painfully at her daughter and then back at her wife. "How will you react when I die permanently?"

Alaya spins her head to view her Mother Vastra's reaction.

Mother Vastra looks with unspeakable eyes, cups her wife's face and kisses gently. "I will not allow myself to put energy to the thought."

Alaya returns her attention to the map.

"Well your daughter faces the thought now."

Mother Vastra looks at her daughter and then leaves the room.

"Vastra! Where are you going?" Mother Jenny leaves the room chasing her wife.

Vastra goes to her office and before she closes the door behind her Jenny stops it with her foot. "We can't let her do this alone. What if Fiona doesn't come back! We need to reach Alaya now. Our daughter screams inside."

"How do you know?"

"Have you forgot your loss? Your sisters? Have you not forgotten Trenzalore?" Jenny grabs her wife's wrist and the coolness stirs her heart. "I do not want to stir up such dreadful memories. My love, please remember." Jenny then returns to the drawing-room. She drags a chair next to her daughter and sits quietly.

Mother Vastra enters the room with a ladder and begins to take down the map.

Alaya jolts out of the chair, stands in front of the ladder and does her best to hold her mother's arm still. "No, please." Alaya softly prays to her mother, "Please leave it."

"This map is only causing you suffering." Mother Vastra kindly offers as a reason for her current action.
"Please leave it up." Alaya looks to her Mother Jenny for assistance.

"Alaya, I honestly support your Mother." She looks to her daughter with tears in her eyes. "When you are home you sit here and do nothing else. What else can we do?"

"Tell me," Alaya looks to her Mother Vastra.

"Tell you what?"

"How will you react when Mother dies?"

Silence

Mother Jenny notices the small twitch in her wife's hand. She knows her Vastra is fighting anger. She can see her wife's neck pulsating as the Silurian's heart is pounding without relief. She runs to her side. "Please come down."

Vastra hears her wife's plea, lets the maps top corner fold over and climbs down the ladder. Instantly she grabs her wife and pulls her close. They hold each other creating a small world of their own ignoring the war and their daughter.

Alaya is patient.

Vastra moves her wife to the love-seat and maintain the close contact. "Please Alaya sit."

Alaya drags the chair to be facing her mothers.

"I would be lost. Simply lost."

Mother Jenny leans into Alaya's mother.

Mother Vastra continues, "I know what it feels like to have someone disappear. I was lost. I cried into the thick air and your mother didn't respond. She ceased to exist, but I had her scent on me. I could not forget."

'I have no scent, I wish I had a scent.' Alaya humbly tells herself as she clasps her hands.

Mother Jenny sits up and grabs her daughter's hands.

"I was completely alone. I ached and died within seconds. My soul was consumed by rage, beyond repair." Mother Vastra took in a deep breath.

Silence

"Breath dear." Mother Jenny says as reaches around to hold out her hand as Mother Vastra grabs it within seconds.

"Anger is always the shortest distance to a mistake. Please don't let any emotion be your biggest mistake."

"I understand. How do I get past this?" Alaya asks.

"You get up and keep your mind busy. Learn to give reverence to your emotions, learn to live your life. Even if it hurts to smile, feel guilty to laugh or when all you want to do is punch something when you are listening to music. You will feel many emotions through strife ... find a way to allow both. If you don't it will be a hard when Fiona returns home."
"When Fiona returns all will return to normal." Alaya laughs out loud, "Normal. We shall never be normal."

"If you maintain this obsessive behaviour when Fiona returns you will find that it was wasted time. You have nothing new to offer your life, your wife or your family. When your children ask what you did while their mommy was gone, what do you want to tell them? Will you lie to them?"

Alaya becomes stunned, 'how will I answer them?'

"How will you answer Fiona when she asked what you did while she was gone. How do you want to look back this time? Do you want to remember yourself being a recluse? The choice is yours, the choice is ours."

Alaya gets up and climbs the ladder, reattaches the map to the wall and looks to her mothers, "I want to keep the map. It is important to me." Dust from the map makes her nose itch and she scratches the tip. She takes a breath in, on her wrist ... she smells the scent. 'Our Scent.' She smiles back to her mothers watching her, "All will be fine. I am my own enemy."

Alaya's mothers nod in agreement.

Nine months pass.

Alaya wakes up to the August morning heat covering her like a heated blanket. It was wonderful, she smiled at such a delight.

Since it was Sunday she just allowed herself to be lazy. She slowly uncurled her body, got up while stretching and put on her housecoat. She went down stairs to retrieve that paper, returning upstairs to the kitchen and makes herself a small breakfast.

Alaya takes her tea, toast with jam, and the newspaper into the drawing room. She turns her attention to the map on the wall and goes through all the war correspondences. She proceeds to make marks and drawing lines based on the latest news.

She steps back and evaluates the map and thinks to herself, 'I hope they have decided to west.'

Alaya eats her small breakfast she continues to read the whole paper. Page five under the fold

_During a major Austrian offensive, Dr Elsie Inglis and another eighty women, financed by the London Suffrage Society to support Serbian soldiers in Russia, were captured and sent to prison. Negotiations have begun._

Alaya continues to read, she will discuss this with her mothers. At this time she can't form her emotions neither pity or anger.

"What are your plans today?"

Alaya looks up to see her mothers bringing in their breakfast trays, they sits down at the table. Mother Vastra looks up at the map for any new information and grabs the first sections of the newspaper.

"I see they are moving south. Let's hope they have decided to go west." Mother Vastra as she looks at the map.
Alaya nods yes, "Mothers the British Museum has two exhibits I would be interested in seeing."

"That sound like fun, what are the exhibits?" Mother Jenny asks over her tea cup.

Alaya points to the British Museum posting, "The collection of fans and fan-leaves by Lady Charlotte Schreiber. Exhibition of watercolours Both from the Department of Prints and Drawings and will on display in the King Edward VII Galleries"

"That is a large gallery," interjects Mother Vastra from the newspaper. "I would like to see the watercolors. Jenny dear, do you have interest?"

"I am not going to have a conversation with a newspaper." Mother Jenny smiles to her daughter.

The newspaper folds down, "My apologies. I appreciate your desire to see my smile. Do you have any interest in the exhibits?"

"I would be interested in both. How about watercolors this Sunday and the fan exhibit next Sunday?"

"Marvellous idea."

"I like that plan, but I must inform you that the fan collection, according to the catalogue, is over three-hundred. Sleeping till," Alaya turns to look at the mantle clock, "One in the afternoon will not give us enough time to see the whole collection."

Mother Vastra went back to reading the newspaper, "We shall depart from our sleeping quarters when we desire, not a moment too soon."

"May I offer an incentive? What would encourage you to wake early on a Sunday morning?"

There is a slight clicking sounds from behind the newspaper.

"Vastra!" chide Mother Jenny with a blushed face.

"She asked an honest question."

"She is our child."

"She is an adult"

Alaya has learned to ignore their playfulness, but she has gotten comfortable and doesn't want to leave. "Mother, would it be helpful if I made breakfast?"

Mother Jenny looks back to her daughter. "That would be fine. What would you make?"

Mother Vastra continues to talk from behind the newspaper, "It depends on what you prepare. If I wake up early to find tea, toast and jam I shall go back to our room."

"I will prepare something worthy of your presence at breakfast." She rolls her eyes while smiling at her Mother Jenny.

"Sounds wonderful ... Jenny come look at this."

Mother Jenny comes to her wife's side. After she read the two lines under the fold. "I don't feel a thing for Elsie, but those poor women. I am glad our Fiona has not remained. Small blessings."
Alaya smiles, it was what she needed to hear to understand what she was feeling.

After breakfast the three women walked to the British Museum and on their way home they decided to enjoy the warm summer with supper on the plaza.

The following Sunday, at nine in the morning, there was a knock on the master-bedroom's door. Their daughter's voice is on the other side, "Good morning. Breakfast is ready." Jenny and Vastra both grimace. They listen as their daughter walks away, stops and returns to knock again. "Nothing is burnt." Both Vastra and Jenny spring up and quickly go to the drawing-room to see a breakfast fit for a queen. Omelettes, bacon and coffee.

Alaya waits, anxiously, as the mother taste their breakfast.

"This is delicious," as Mother Vastra chomps down with usual Silurian appetite. "What's in this?"

Alaya smiles, "I went to the library yesterday before shopping and found this recipe in Pot-luck cookbook. You can put any sort of meat, sweets or even just cheese. I made both of yours with a bit of meat and cheese. I made mine with mushrooms. It has high protein and should last us till a small tea at noon."

"Very good." Mother Jenny as she has another bite.

The they continue to eat while Alaya describes from the catalogue the various fans they will see in the exhibit.

It was another beautiful Sunday, with a generous walk to the museum and a light tea at noon.

Alaya allows herself to be sad all the while the glitter of happiness covers her body. She reminds herself, 'I went to the museum today to see an exhibit with my mothers.' She walks home talking with her mothers proud of her life and missing her wife at the same time.
Going Home

Fiona sees Miss Shaw and Miss Gardner immediately as she enters the main waiting room.

"Attendere Medico Saint- Claire Ho bisogno di parlare con te !"

Fiona turns to the voice and she sees Doctor Viscardi administrator with his assistant. "My friends are here to take me home. Thank you for your kindness."

His assistant translates, "I miei amici sono qui per portarmi a casa . Grazie per la vostra gentilezza."

"Lo so, sei stato molto utile . Si prega di tornare di nuovo. Se hai bisogno di un lavoro . Inoltre , qui è il pagamento per i vostri servizi." Doctor Viscardi hands an envelope to Fiona.

"I humbly accept, only because my journey home will be difficult. I will write when I have arrived home safely. Please be safe and good luck." Fiona waits for the assistant translates.

"Chiamerò il vostro ospedale e far loro sapere che avrete lasciato con i tuoi amici. Essere sicuro e spero di arrivare a casa con piccola sfida."

Fiona waits for the translation. She nods and offers her hand in friendship.

She walks towards Miss Shaw and Miss Gardner who are now standing ready to leave. "Shall we go home?"

As the trio walk out the door Fiona asks, "Which way do we head home?"

"We can't go home the direct route. North is becoming a terrible state of affairs."

Miss Gardner pulls out her small map. "We should go west and then find a way north. We are going by our wits."

"We should get rest, take inventory and plan together." Miss Shaw adds as she hails a taxi, "We had a stressful time these past few days."

All three women get into taxi. Miss Shaw tells the driver, "Si prega di alloggio."

Miss Gardner smiles to a shocked Fiona, "I know. She is amazing."

In less than fifteen minutes the three women are in a hotel room with two double beds.

"Doctor Flint-Saint Clair, we need to take inventory of everything we have." Miss Gardner commands.

"Miss Gardner I think that is prudent. Shall we lay everything out on the beds?"

"Please call me," She looks to her Tori who offers an approving smile, "Allie. Please call Miss Shaw Tori."

"Allie and Tori. I like that." She watches as both women look a little flushed. "Shall we?"

All three women lay out all their items and food on the floor.

Allie laughs looking at all their things, "I shall be glad when I change into something new. This skirt
has kept me company long enough. We shall divide everything tomorrow morning. Tonight we should eat, take baths and get a good night sleep."

Everyone agrees.

Tori goes to the in-line phone. "Is there anything specific you would like to eat. This could be our last meal for a very long time."

"I would love something other than broth." Fiona quickly remarks, "After weeks of hospital soup I want my teeth to feel useful again."

"Anything that would give me sustaining power. I trust you."

"Allie, what desert should we try?"

Allie runs over to the pile on the floor and picks up her black journal. She pages through, "Tear-a-mesue"

Tori smiles and picks up the in-line receiver, "Servizio in camera prega. Sì, il servizio in camera? Questa è la stanza 203. Siamo lieti di ordinare la cena. Sarebbe tre cene bistecca con verdure, contorno scelta, due bottiglie di vino rosso e tre porzioni di tiramisù. Grazie." She puts down the receiver and looks to her companions, "We shall eat well tonight."

"Now, let's look at our map." Allie lays it out on the table for all three, "We should not go the same way we came. Coming down here the train was controlled by the Germans. We needs to go west. According to the newspapers the eastern coast is constant under threat of war. Coming down there were empty trains heading north." Allie discusses the option, but each one starts out in Naples. "So do you agree?"

Tori and Fiona nod.

"I can't tell you wonderful it is to have faces from home."

"I am sorry your Alaya isn't here."

"I am not, Alaya or Mother Vastra would have added more stress to an already tense situation. I am glad you both came, truly." Fiona looks to them with honest eyes of friendship. "My mother has always liked the two of you. Alaya has done her best to keep me updated. Tori, I am glad you became brave."

"Me, too." Allie pulling her Tori close.

After a hearty meal, two bottles of wine the three head to bed.

Fiona and Tori wake up to see Allie sitting at the table evaluating the map. The both go to the table. Tori touches her shoulder, "Allie, what are you looking at?"

"We are out of options."

"What?" Fiona asks.

Allie hands the paper to Tori, "I was told that northern Italy is off limits. There are battles. We have to go west, over the water."

Tori reads the paper.
"Well then we walk and hop on a boat. Does it really matter, as long as we keep moving?" Fiona offers her confidence.

"Yes, I am afraid Allie is correct. The war in Northern Italy is intense. We would have to maintain course alone the coast, into souther France before we start heading north again."

"Hugging the coast?" Allie asks.

"Yes it seems the battles are along the east coast and inland. If we go home along the western coast," As she using her finger to drag along the coast on the map, "We then can go home south of France."

"There are no trains along the way. We would have to walk."

Fiona stands a little taller, "Then we walk."

Allie takes a deep breath, "If we don't sleep and walk straight to London it would take 25 days."

"Oh." Fiona sits down at the edge of the bed.

"How much money do we have?"

Allie opens the black wallet and journal, "We have three-thousand pounds. We did not spend one-tenth coming down."

Fiona opens the envelope she received from the Hospital. "How much do we have now?"

Tori counts the money, "It is about two-hundred pounds. More than enough. I know how we will get home," Tori slams down the paper and points to an advertisement, "We take this home."

Fiona stands up, looks where Tori is pointing, and smiles.

Allie looks at the advertisement and stands excited, "We have to manage our money differently." She looks to Tori and Fiona, "We will have to keep warm, allocate funds for upkeep ... we can do this!" She hugs her Tori and kisses her on the lips. She immediately steps back, "I am sorry. Please forgive me for my forwardness."

Fiona smiles and laughs, "I would do the same, but I am a married woman."

They pack their belongings, pay the hotel bill and grab a taxi. Tori instructs the driver, "Vi preghiamo di prendere al rivenditore di automobili più vicino."

Within a few hours, after giving instructions to Miss Gardner, the women are on the road in a Fiat Zero with three extra gas tanks, two extra wheels, and a bottle of wine heading home.
Strange Noise

Alaya is woke up with her mouth buzzing. She sits up and hears a faint bell.

She runs downstairs banging on their room, yelling "Mothers! Mothers!" She continues to go to the ground floor and hits her perception device as she opens the door. She looks to see four men, two are down by her Fiona as she is holding on to the bicycle blocking their attacks while ringing the bell.

"Welcome home!" Alaya kicks the first man down, punches the next.

Mother Vastra jumped from the second floor windows and is standing with katanas in on hand, "Alaya, catch!"

Two seconds later Alaya is using her chakram to protect her wife with a swift throw the weapon banks off one wall, leaving an open wound on the one to the right who falls to the ground clutching his calf. Alaya whips the chakram again this time it banks off the other wall hitting the second man to his shoulder, leaving a gaping wound who also falls to the ground trying to stop the bleeding.

Alaya looks to her mother, who now has the other two men tied leading them down the steps to the basement entrance. Alaya leaps down and steps over the wounded men to look at her wife and just smiles. Fiona smiles back.

All four men are tied up in the old basement kitchen. Fiona is tending their wounds while Vastra is asking questions while holding a blade to the throat of her chosen victim.

"Who are you?"

Silence

"What do you want?"

Silence

Jenny enters the kitchen and sees the four men alive but wounded. She goes to take care of their wounds to see a familiar redhead already on the task. They smile. Jenny turns to her wife. "There is a car out front and two men are coming down the stairs."

Vastra prepares with her two katanas.

Jenny stands to the right her wife with both of her humans holding tight a katana.

Alaya stands to the left of her Mother Vastra with a katana in her right hand and chakram in her left.

Fiona runs up to her stand in her rightful place left of her wife with her cricket bat prepared to swing sixes all night.

The basement door is opened. In walk in a tall grey haired man with a small man with glasses. He speaks with a slow distinctive and overly enunciation, "We don't mean any harm."

Vastra stands prepared to attack, "Who are you and what do you want?"

"Nothing we want something you have."

"I am in no mood for games. Who are you? I shall not repeat myself again." Vastra is also irritated
that his responses are as if the gramophone is on the wrong setting with low tones.

"You are no position to ask questions."

"You are in my home, a stranger. So humour me."

"I am insignificant. I am on a mission of God."

"Papal Mainframe?" Jenny asks with a soft whisper towards Vastra.

"Are you with the Vatican?" Vastra asks the grey hair man.

"You are a bright one. Although I was told that you were a reptilian species. It just goes to show that even churches can get their facts wrong."

"What do you want?"

"We want an simple item you have in your possession."

"What is that? We have many things. We have a tea kettle, but I have not successfully found my stash of tea."

Fiona smiles.

Both men look towards Fiona

Fiona smiles disappears and her hand tightens around her cricket bat.

"You want her?" Vastra asks.

Both men slowly shake their heads no.

"You want her cape?"

Both men slowly shake their heads no.

"You want her shoes?"

Both men slowly shake their heads no.

"I guess that is all, unless you want her naked, she has nothing of value."

The smaller gentleman walks close to Fiona, Alaya blocks him with her katana at his throat. Vastra warns the smaller man, "Step one centimeter closer and you will become headless."

The smaller gentleman steps back.

Vastra throws her authority, "I am the head of the household. What do you want?"

"Isn't it obvious, we want the cricket bat."

Fiona becomes stiff, "You can't have it, it belongs to me. Only me!"

Vastra while keeping her head looking at the taller grey man, "Fiona."

Fiona turns her head towards Mother Vastra, Alaya puts a finger to her mouth and almost kisses it.
Fiona smiles and nods understands to keep quiet and allow Mother Vastra to maintain control.

"As you can see the young woman has spoken. It belongs to her."

"Pity." The tall man shakes his head in mock sadness. "We can take it by force. Nobody has to get hurt."

"I look to my right, to my left and I notice there isn't a wound inflicted on any of us. To your left there are four men who are wounded. We tended their wounds. Where should we send the medical bill?"

The tall man laughs and tilts his head to the ceiling, "I enjoy your sense of humour. My men were not properly equipped. Next time they will be and if they have to slice off the good Doctor's arms to obtain the bat ... we will do what we must." The grey haired man looks to Fiona, "What a pity all that hard work to become a Doctor wasted because you wouldn't hand over a cricket bat. Don't be a fool."

"You do not speak to anyone but me." Vastra straighten up and her anger beamed through her eyes, "You touch one hair on her and I sear the Vatican will have to hire more young men to feed every bishop, cardinal, patriarch and even the pope. What ever fate befalls this young lady will be their fate." The grey haired man eyes widen, "If you have any information on me, you will know I will do what utters from my lips."

"I guess our negotiations failed." The grey hair man looks to his smaller associate.

"I did not hear any negotiations. I heard threats and demands."

"True. My apologies. Shall I start negotiations."

"Not tonight," Vastra looks into the grey hair man's eyes.

"Ah, I see. Lets say one month. I am a patient man, lets say in a month my associate and I come to visit."

"You are not welcome into my home."

"I understood we made a terrible first impression."

"First and second impression."

"Yes, the night we were caught following," He points to Alaya, "That one. She is smart."

"We shall be in touch." As the grey hair man looks to his wounded crew, "I will send a telegram when and where."

"No, we will pick the location."

The grey hair man nods in agreement.

"Why do you want a child's cricket bat?"

Fiona looks to Vastra with anger in her eyes and barley whispers, 'it isn't a child's bat.' Vastra smiles.

"It has power to defeat our enemies." He turns his back and watches as his pitiful men leave the
building. Before he closes the door he looks to Vastra, "Negotiations will be begin in a month."

Vastra locks the door and runs up stairs to watch all the men leave in the automobile. She opens the
door and licks the air, "Their scent lingers. They are gone." She turns back to her family. "Welcome home ..."

Alaya has returned to her half-Silurian self and it holding her wife in a tight embrace.
Now That I am Home

Alaya grabs her wife's body up in her arms and carries her up the stairs to the drawing-room. "When did you get home?"

"Moments before I rang the bell. We went directly to Tori and Alaya All of our stuff is combined, were are too tired to divide our things. I immediately came home, that is when I noticed I was being followed. I calmly walked to our home and went to my bicycle to call for help. It was just moments. They didn't harm me. Here I thought coming home would be a peaceful reunion." Fiona smiles as she touches every scale on her wife's face. "I missed you so much."

Alaya places her wife on the chaise and proceeds to take off her wife's shoes and notices the blue ribbon tied to her ankle. She unties the ribbon and pulls out the leather pouch. She pulls off the socks and sees what she has suspected there are sores. When Fiona stood next to her she would not stand sure-footed and kept re-balancing herself. "I will be right back."

"Mother Vastra, you truly have not found the tea?"

"You have hid it well." Mother Jenny laughs, "My poor Silurian is truly beset by the hidden tea supply."

"I shall start looking for my Scottish whiskey tomorrow." Fiona teases, "Do I get a hint?"

"No. Good luck I hope you are tortured as much as I." Mother Vastra smiles.

"I have so much to tell you, my travels and thank you so much for sending Miss Shaw and Miss Gardner. It was generous of you." She stretches out her arms, "Please mothers come closer."

Mother Vastra and Mother Jenny come to be by Fiona's side. "We are glad you are home little one. You were missed." Vastra instinctively tastes Fiona with her tongue down her cheek and around her neck. It was a different touch than her wife's, it was unexpected but she didn't flinch. It felt loving and tender, like a hug from her mother.

"That was nice, you can do that any-time you want to know me or taste me. That felt motherly."

"My family scent is whole again."

Mother Jenny cupped Fiona's head in her hands and kissed her cheeks. "Welcome home."

"We would have come ourselves if it was possible. Alaya alone would have followed you to Serbia."

Alaya returns with a basin of water, towels and a first aid kit. She cleans cleans her wife's feet and tends the wounds. As she is wrapping a bandage she looks to her wife's eyes gazing directly into her own. "I would have come, but your letter convinced me"

"How is my brown-eyed half-Silurian? I truly wanted to shock you and halt to whatever noble romantic gesture you were going to attempt."

"I am pleased you are home." Alaya gently wraps her tongue around her wife's wrists and with the tip of the tongue licks the pulse point. Slowly she slinks back her tongue and smiles.

Fiona starts to yawn, "I am sorry it was a long trip and it is very late. Would you mind if I rested my
eyes?"

"We shall have a good meal tomorrow night and celebrate your return. Good Night." Mother Jenny offers.

"You fought bravely." Vastra smiles, "Your instincts didn't falter. I am proud of you."
Fiona nods and blushes knowing that it is wasn't just about being ready to fight.
The mothers head back to their bedroom.

"We are both tired, it was an eventful night. Please rest I will tend your wounds." Alaya gently cleans the wounds and put on proper bandage.

Fiona in a sleepy tone, "I suspect you do not have off tomorrow. Do not worry, I could use the time to get acclimated back into being home."

Alaya smiles.

Alaya finishes the bandages and stands up, brings over a blanket and covers her wife.

Alaya leaves the drawing-room and knocks on her mother's door. Mother Jenny answers in a housecoat, "May I have a moment?" Mother Jenny opens the door wider.

"How are you?" Mother Jenny asks knowing full well that a year changes things.

"Does she still love me?" Alaya looks to the floor with clutched hands.

Mother Vastra is by her daughter's side, "When she fought where did she stand? Was it by me? Your Mother Jenny? She could have stood anywhere or hide behind us for protection. If there is any doubt look to her instincts. Look to the passion of her actions. She is loyal, strong and worthy of your love. You are stronger, more confident and prepared to adjust to life. No matter what happens, you have lived and survived. Stand proud my dearest."

"Thank you." Alaya hugs her Mother Vastra with such glee that it surprised the tall Silurian. She pulls back, holding her Mother Jenny's hand, "How are you two?"

"We have a month to investigate and obtain a solution. So let us take time out for ourselves and our family." Vastra speaking directly to her wife.

Mother Jenny nods.

"Be near your wife, you only have a few hours until you must go to work." Mother Vastra commands with a smile.

"Good Night!" Alaya offers before she closes the door and heads back to the drawing-room to watch over her sleeping wife.

Alaya grabs pillows and blanket, quietly dragging a chair next to the head of the chaise. She lays down and holds her wife's hand. It took another fifteen minutes before Alaya fell completely asleep, she lost the fight trying to stay awake to watch her wife sleep.

It seems like minutes have passed as she is woken as Mother Jenny whispering in her ear, "Good Morning. Time to wake up."

Alaya blinks open as she remembers the night before and looks down to her hand. Fiona has held it
all night. Alaya smiles and looks to her mother, "She is home."

"Yes, you need to get ready for work. I have made coffee."

Alaya nods, slowly pulls her hand out of her wife's gentle hold and exits the drawing-room shutting the door behind.

"I will get changed. Mother, please if you do not mind but pack me a lunch? It would be helpful. I have much to do."

"Of course."

Alaya quickly goes through her task list before she leaves for work. After she changes into her detective uniform, eaten her breakfast, she creeps into the drawing-room, gently kisses her sleeping wife's forehead and heads off to work.

The sunbeam slowly moves across the drawing-room to shine brightly on sleepy red-head. Fiona stretches and smiles at being home. She sits up to see the message cylinder. She spells her name and out pops a note.

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My Dearest Fiona

Welcome home. I hope you slept well. There is food in the kitchen, coffee and if you are tempted there are sweets. I shall be home around four in the afternoon. Enjoy your day. Please let your feet heal.

Your Alaya

PS Tonight we shall sleep in our own bed. I will remove the hot water bottles for my love is home.

---

Fiona loved that her butterflies danced in her stomach.

She goes into the kitchen and makes herself a light meal of coffee, toast and jam. She quickly looks under Mother Vastra's choice seat to make sure the tea remains. She smiles seeing nothing has been tampered.

Once breakfast is done she heads up to take a nice hot bath. After she is dried she looks at her clothing, she has worn the olive green wool outfit long enough. It is time to return to her life ... she decides on her favorite skirt and blouse but decides to hold off on putting stockings and shoes ... to allow the wounds to heal. She grabs her physician bag and re-dressed her wounds ... 'something is different about my Alaya. Something warmer. Something more mature. What did I miss while I was gone.'

She ponders her thoughts as she makes the bed. She pulls back the sheets to make a fresh change and four hot water bottles fall to the floor. Fiona lets out a hearty laugh. She continues to make the bed with new sheets and notices the picture next to the alarm clock, she blushes as it is a picture of herself standing in front of the moonlit windows with nothing more than a sheer nightgown. She looks closely, her hair is short or is it up. She can't tell.

She looks at her wild long hair, 'my long hair, Alaya has never seen it this long.' She quickly sits at her vanity and pins it up in a tight bun, leaving little for the imagination. 'What if my wife prefers short hair? It is becoming practical with the war.' She tightens the bun with another tug. Satisfied with the hidden hair she takes empties the hot water bottles and returns them to the storage area with
all the other emergency supplies.

She returns to the drawing-room to fold blankets, return furniture to its rightful place ... at least what she remembers to be the room settings. She looks to the map on the wall with notes, telegrams and markings. She tears up and sits down. She covers her face and wails into her palms. Fiona mourns the lost time, the lost educational progression and now she fears the consequences of Elise's anger. She grabs the pillow behind her back and screams into the fabric.

Fiona fails to notice the mothers running into the room. Mother Jenny rushes over and attempts to comfort Fiona.

Fiona instantly stands up and pushes back. Seconds later she realizes it is Mother Jenny. "I am so sorry. I ... I reacted poorly." She steps back into Mother Jenny's open arms and sobs.

Mother Vastra wraps her long arms around her wife and Fiona.

They allow Fiona to compose herself, "Thank you. When Alaya returns there is much to talk about."

Mother Jenny nods as she steps back to evaluates Fiona's face, "Are you better?"

Fiona nods, "Thank you both. I am looking forward to being back into the gym. I shall imagine the punching bag Elise."

Vastra laughs and gives Fiona a pat on the back, "I pity the punching bag."

Mother Jenny, "I am going to prepare dinner. Would you like to help?"

"Yes, I want to help." Fiona grabs Mother Jenny's arm, "Tell me ... how was my Alaya? Did she brood?"

Mother Jenny and Fiona prepared a grand dinner together while discussing how Alaya came out of her obsessive worry into a self-sustaining woman.

Meanwhile a smiling Mother Vastra reads the evening newspaper licking the air taking the scent of her family member her tongue forgot.
As Fiona puts the lid on the steamer and turns to find Mother Vastra waiting, "Yes?"

Mother Vastra asks, "May I have permission to visit your bedroom?"

"Of course, may I know the reason for the intrusion?" Fiona smiles.

"I would like to see if the tea supply is located in your bedroom."

"You may look but the tea has not been stored in any private bedroom."

Mother Vastra looks into Fiona eyes hoping for a hint. Fiona forces her mind to think of custard pies and Alaya kisses.

Mother Vastra says something in Silurian.

Mother Jenny laughs, "My poor Vastra. She has been like this for a whole year. Frustrated."

"Alaya and Mother Vastra have the same streak of determination."

Mother Vastra announces, "I am going to look at the library stacks." She looks at Fiona hoping for pupil reaction, nothing and leaves the kitchen in a huff.

"She has looked behind every book, on every shelf at least once a month. You hid it very well."

"She taught me well. I know what she wants and that is my advantage. She needs to change her goal."

"What do you mean?"

"Do not share information with the enemy." Alaya quickly interrupts her wife from saying another word.

"Alaya!" Fiona stomach instantly fills with butterflies. She rushes to her wife and stops short of grabbing her wife when she notices Alaya clasps her hands.

Fiona hands start to tremble. "Is there something wrong?"

Alaya takes her wife hand and pulls into the drawing-room. Alaya pauses when she notices her Mother Vastra going over each shelf, book by book. Alaya pulls her wife as she is desperate ... she leads her wife up to the gymnasium.

They are finally alone.

Alaya and Fiona face each other, "We are finally alone ... the bedroom is too intimate."

Fiona heart is beating, butterflies in her stomach and feels as if she is forgetting to breathe. "It has been so long."

"Last night you stood by my side, prepared to fight."

"Where else would I be? My place is by your side, is it not?"

Alaya takes a deep breath, "My dear your place has always been at my side."
"What do you fear most?" Fiona asks with tears developing in her eyes.

"You have grown away from me. What do you fear most?"

Fiona cups her wife's face, "I might have been miles away, but my heart belongs to you. Whatever changes we have made to survive will sustain our ... love." She takes a deep breath and looks down at her wife's clasped hands, "I fear that you isolated yourself and cursed your lack of control."

"I did for a short while."

"You mothers told me."

"What changed?"

"Me."

"In what way?" Fiona grabs her wife's clasped hands, "There is nothing to lose in your honesty."

"No matter what I did, your scent slowly weakened and then completely disappeared. I felt you slipping away. The only thing I could do was force myself to remember you. I only had my mind. It wasn't enough, at first."

Fiona patiently waits as her wife gathers her feelings and finds the right words never letting go of her wife's half-Silurian's hands.

"It became enough. Knowing you, being with you, being your wife ... it became enough. I allowed myself to miss you and enjoy life. I allowed myself to laugh and feel guilt of my laughter. I didn't stop enjoying being me. Learning and growing. I have to be more for myself and not the same person I was two, five or ten years ago. If I am the same person with no more experiences in ten years my life would be wasted. I am more than just my wife. I am more than my mothers. I am me." Alaya looks into her wife's eyes for any reaction.

Fiona cups her wife's face, "You are amazing. I have learned something about myself."

"What is that?"

"I can't leave you again."

"What if you must."

"No." Fiona shakes her head, "I need to be in control of my own destiny. Too many have interfered with my life ... I will not stand for it any more. I stand by your side always to protect our choices. Nobody will make demands of my future or try to manipulate me like a puppet." Fiona tears up. "Will you stand by my side to allow me to take back our future?"

"Oh god, yes. Yes!" Alaya holds her wife tight. "You will always have the right to make your own decisions. I must remind you that we are married and I expect to have the same rights to our future as you demand."

Fiona blushes, "I have not forgotten we are married."

"I never thought you did." Alaya smiles at her wife's adorable red face, "I believe in you, me and together we can do anything."

Fiona eyes widen, "Together!"
"Together."

Fiona pushes her wife against the wall and kisses her wife. The coolness, how she missed that coolness ... like mint iced-tea on a hot summer day. She pull back and takes off her glasses. "I love you Alaya."

Alaya pulls up her wife off the ground and spins her around. "I love you."

Fiona lets herself laugh and smile. She is finally feeling better, "Your mother and I have made a nice meal."

"It smells wonderful. Do you have your appetite back?"

"Because of you."

"Let me change, I will meet you down in the kitchen in a few minutes."

Alaya goes to her bedroom while Fiona goes down to the kitchen.

As soon as Fiona enters the kitchen Mother Jenny warns Fiona, "Vastra would like to talk to you."

"About what?"

"Her tea supply."

Fiona smiles.

Mother Vastra enters the kitchen making a beeline into Fiona's direction.

Fiona smiles and yells, "ALAYA!"

Mother Vastra, "She will not help you. I have a question."

Alaya runs into the kitchen and stands between her mother and wife ... she prepares to protect her wife. She stops and evaluates her stance. To Vastra's surprise Alaya steps back and stands to her wife's side.

Mother Vastra smiles at the minor adjustment, "I just want to ask the little one a simple question."

Fiona smiles at her wife, "Ask your question." She stands as tall as her small frame can against the tall Silurian.

"How do I need to change my goal? I am looking for my tea supply am I not?"

"Those are two questions." Fiona smiles looking up to Vastra.

Vastra curses in Silurian, "You have hidden my tea supply?"

"Of course. You had over a year to find the supply." Fiona shaking her head, "I am disappointed. What of your tracking ability? Do you conceded failure to locate your tea supply?"

"I do not!"

"Then I shall not answer any questions or offer hints." Turning her attention to her smiling wife, "Are you hungry?"

The four enjoy the dinner that includes beef in pastry, swiss chard with garlic and anchovies and
carrots.

After the first bite Mother Vastra calmed herself.

"This is absolutely delicious. Thank you mother and Fiona." Alaya finds herself smiling in between bites. "I stopped by Miss Shaw and Miss Gardner's home after work today. I told them to take the next week off, as the temp workers have been hired for the next week." Alaya places a key on the table.

Jenny quickly picks it up, "What door opens this key?"

"It is for the car we drove from Italy."

"You drove?" Alaya asks.

"I did a little. Mainly Miss Gardner drove. She is better equipped behind the wheel. Besides we had no other option. The trains were controlled by the Germans, the passenger ships were questionable transportation and walking would have taken a month to return home. The automobile was the most sensible option."

"How did you know where to go?" Mother Jenny inquired.

"We only drove between sunrise and sunset. I slept in the car while the others slept in their tent." Looking at Mother Vastra's empty plate, "Would you like seconds or have desert?"

Vastra looks to her family's plates, "I see that most are almost finished. Desert would be welcome, is it sweet?"

"Very," answers Fiona in a sultry tone.

Mother Jenny blushes.

Fiona jumps up and returns with a tray. She places a plate in front of each of her family.

Mother Vastra laughs, "What have you made your family?"

Alaya stares at the plate and then curiously to her wife.

Fiona smiles as she scoops the soft cold desert into her mouth, "Mmm. This heavenly."

All decide to plunge in and take a scoop themselves.

"What do you call this desert?" Mother Vastra is the first to ask.

Mother Jenny rolls her eyes, "You had to ask."

"Strawberry Breasts." Fiona replies as she puts another scoop in her mouth, "MMM."

Mother Vastra laughs from deep inside her body. "Wonderful. How wonderful." She returns to eating the lovely treat.

Fiona takes another scoop with her spoon, "Mmm" as she licks the spoon clean and gets another scoop. Each spoonful dances on her tongue and she is enjoying the fun flavors. With each spoonful Fiona offers a soft moan with pleasure.

Alaya blushed as each time it brought an unsettled stomach.
She leaned into Fiona and whispered, "Do not tease, you have my attention."

Fiona's eyes popped wide open, she blushed and stammered a whisper to her family, "I.. I am sorry. It has been so long for anything as simple as strawberries."

Vastra teased, "Is that all? My poor Alaya wishes she was that spoon."

Jenny's face turned red, "Vastra!"

Fiona kissed her wife on the cheek. "I shall never tease, I will always follow through."

Fiona slowly finished her desert and wait for her wife to finish. "Would you like to take a walk this evening?"

"That would be wonderful. I do not work tomorrow."

"No? Why?"

"It will be Sunday."

Fiona sits back and looks around, "My mind needs to adjust. Tomorrow is really Sunday?"

Alaya smiles. "It will take time."

Alaya stands to take the plates and dishes to the kitchen. Fiona woke up from her thoughts and helped.

Jenny stands, "We will do the. You two girls go for a walk."

"Thank you mothers." Alaya turns her attention to her wife, "Are your feet able to walk?"

"A few, I just want to be outside."

Alaya nods, they head to the front door. Alaya looks to her wife, "I am sorry ... I must." She activates the device on her arm and turns into a a human representation of her half-Silurian self.

Fiona lets a tear fall. "I don't know how to comfort you."

Alaya opens the door and leads her wife out to the fresh air. "You are by my side, that is enough."

As they walk towards Garden Square Alaya dares to ask, "How are you?"

"I am actually quite relieved. I mean if Elsie held my education captive, then it is not for me. I shall be content working for my family."

Alaya stops progress, "Do you not know?"

"There is much I do not know. Is there something specific you want to disclose?"

"Elsie and eighty women are prisoners of war, for over a month."

Fiona, "What? No. I am so sorry for them. Not Elsie, but the other women." Fiona mind is buzzing, "I am sorry. But can we call Louisa? This could be important."

They turn around and walk back home. "What do you need me to do?"

"Those medical logs I gave you, are they safe?"
"Yes, in my mother's office, locked."

"Good."

They get back inside the front door.

Alaya turns off her device.

Fiona pounces and pushes her wife against the door. She kisses the cool lips with her own trembling warm lips, with a whisper, "I must take care of this, for my sanity and my ... our future. I want to court again. I know it is stupid, we are already married ..."

"That is a great idea. Courting. We have to talk about this past year ... when we are ready."

"Of course I want to feel you when I sleep and share our bed. I need to get to know you again."

Alaya kisses her wife, "Getting to know each other is always such fun."

Fiona laughs and pulls her wife upstairs. "Please get the logs and I will call Louisa."
Defense

Alaya walks into the room with a stack of papers and Fiona's medical journals.

Fiona waves and smiles at her wife, "Yes ... yes." Fiona is on the phone, "I do ... why must I go back to Edinburgh?"

Alaya puts everything on the table and comes close to her wife's side.

"Can you set that up? ... yes ... wonderful ... see you soon ... thank you." Fiona hangs up the phone and falls into her wife for a hug.

Alaya holds her wife tight and she notices her wife's hair is tight in a bun she thinks 'it looks painful.'

Fiona looks up, " Louisa is coming over shortly. We have to return to Edinburgh to release my education back to my medical school here in London."

Alaya dares to ask, "What if they aren't willing?"

"Louisa said we must be prepared. She coming over after her rounds."

"If you must we return to Edinburgh together."

"It is essential I gather all my documents." Fiona goes to her coat and pulls out another journal and stack of papers. "I am sorry, our time alone will have to wait, just a few more hours." Fiona tugs her glasses tight, "I need to go through these before the London foursome come here."

"How can I help?"

"This is going to be tedious. Please verify the information with me."

"I will return with tea and the proper tools."

Fiona flops in the chair. Lets out a loud sigh asks herself, 'another interruption in my life, when will my life be mine?' She lays her head down on the table and hides within her hands.

Alaya comes back with a tea service, pencil, paper and typewriter.

For the next few hours the two go line by line making adjustments as needed, which were very few.

It impressed Fiona as Alaya pronounced most of the medical terms correctly and deciphered the medical shorthand. It made the task go smoothly.

Fiona looks up, "Perfect. We are, I hope complete." As Fiona takes a sip of tea ... "I have a question, but I am not sure how to ask."

Alaya sits down with her tea, "Just ask. The worst thing would be to never ask."

"Well, I made our bed."

"Oh." Alaya blushes.

"I put the hot water bottles away. You will not need them anymore." Fiona offers a loving smile. "You have a picture of me, is my hair is it up or is it short?"
"Why?"

"You have only seen me in either short or no hair." Fiona sips another bit of tea.

"Not necessarily. I would visit you at your window." Alaya nods her head towards the direction of their current gymnasium. "I have seen your hair ..."

"Wait." Fiona gives a devilish look. "The only time I have ever taken down my hair is before bed, because it gets in the way of everything." She leans over the table, "Alaya Vastra Flint! What is it you have yet to share?"

Alaya takes a long sip of her tea, very long.

Fiona sits back and crosses her arms, "Oh. I can wait."

"Do you remember the day you delivered your note with the cleaned handkerchief?"

"Yes." Fiona puts her mind on that fresh memory. "How nervous I was, but determined. Oh, how foolish young girl I was." She snaps quickly out of her thoughts, "So?"

"I tracked you that night from our home to your room."

"What did you do?" Fiona now is half standing, looking over her wife.

Alaya shrinks into her seat, "I climbed the chimney and saw you. You quoted Virginia Woolf to yourself. Made a funny face after licking the envelope paste and you let your hair down. I didn't see anything more. I knew right then you were someone amazing."

"You didn't stick around? Why not?"

"Mother Vastra interrupted my voyeurism from the street."

"How many times did you visit my room?"

"Without your knowledge?"

"Yes, of course without my knowledge." Fiona slaps her hands down her side in frustration.

"Just that once."

Fiona stared into her Alaya's eyes. "Your picture of me is my hair up or short?"

"It is how I last remember you, so short."

Fiona asks softly, "Do you prefer it long or short?"

"I don't have a preference, truly. I just don't like it being controlled with pins. I want it to be free or loose on your head. It looks painful."

Fiona starts to take out pins, placing each one in her wife's hand.

Alaya looks down at her palm as the hair pins start piling up each with a high pitch 'plink', there is a small sensation on her tongue.

"There that is the last one."

Alaya looks to see her wife bent over shaking out her hair, flinging up and launching a glorious
mane. "What an amazing view." She places the pins on the table and slowly comes over to her wife with intense eyes.

"What are you doing?" Fiona backs up slowly.

Alaya comes closer, calculated and ready to pounce.

"I, we have work to do. Alaya!" Fiona starts moving backward around the room, she finds herself stuck against a wall. The only exit is the wide open door or a window to the streets. She decides to run for the door, she takes a deep breath and makes a mad dash. Almost there, just two steps to go. Fiona is pulled at her waist from behind by long half-Silurian arms. She didn't make it to safety.

"Alaya!"

She is spun around now face to face with her capture with deep breaths heaving in a mixture of passion, laughter and love. She can see her wife's Silurian and Human blood pulsating. Passion because her wife's eyes woken the butterflies in her stomach. Laughter because she really did her best to make the narrow escape into the safety of the kitchen. Love because she has never stopped loving her Alaya.

There it is, their scent. Fiona takes a deep breath, like it was her soul returning. She closes her eyes, takes a deep breath and it fills her lungs. She can feel it infecting her blood, changing her body chemistry.

Alaya smiles watching her wife drink in their scent. She licks the air, closes her eyes and fills her lungs with the potion only they create. Her scales all around her body flex and expand soaking through her skin. She opens her eyes to see her wife staring back with a smile and drunken eyes. "I truly do not care if you have short or long hair ... as long as you are happy." She kisses her wife passionately and deeply.

Fiona melts into her wife's arms while reaching for Alaya's crown caressing the ridge peaks.

Alaya's throat makes a soft clicking sound.

Fiona is pleased and softly moans in response.

"Is this a bad time?"

Alaya looks up to see Louisa, Lou, Fiona and Mary gobsmacked at the scene unfolding before them while Mother Jenny is smiling and her Mother Vastra is beaming with pride.

Alaya stands with flushed red scales on her face and quickly puts her Fiona behind her. "Forgive us. It has been a long time." She can feel her wife attempting composure. "Please give us a moment."

Alaya spins around, grabs the pins from the table. Together Fiona and Alaya get the red mane under control. Not as tight as it was, but at least presentable.

Fiona leans into her wife's chest softly whispering, "I am so embarrassed. I just want to disappear."

"I feel like we put on a travesty. My dear, how shall we recover?" She looks down at her wife hiding in her arms.

"Would anyone like refreshments? How about a nice cool desert?" Mother Jenny and Mother Vastra entering with the services of cold drinks and desert plates.
Alaya and Fiona turn to look at the four women distracted by strong drinks and strawberry breasts.

"Don't mind us old ladies. We all love a good romance." Flora said as she popped the single strawberry nipple in her mouth with a smile. "Welcome home dear Fiona."

Within seconds, Fiona is going around the table hugging her friends and colleagues.

She sits down next her wife, leaning in on her shoulder. Alaya is holding her close while playing with a long thick springy strand of red hair. All the women start with casual conversation, catching up on each other's lives, the war and the expansion of the medical services run by women.

"What of her academic achievements? Why must she return to Edinburgh?" Alaya asks when a lull was in the conversation.

Mother Vastra and Mother Jenny instantly become stiff and patiently listen to the dialog.

"She must return to Edinburgh?" Mother Jenny asks in a cracked voice.

"While Elsie is unavailable we need to get her transferred back to London medical school. Are these your medical logs?" Lou responds while looking over the papers organized on the table.

Fiona points to each folder and pile of paper, "These are when I was in Edinburgh, Brussels, Wimereux, Serbia, Durres, Bari, Northern Italy and South of France."

Each pile is read thoroughly and passed to the next person. All the women talk in hushed tones.

Fiona stands back contemplating if her hard work, her meticulous record keeping will be all for naught. She goes to the kitchen for a drink of water. She stand at the sink drinking. She feels her wife's wonderful arms wrapping around her.

"What is going through your mind?"

"I want to hope that all will work into my advantage. All that work, to be for nothing ... it genuinely eats me up inside."

"Come back to the drawing-room. They might have questions."

Alaya holds out her hand and her wife takes it as they return to their seats. Fiona leans on her wife's shoulder as she waits.

After the London foursome deliberated, Lou speaks to Fiona, "Have you truly completed all these procedures?"

Fiona stands, "Yes, are there discrepancies? Wrong format? Missing information?"

"No, no, no. Nothing is even remotely wrong. We are just surprised at the quantity." Lou looks to Mary, "Do you have any questions?"

"Yes, I actually do." Mary goes to the Edinburgh pile, "Are these complete?"

Fiona shakes her head no, "I didn't start recording my own medical logs until Elise began threaten and told me I will not qualify as a doctor. She said she would hold my credentials hostage."

"Astonishing."

Louisa sits back, "What did I tell you. I saw it first hand in Brussels. There is no way Elsie will win
Fiona pulls her wife closer.

Alaya knows something is wrong. "When do we leave for Edinburgh?"

"We have a committee meeting scheduled in first thing Monday. We shall leave tomorrow morning. Before Elsie recovers."

"Why should we be concerned with Elsie?" Fiona finally builds up the nerve to ask.

Flora calmly responds, "She and the other women have returned to Scotland yesterday. Which is why we have to act fast."

Mother Vastra looks to Fiona, "You will not be alone this time. We shall all be there."

Fiona smiles, even if she is stuck in Edinburgh for the rest of the war ... it is much closer than Serbia. Besides I would rather have York once a month than nothing for a year.

Alaya pulls her wife close and whispers, "If you end up in Edinburgh, I will follow directly."

Fiona looks into her wife's eyes, "How?"

"It is simply a transfer. I have already inquired last year." Alaya kisses her wife's forehead. "Just in case. Besides it is only temporary. Once the war is over we can get back to a normal life."

"Normal? Us?" Fiona smiles. "If you believe we shall ever have a normal life, you have not been paying attention."
Alaya and Fiona are washing the desert plates, glasses and tea set.

"I am finally home and I must leave again." She talks to her wife as she hands the wet cup. "Is this worth everything."

Mother Vastra looking behind the ice box, "I am sorry, you must."

"Why?" Fiona asks while cleaning the next cup.

"Elsie has something I need to read."

"Oh," Fiona stops and braces herself against the porcelain sink. "What do you know?"

Alaya places her a hand on top of Fiona's. "Only second hand information, from your London foursome."

Fiona whispers almost in anger, "Please. Alaya lets finish the dishes before we discuss anymore. If not, I shall throw every dish against the wall."

"Yes, dear. Please you have broken enough dishes accidentally. It would distress Mother Jenny enough that she will only allow you to have a child's cup." Alaya puts a long strand of red hair behind Fiona's ear. "My goodness, you do have untamed hair."

Fiona smiles and her heart skips a beat, those butterflies are back.

Mother Vastra is now looking above cabinets and curses in Silurian with each failing.

Alaya laughs, "Mother just concede. You shall never find the tea supply."

Mother Vastra comes to face her daughter, "Why?"

Alaya looks to her wife, "May I?"

Fiona nods.

"Because you are in a quest for tea. Stop looking for tea."

Mother Vastra is playing past conversations over in her mind. "The tea is hidden?"

Fiona and Alaya both nod yes.

Mother Vastra leaves the kitchen, "I need to think about this."

Fiona and Alaya burst out laughing.

"I guess I should look harder at finding my whiskey. We will start when we return to Edinburgh."

"Oh no, you are on your own. Remember, I have a bet going you will find your whiskey before my mother finds her tea. No helping."

"Please?" Fiona pouts and starts to take out a hairpin.

"You can let your hair fly free, I am playing fair. So should you." Alaya walks away into
drawing-room and plops down on the lounge. "This day is finally over." Looking at the clock, "It can't be midnight?"

Fiona comes and lays down next to her wife and uses her chest as a pillow.

Alaya instinctively blankets Fiona with her arms and closes her eyes with a smile.

"Good night you two," Mother Jenny says as she is escorted by Vastra to their own bedroom. "Remember tomorrow we travel."

Fiona moans and put a tighter hold around her wife.

"We should go to our room," Alaya softly speaks to her wife.

Fiona stands up and offers her wife a hand. "Lets go to bed."

"After you," Fiona steps aside to let her wife go up the stair first.

Fiona pinches her wife's arse.

"Hey!" Alaya leaps to the top step and smiles.

Fiona enters the bedroom, just as she has earlier today, but now it is more intimate. Something powerful. With Alaya facing the dresser Fiona takes the opportunity to strip down to her pale white skin, rapidly removes all her hairpins and shakes her hair out the lose bun.

Alaya turns around with two nightgowns in her hands to discover her wife with the fire hair is standing before her in her birthday suit. Freely she examines the delight set before her and offers a smile. She calmly turns back around and places the nightgowns back into the drawer, "I change my mind. I like your hair wild and long. I know it isn't practical for day-to-day." She turns back around to face her wife. Her heart is pounding out of her chest, that mane sends a charge through her body and her scales react. She slowly walks towards her wife with the same intense eyes from earlier today.

This time Fiona opens her arms allowing Alaya to express herself anyway she pleases.

By the time the landing clock strikes two an exhausted Fiona turns to her wife, "Next time ... Ah will be th' a one attacking ye. Be afraid, very afraid." She immediately falls asleep on her wife's chest.

Alaya chuckles, "Oh I am Scottish warrior, I am."
The alarm goes off at the usual six in the morning. Fiona jumps out of bed in a panic.

Alaya reaches out and silences the belting sound. "Fiona?"

Fiona nods as she leans over with one hand on the bed. As soon as she catches her breath, "Alarm startled me." She finds her glasses and notices her Alaya has a goofy grin on her face. "What is funny?"

"Your hair."

Fiona runs over to the vanity, "Alaya! My goodness it is a mess." She brushes out what she can and gathers it up and ties it with a ribbon. "There, the wild mess has been tamed." She turns to her wife and asks, "You are positive you like this frizzy mess?"

"Oh Yes. It is a wonderful and fun. It matches your personality. Even when it resembles a discarded bird's nest."

"Don't ye take a rise it to me good wife, Ah shall leave ye home alone."

The London foursome, Flint Family and the Flint-Saint Clair Clan all in a private car. The women pooled their money to ensure privacy.

Alaya and Fiona are sitting next to each other on the velvet red chesterfield, Fiona is leaning against her wife with her eyes closed.

Louisa is talking to Vastra, "We need to know what happened. We need to be prepared."

Mother Jenny is watching Alaya and Fiona, she catches her daughter's sad eyes. All she can do is offer a smile.

Alaya smiles back. It gave her the confidence to prepare her wife.

Alaya stirs her wife out of the mental void, "Fiona. We have less than eight hours until we reach Edinburgh. I am so sorry, we need to know what happened with Elsie."

Fiona grabs her wife tightly, "Why can't I just tell one person. Why do I have to be everyone?"

"You are right." Alaya stands up, walks to her Mother Vastra and interrupts her conversation with Louisa.

As the train moves faster and faster it is impossible to hear a conversation that is on the other side of the car. Fiona watches as her wife defends her, negotiates and even compromises. Fiona wishes she had Silurian hearing. She becomes introverted as she notices all eyes are on her, she feels as if she is Louisa facing the courts. She emotionally retracts and pulls her body in for comfort.

Alaya runs to her wife and picks her whole body into her own.

Fiona hides in her wife's chest, the safest place in the world.

Alaya whispers in her wife's ear, "Louisa and Mother agree, this is too much of an audience. Would you like to talk to Louisa alone?"
Fiona nods yes.

Alaya looks to Louisa with a smile. "It is all set. You and Louisa will go to the front of the car while the rest of us will seat ourselves further away."

Fiona nods yes.

Alaya puts her wife down, kisses her forehead and encourages her towards Louisa who is waiting at the table with paper and pencil.

Fiona walks to the table and faces Louisa.

The noise of the tracks is too loud for even Alaya's hearing. She watches as her wife points to the end of the car and Louisa nods her head yes.

Fiona comes back to her wife, grabs her hand, leads her to the table and sits down.

Fiona looks to her wife, "There are rules." Alaya nods. "You are there to listen, not judge, correct or interject. You are a piece of furniture, no emotions, no clasping of hands, no facial expressions and certainly no physical contact. This is about me."

Louisa smiles, those words were uttered before.

Fiona grabs her wife's hand for support, "Well a little physical contact ... for my nerves."

Fiona told Louisa everything.

It was hours of Louisa questioning, clarifying and making notes.

Fiona would tear up, pound the table and even stand up to pace.

Fiona got it all out, every sorted detail.

Louisa closed her notes. "I need a drink," and walks over to the cabinet to give herself a small glass of brandy.

"Fiona, thank you for letting me hear. I am sorry you went through all that, alone."

Fiona tears up, "Never alone again. Please?"

"I will do my best." Alaya asks softly, "At a later time I do have questions. Let me know when you are ready."

Fiona nods, "Just not now. I would love fresh air."

Alaya and Fiona go to the back of the car and go out on the small metal landing. They look out and notice something familiar, the York railway station.

Alaya takes her wife's hand, "You have been talking for four yours. Why don't we have drink and sandwich?"

Fiona quickly runs back inside and opens the cabinet with zest. "No ... no ... no ..." as she picks and reads each label. She gets on her hands and knees looking deep into the cabinet, "Ah! I found it," echoes from within. Fiona pulls herself out and it triumphantly holding a bottle of Scottish whiskey. "It is only from Oban, but it will dae." She pours herself a small glass and gulps in one shot. "Ah I have missed 'at. My good wife, no matter how this turns out ... we shall do it together."
Alaya laughs, "Together!"

Fiona finds herself a seat. "Mother Vastra, I am now determined to find my whiskey. Since ye have noot found your tea supply ... I have at least a year." Fiona smiles at Mother Vastra, "You shall have a month of loo duty."

Mother Vastra smiles with widen eyes, "My dear Fiona ... that Oban stuff has given you a false sense of reality. I shall find my tea supply. Your whiskey shall be at least a ripe 25 year before you taste one drop."

Alaya, Jenny, Fiona and even Vastra let out a roar of laughter.

Everyone else is left out of the joke, and they will be, for the rest of their lives.

Louisa turns to Alaya and Fiona, "Why don't you two return to your private world. I shall disclose with everyone what you shared. We shall discuss openly. Fiona, you did very well."

Fiona collected pillows from around the car and created a little moroccan seating area. She lays down and Alaya curls up. They fall asleep to the rhythm of the tracks.

"How can they sleep?"

"Do they always sleep so conjoined?"

"Look at that red hair."

Slowly Fiona and Alaya wake to find six woman looking down at them. Fiona and Alaya attempt to get up but scales are caught in a strand of hair. "Don't move," as Alaya attempts to free herself from the mane. "Turn around let me fix this."

Fiona turns her back to allow Alaya to meticulously put put Fiona's hair up in a soft bun.

"All done."

"Thank you."

Fiona smiles, "Entertained?"

Mother Jenny and Mother Vastra offer hands to stand upright.

"We are nearing our destination."

Fiona goes to the window and is attempting to find Edinburgh Castle, "Look Alaya! Isn't it a grand fortress?"

"Wow! I believe it would an amazing city to explore." Pulling her wife close. "What grand adventures we would have."

The North British Hotel is just a few feet away from the rail station, which is a great location considering the long trip from London has completely demolished everyone's energy.

Once Alaya and Fiona have entered their room they let their clothes drop to the floor and slip under the covers. They are relieved to finally have a privacy.

Alaya whispers to her wife, "It is a shame our energy is tapped."
"Aye, tis is a shame. I am pleased to be with you without the constant eyes from our friends and family. When I am with you alone, I don't have to pretend to be somewhere else."

"That is wonderful to hear," Alaya yawns. "Good night."

Fiona curls up to her wife, "I will not be attacking you tonight. Tomorrow, I might."

Alaya smiles and wonders what Fiona's hair will look like tomorrow and falls asleep minutes later.
The Folder

Vastra knocks on the adjoined door.

Nothing.

She licks the air, "Dear they are not in their room."

"They know we have to be at the Medical school at nine. I am sure they aren't far."

As if on right on cue, there is laughter coming from next door.

"Well, you lost the bet. You have to knock, we need to know if they want breakfast."

Mother Vastra smiles and knocks on the door again. This time Alaya swings the door open, "Good Morning Mothers!"

A Scottish voice echoes the sentiment from behind, "Morning!"

"I knocked earlier but you weren't in your rooms."

"We went for a hike. I hope we didn't bring you worry?"

"No, Where did you hike?"

"Arthur's seat."

Mother Jenny asks, "What did you climb?"

Alaya enters her parent's room, goes to a large window, draws the curtains open and points. "That is Arthur's seat."

"How wonderful. How was the view?"

"We can go again if we have time. It is not far."

Fiona pokes her head into the room, "Mothers you will love the climb and the view is amazing. You can see the waters."

"It sounds perfect, but Vastra and I went directly to sleep last night. We are famished. Will ladies like to join us?"

"Absolutely." Fiona goes back into her room. She quickly pops her head back in, "Alaya dear. I need help with my hair."

"Yes," Alaya shifts her body and leaps over her mothers' bed and into the other room.

Jenny affectionately looks to her tall Silurian, "You and your daughter are quite pleased with our hair."

As Vastra walks closer to her wife, "I love your soft curls," She smiles into her wife's brown eyes.

"Even though I now have grey hairs?"

Vastra fights the thought of her wife growing old, strokes her wife's hair, comes down for a kiss but
interrupted by a conversation next door.

"Aye!" Fiona teases her wife. "I will tear off one of your scales with my teeth if you aren't careful. Softly, please."

"I am so sorry, I need to get used to using a brush. I never used one before." Alaya softly reminds her wife.

"Let me show you how to do this. Wait, get your mother Jenny."

Alaya pops her head into her parent's room, "Mother, will you assist me?"

Vastra and Jenny both come into the other room.

"One of the things I had to learn when I brushed your mother's hair is to work from the bottom up. But this," Pointing to Fiona's wild frizzy hair, "My dear Alaya, is a whole different matter."

Fiona spins around wiping her long hair, "It does seem to have a mind of its own."

Mother Jenny comes over to Fiona's hair and demonstrates how to brush her hair. The tall Silurian and half-Silurian daughter listen as if their lives were utterly dependent on the information. "You start here and work your way up. Once you have all the hair in sections then you go like this ... this and put a pin here, here ... I need more pins ... Done."

"Beautiful," comments Alaya.

"All that hair is now under control?"

"Yes. Alaya, when we get home we can work on this together." Mother Jenny smiles while thinking to herself 'my Alaya needs to learn this for her own family'. She makes a mental note to teach her daughter other things about human children. As she pulls her wife in close for comfort, she wonders if it not too late.

"Can we eat now?" Mother Vastra ask her wife.

It was a short walk to the school. All women enter the meeting room to find Elsie waiting.

Elsie doesn't look back, she just sits there stoic tapping the folder in front of her.

Louisa immediately goes to her, "Welcome home. How are you?"

Silence.

All the women pick a seat, watch as a staff member adds coal to the fireplace and leaves through the rear door.

The clock strikes nine and five women enter the room and take their seats behind the long desk. The head of the committee, "Good Morning. Thank you, all for coming. This committee was formed based on the request of Doctor Louisa Anderson on behalf of Doctor Fiona Flint-Saint Clair. Please inform the committee of your request."

Louisa stands, "We formally request that Doctor Flint-Saint Clair be transferred back to London Medical School for Woman along with her medical logs and academic record."

The committee looks to each other whisper.
"That is all. The request is approved, unless there is a reason unknown ..."

The committee goes quiet as Elsie stands and clears her throat.

A mumble could be heard from a committee member, Elsie snaps her head up looking for the culprit. "It is imperative that Dr. Flint-Saint Clair remain here with Edinburgh Medical school and be sent overseas for her training under my authority."

"Why?"

"Because she is skilled and talented surgeon. We should encourage her with more work, more adventures not lockup in an operating room."

"That is not your decision to make."

"The war office disagrees."

"There isn't conscription for men or women, even during wartime."

"How can we expect her to be a physician if she is not willing to serve?"

The committee head directed her attention to her left, "Do you have Doctor Flint-Saint Clair's logs?"

The woman passes a small folder.

"Doctor Flint-Saint Clair, we have your log files here from the past year and it seems that you have had not taken opportunity to expand your skills."

"You do not have all Dr. Flaint-Saint Clair's surgical and medical logs."

"Do you have additional log files?"

"Yes we do." Louisa instructs Fiona, "Please take these up to the committee."

Fiona makes the short journey to the Committee Head and hands one folder at a time "These are when I was in Edinburgh, Brussels, Wimereux, Serbia, Durres, Bari, Northern Italy and South of France."

"I did not know we have a hospital in Italy or South of Paris."

Fiona returns to Louisa's side.

"You do not," Louisa said with a sense of authority. "Doctor Flint-Saint Clair was faced unusual set of circumstances and returned to London on her own. She paid for her trip from Servia to Bari by doing medical services. The Bari, Italy file includes references and appreciation to the Scottish Women's Hospitals for Doctor Flint-Saint Clair's services."

"Doctor Inglis, can you shed light on as to why Doctor Flint-Saint Clair was fending for herself?"

Doctor Inglis stood tall, "I woke up one day and I was told Doctor Flint-Saint Clair abandoned her post."

Alaya grew angry and balled her fists. Vastra shifts in her seat. Lou and Mary look to each other. Jenny crosses her arms. Fiona looks at Elsie while shakes her head in disappointment.

Louisa feels the tension of those sitting behind her. She whispers something to Fiona, instantly Fiona
stands a little taller.

"We are not here to quarrel. We simply request a transfer."

Elsie tapping a folder on her table, "If Doctor Flint-Saint Clair runs from her duties we should not, in good faith, recommend her to any medical school. This committee should take it under advisement and bring her up for disciplinary actions."

Louisa asks the committee, "Please have Doctor Inglis clarify for our own understanding, is Doctor Flint-Saint Clair a gifted surgeon or a delinquent? If she is as unreliable then why invest time and energy in someone who is irresponsible?"

The air in the room shifted from a calm curiosity into agitated tension.

Elsie just taps the folder. "I need a moment. My I have a few minutes?"

The committee head nods yes, "You can have five minutes."

Elsie turns around and walks out the meeting room.

"What do you think she is going?" Fiona asks Louisa.

"I have no idea."

Fiona looks to Elsie's table 'the folder'. Fiona doesn't hesitate and runs over to the table and grabs it and places it on their table.

The committee head, "Doctor Flint-Saint Clair, please return the property ..."

"I will not offer any official complaint, nor will I offer any evidence against Doctor Inglis. So please have allowance for my immaturity."

Before anyone had a chance to respond Elsie returns with a cup of coffee. She stops in her track as she notices the missing folder. "Where is my documentation?" She turns to Fiona and then back to the committee, "Please return my property."

"We were addressing the unethical behaviour and request your documentation be returned."

The Committee head consoles with Elsie.

Fiona nods yes, picks up a folder from the table. She walks across the floor, Elsie has her hand extended. Instead of handing Elsie the folder she shocks the room by tossing the contents into the fire. Elsie leaps forward, but Fiona firmly plants her feet and will not allow any rescue attempt. She hold Elsie in her place and watches the paper burn quickly into ash.

Everyone stands.

"Doctor Flint-Saint Clair this is most inappropriate."

Fiona turns to the committee head, "It was not inappropriate. Is was documentation of lies. You have my logs and medical records from Doctor Inglis and from Doctor Anderson. Which is complete? Doctor Inglis has held my academic career hostage with threats and inappropriate behaviour. If Doctor Inglis feels that this," Fiona points to the fireplace, "information is vital then have her verbally disclose it's contents to the committee. Doctor Inglis has my respect as a surgeon, but not for documentation."

Elsie was absolutely livid. "How dare you? That was mine."
Fiona stood taller, "No the information was about me. Why not tell the committee what was in the documentation.:

It only angered Elsie more and she pounded her fist on the table, "I demand that Doctor Flint-Saint Clair be investigated!"

"Why?" Louisa asks the committee, "Please ask Doctor Inglis as to why there needs to be any investigation. We have proof of her skills and references as to her abilities."

Elsie turns to Louisa pointing, "You! I hold you responsible. You manipulated her, just like you did before. This time I will win, Fiona will work by my side."

Fiona shakes her head no, "Doctor Inglis I shall never work by your side."

"I demand an investigation!" Elsie hits the table again.

"Why? If you know something, please tell the committee."

Fiona agitates Elsie further by getting close and whispering, "You submit to the committee a token of my log files. You have nothing but lies to offer the committee."

Elsie saw red, "I demand an investigation to Doctor Flint-Saint Clair and her family!"

"You have nothing to offer this committee except requests?" Fiona speaks to the committee and the room, "I have come with evidence of my good works, my academic success, and my surgical logs. Doctor Inglis offer nothing. She does not even offer an oral argument." Turning her attention to Elise, "You say I am should be investigated but want me hostage and serve by your side. You have no evidence." Fiona points to the dying fire, "My act of rebellion is forcing your hand... you have nothing." Fiona returns to Louisa's side. She leans over to Louisa is a loud whisper, "She has nothing."

"I demand this committee to investigate! At once." Elsie repeats her plea.

Louisa calming asks, "If you have an insight into Doctor Flint-Saint Clair, please offer evidence. If you do not, our original request for transfer stands."

"She is fowl!" Elsie points to Fiona while addressing the committee. "She... she is illegally married and practices bestiality. She is an abomination to god. Her husband is nothing more than a female reptile as her mother-in-law is a lizard. Doctor Flint-Saint Clair’s family should be captured and brought to science to experiment. That is what has been burned into the fire, evidence and proof of the revolting facts."

Fiona remains calm.

The room is quiet.

The committee head looked at Fiona, "Thank you for your services. Your transfer, logs and academic records are hear-by transferred to The London School of Medicine for Women."

Louisa walks up to the committee table and quickly gathers all the documentation, academic record and log files of Fiona. "Thank you," She nods to the committee and returns to standby Fiona.

"The committee wish you luck in your academic and professional career Doctor Flint-Saint Clair. Thank you for your service and patience."
Everyone exits leaving Elsie to stand in her anger to face the committee alone.
"How does it feel to be free of Elsie?" Alaya asks her wife.

"I feel terrible how I manipulated her into disclosing herself." Fiona looks outside watching Scotland disappear into the distance. "I had to get Elsie to talk. I needed her to be responsible for her own words. I wanted her to be her own undoing."

"How did you know she would say anything?" Mother Vastra asks Fiona, "It was risky."

"All those criminal documentation I dictated and typed, for the family business, taught me one single thing. Get them angry."

"I am pleased your career is your own. But," Mother Vastra takes a deep breath, "I would have like to read Elsie's papers."

Fiona goes through all the papers in her according file and hands Mother Vastra a folder, "You mean this one? I made the switch with an empty folder."

"Aren't you the clever one."

Vastra starts to open the folder.

Alaya leans towards her mother, "May I suggest we wait until we are in our own home."

Vastra closes the folder, folds it in half and places inside her coat pocket. "Wise advice."

On the train ride back to London Louisa, Fiona, Lou and Mary discussed with Fiona expectations, curriculum and schedule. It is agreed, Fiona would take two weeks to recuperate.

"What will you do with your two weeks?"

"Read, take on a few rambles and locate my whiskey supply." Fiona leans into her wife and softly asks. "May we plan for day outings?"

"Of course. What do you desire? Trip?"

Fiona shakes her head no, "I want to just be in our London. I want to relax, go to the park, enjoy the last bit of summer ... anything. I want to relax, read and do nothing. Cinema or possibly just tea. I want to be with you and our mothers."

"We have many hours before we arrive home. May I ask questions about Elsie?"

Fiona pulls her wife closer, readjusts her head, and softly responds "Yes."

With hush tones and stone in her throat Alaya fearlessly asks, "When she barged into your room, did she ever violate you?"

"She tried. It made me angry." Fiona starts to tear up and closes her eyes.

"Next stop York ... Next stop York," the porter yells as he enters and exits the car.

Fiona smiles and opens her eyes to see Mother Vastra and Mother Jenny offering genuine smiles. Fiona smiles back and instantly feels secure. "I kicked her off, but she kept coming. She tried to kiss
me, but my hands kept her off my face. She even dared to reach under my skirt multiple times. She
did not succeed in feeling any bare skin." Fiona takes a deep breath. "She was stronger, but I had the
advantage. I knew what she wanted. I knew her goal."

Mother Vastra smiles, "You did well little one."

"When you stood by my side," Alaya continues her quest for clarification, "You did not hesitate to
come to my side with your cricket bat in hand. We have never been in that situation before."

"After the first time Elsie assaulted me I taught myself to leap from my bed and have my cricket bat
in hand. I would practice every time I had time to myself. If she ever got near me again, I would take
her down at the knees." Fiona continued, "She was devious. She knew when I was tired and
exhausted. The final attempt she made I was fast asleep and she was already on top of me. I was
pinned."

"What did you do?"

"I did the best I could to get myself free. When that failed, I screamed." Fiona becomes quiet. "She
had to choose to hold my wrists and hair down or cover my mouth."

"You are safe now."

"All I could do was scream. She kept trying to kiss me. I spat, turned my head, bit any skin I had
access and even attempted to kick her off ... she was too strong." Fiona sits up, "Mother Vastra is
there anything I could have done?"

"By yourself?" Mother Vastra would answer without clarification.

Fiona nods yes.

"How are you pinned?"

"She straddled her legs around my waist, held my wrists down and had my hair in her grips."

Vastra tilts her head and ponders the situation.

Fiona and Alaya patiently wait for Mother Vastra's analysis.

"I am sorry. There isn't any solution."

Fiona sits back, "I am relieved. I constantly replay the events over and over again. I wonder if I could
have done something different. I just don't see a solution. It wasn't until my cries have been answered
and nurses and other doctors pulled Elsie off me that I could find my strength."

"What did you do?"

"Oh, I wanted to hit her with a cricket bat across her face. She was off of me, and I just wanted her
to stay away. That is when she demanded I leave. I didn't hesitate, I packed my belonging, put on my
cape and walked towards the coast. I was prepared to walk all the way back to Calais. I would have
telegrammed, but I lack funds. All I thought about was coming home."

Fiona pulled her wife closer and looked to the Mothers. "I just wanted to be with my family. I was
determined. You do not know how pleased I was when the Bari Hospital administrator told me that I
stayed until my escorts arrive. Every single day my bags were packed readily to leave in an instant." Fiona sat up a little taller, "The hospital offered me a position on their staff. If I knew, it would be
safe for our family I would have sent for all of you. Then I remembered my mother's journal and advice. I needed to be home, to prepare, to at my rightful place."

"Anything else?" Alaya prodded.

"Not really. If anything comes to mind, I will let you know."

"Good. Are you ready for your next chapter in our lives?"

"As long as we stay together, yes."

After a long train ride everyone went directly to their homes.

Vastra ran up to the drawing-room and flayed out Elise's documents on the table. Everyone picks up a piece of paper and sat down to read the information.

"Some information is wrong, so I suspect this is all speculation rather than researched." Mother Jenny smiles as she points to a paragraph pertaining to herself, "I am not old and frail. Do I look old and frail to you?"

"My dear, you are strong as an ox and more cunning than a fox." Mother Vastra smiles at her wife. "This document concludes I am just a few years older than a hatchling egg. They write you as an old mammal and myself as if I am not able to hunt for my own food. My dear, Jenny you are, at least according to this dossier you are the queen of our little matriarchy."

"At least they know who is in charge." Jenny smiles without looking up and continues reading.

"I am concerned and wonder why Elsie even had this information."

"Alaya, do you have your magnifying glass?" Fiona asks as puts down papers.

Alaya goes to the secretary and pulls out her detective kit. She hands the magnifying glass to her wife who looks to a certain section of the document.

"Feel here and look."

Alaya places her finger and notices a raised area and looks through a magnifying glass, "What is it?"

Alaya goes back to the desk, the fireplace before she returns to the table. "Watch."

Alaya takes the onion paper, lays it lightly over the raised image and takes a piece of charcoal to lightly rub over the area.

"It looks like two Crossed Keys joined by a cord." Vastra looks closely.

"A coat of arms, but to whose?" Jenny looks at it carefully.

"College of Arms would know." Vastra looks to Fiona, "I am sorry dear, but it looks like we shall call on your free time to visit on your family's behalf. Do you mind?"

"Of course not. I shall go directly tomorrow and inquire." Fiona smiles, she loves being part of this team.

"On that note," Alaya pulls her wife close, "I need to work tomorrow. Do you mind if I take my leave?"
"Oh," Fiona smiles at the table full of papers needing her attention and then turns to see her wife's eyes. "I am coming. These papers will be here tomorrow. Good night mothers. Fiona and Alaya offer kisses on Mother Vastra and Mother Jenny's cheeks.

"Good night dears."

Alaya and Fiona go to their bedroom.

Alaya makes a beeline to the dresser in an attempt to pull out nightgowns. She speaks to her wife, "I didn't expect you to follow. I have to wake early tomorrow for work." Alaya smiles as she feels warm hands working around her torso.

"Ah, will aye choose ye," Fiona reminds her wife as she kisses her wife's neck.

Alaya starts to have deeper tones, "That is nice."

"Nice? Ye shood be afraid of yer Scottish warrior."

Alaya's scales flex in anticipation as Fiona yanks off her wife's clothing. Within seconds, Alaya's naked back is revealed. Fiona pushes her own naked body against the cool, elegant scale design and responds to the temperature change with a soft moan. Seconds later she spins Alaya around and looks devilishly at her wife's body.

She pushes Alaya against the dresser and pounces between her legs pushing back the soft rose petals with her warm tongue.

Alaya starts to make soft clicking sounds, it only encourages Fiona more to push deeper.

Alaya knees become weak and Fiona makes no attempt to sustain her stance. She lets her wife drop to her knees.

Alaya leans her crowned head into her wife's stomach wrapping her arms around the waist.

Fiona doesn't hesitates. She doesn't question. She plunges her mouth and pushes her tongue into the soft flesh underneath the crown crest. Alaya lets out a deep almost painful sound.

Fiona digs deeper flicking her tongue in the flesh drinking up the Silurian scent fighting against her own breath's current. Fiona moans at the sensation.

Alaya attempts to touch her wife, but her hands are swatted down. The only option is to let her long tongue slither around her wife's body.

Fiona reacts arching her back and returns instantly to plunge her tongue deep into the moist flesh secret area of her wife's crown. She remains steadfast and soon rewarded as her wife's clicking sound is faster and deeper. Alaya's tongue squeezes Fiona's body and lets out a deep roar into her wife's stomach, clenching her scale hands into her wife's buttocks.

Fiona stays and drinks in the Silurian scent still exploding out of the crown. As soon as she feels her wife's collapsed body she comes to Alaya's rescue and leads her to the bed.

Alaya curls up into her wife's body.

Fiona feels her wife's heart pounding heart and she falls asleep to the rhythm of her wife.
"May I be of service?" asks a grey-haired gentleman behind a long high desk.

"Yes, we found cleaning out our cellar old papers with a symbol. We made an etching. Do you have any insight?"

The grey-haired man puts on his glasses and evaluates the charcoal etching Alaya made. "A key is always a symbol of knowledge, guardianship and dominion. The two key cross is the symbol of St. Peter, the the key to the gates of heaven."

'It represents St. Peter's Cathedral Basilica?' Fiona inquires.

"No my dear child it represents Rome and Catholic faith." He points to the etching, "That is the Vatican symbol."

"Thank you, do you have an image of the seal? We only have an emboss."

"One moment." The grey-hair gentleman leaves his post. He returns wearing white gloves and holding rolled fabric. He goes to a table and unrolls a embroidered sample with the Vatican coat of arms.

Fiona quickly sketches the pattern.

"Thank you sir. My family's curiosities will be satisfied." She hands the grey-haired gentleman a pound and left to enjoy the rest of her day. She decides to walk along the Thames and eats street food for lunch. She finds a patch of grass to clean up her sketch before heading home.

She walks into 15 Saville Row to be greeted by Miss Shaw. "Good to see you again dear friend. How are you and yours?"

"It is good to see you too. We are well, thank you for asking. How is your own family?"

"It is a relief to be united, I shall never leave again."

"When you are settled, we shall have a picnic out the four of us?"

"That would be most anticipated. Alaya would love to hear about Miss Gardner's driving skills."

Miss Shaw hands a small stack of letters, "Here is the mail for the residents."

"Thank you, have a pleasant evening." Fiona heads up to the drawing-room and flips through the mail to find an unstamped envelope addressed to herself. She opens to instantly recognize the handwriting,

My Dearest Wife,

I can't express how I am feeling the day after I was ravaged by a Scottish Warrior. It was welcomed and a complete surprise.

I am not saying I was surprised at your passion, forethought to kiss me, touch me or lead me to ecstasy. It is how you brought it about. I had no idea my body was able to release itself in such a
During our morning exercise and breakfast I had to control myself from screaming from the top of my lungs how my wife is the greatest lover in the world.

Calm yourself, as I didn't unveil your prowess.

How did you know what to do? I didn't even know.

Did you talk to Mother Vastra? Mother Jenny?

I welcome your bravery and warrior spirit any moment you feel moved.

Your Devoted Wife

Alaya

Fiona sat down at the secretary to write a response.

After the enveloped was sealed she went down stairs to Miss Shaw. "Please deliver this to Mrs. Alaya Flint-Saint Clair when she arrives home."

"I will." Miss Shaw offers a smile with soft blushed cheeks.

Fiona returns to the residence to begin making a hearty stew, fresh bread and pudding.

The residents of 15 Savile Row trickle before the sun sets.

"Alaya is home." Mother Vastra announces to the kitchen crew.

'Thank you Mother Vastra." Fiona doesn't expect her wife to come up right away.

Alaya stops on the first floor landing to open her letter.

I guessed.

Alaya enters the kitchen with deliberate footing she walks towards her wife and gives her a passionate kiss. Fiona blushes as they are in their private world for a moment.

Alaya spin around, "Good evening everyone."

Dinner is served by Fiona with shaking hands and blushed cheeks. Alaya comes to her rescue and finishes serving.

Mother Vastra and Mother Jenny pretend to not notice the edge of sexual excitement lingering in the air around them.

Mother Vastra leans into her wife and with whisper, "I wonder what they discovered?"

"Boundaries, dear." Mother Jenny kindly reminds her sometimes foolish wife.

Each discuss their day and when it came to Fiona's turn she smiled. "I have two discoveries today. I did visit the College of Arms. It that can wait until after dinner when we have tea and desert."
'What is the second?' Alaya quickly plays into her wife's hand.

Fiona bends down to her seat and produces a large bottle of Scottish Whiskey. "I have found my loot!"

Mother Vastra sits and stars, "Impossible."

Mother Jenny offers comfort to her wife.

Mother Vastra stands and paces. "When did you find it?"

"This afternoon."

"How did you know to look ..." Vastra stops and tilts her head. "Let me see the bottle."

Alaya hands the bottle to her mother.

Vastra licks it and smiles, "Oh my dear deceitful little one. Where did you get this?"

Fiona smiles, "You were seconds away from divulging the whiskey location. What gave it away?"

"The bottle's scent is too new. Did you buy it?"

"No, I walked along the Thames home from the College of Arms to find this laying on the ground. I cleaned it up and filled it with discoloured water and re-corked the bottle."

Mother Vastra looks to her daughter, "Your wife is clever, but not as clever as I."

Alaya grabs her wife's hand, "Oh Mother I love my adroit wife."

Vastra sits down and finishes her plate, "That was a good meal ... is there enough for a second helping?"

Fiona stands and serves her small family a second helping. It pleases her to see their appetite healthy and they enjoy her cooking.

After dinner tea and pudding is served in the drawing room.

Fiona pulls out the sketch she has made, "The curator at the College of Arms told me a key symbolizes knowledge, guardianship and dominion. The two key cross is the symbol of St. Peter, the key to the gates of heaven and belong to the Vatican in Rome. This is the sketch I made after seeing the embroidered sample."

"The Papal Mainframe." Mother Jenny mutters and sits back with folded arms.

Alaya and Fiona look at Mother Jenny's body language and then to Mother Vastra hoping someone would explain.

Mother Vastra, "My wife and I are criminals with a bounty on our head in the very distant future."

Alaya sits back rolling her eyes, "I am never shocked at finding new things about my Mothers? Is there more? Are you Aliens from another planet? Are you gods?"

"In 1881 I was mistaken for a god." Mother Vastra offers with a shrug.

"I have been to Japan to battle mechanical robots," Mother Jenny smiles to her wife and laughs.
"When we returned to 'Our London', after a battle, we found out our names have been put on the Papal Mainframe's most wanted list." Mother Vastra and Mother Jenny are having fun shocking their daughters. "The Papal Mainframe is a space church overseen by The Church which is a religious and military organisation during the 51st and 52nd centuries."

Fiona offers a cringed facial expression, "You are joking."

"I assure you this is truth." Mother Jenny sits up.

"Why haven't I have heard you mention any of this before?" Alaya takes her wife's hand.

"Because it was not information necessary to share." Mother Vastra offers the simplest and honest answer.

"Now it is essential we know? Why?" Fiona asks Mother Vastra.

"The Church and the Papal Mainframe is the germination and evolution of 'Our London's' Vatican and Pope of the Catholic Church." Explains Vastra. "We have less than a month to figure out what do these papers, the cricket bat and their enemies have in common."

"My cricket bat?"

Vastra hands Fiona a piece of paper which has documentation of her defeating the Weeping Angels.

"It is just a bat! Nothing special."

"When did you first hold your cricket bat?"

"I learned cricket from my mother's friend when I first moved to London."

"Did he gift your the bat?"

Fiona runs upstairs and returns shortly laying the cricket bat on the table. "This is what is causing trouble to my family? This ... your words Mother Vastra," Pointing at the handle, "A child's cricket bat. I shall not be a conduit for more pain to this family. Let them have it." She plops back in her chair, "Ay, cood use a bevvy ay whiskey."

Alaya stands up, "Will wine be acceptable? May I offer a round?" Everyone nods yes and she goes to the drinking cabinet to sort out the drinks.

Fiona reads the cricket document again.

Vastra and Jenny examines the cricket bat in detail.

Alaya turns around with a tray of four glasses, "We have company."

The three at the table look up to see a weeping angel inches from the table.

Fiona jumps back to stand by her wife's side. Vastra stretches out the cricket bat, like a sword, to protect her family while Jenny instinctively pulls her wife in front of her family.

"What does it want?" Alaya asks.

"What do you want?" Fiona asks over Mother Jenny's shoulder.

Silence.
"I will deal with this, everyone close their eyes." Everyone but Vastra and Jenny close their eyes.

Jenny looks to her wife, "I am going with you if something happens." Vastra nods and Jenny gives herself permission to close her eyes.

"What do you want?" Vastra repeats herself and closes her eyes for second to see the Weeping Angel pointing to Fiona.

"No you talk to me." Vastra blinks and the angel's remains pointing to Fiona.

Vastra with an irritated voice, "Fiona. It seems I am demoted again. First my Jenny is assumed head of this family and now I the lone assassins will not acknowledge my authority in my own home."

Fiona comes up next to Mother Vastra and takes the bat and walks up to inches from the finger pointing in her direction. "I have kept my part of the bargain. I have only studied medicine and limited my brain's pleas for diversity. What do you want now?"

Blink.

The finger remains inches from her face, "This is truly annoying. When I played charades with my classmates at least there is more than pointing."

Blink.

The finger remains inches from her face. "I am here, right in front of you. What do you want?"

Blink

The finger remains. Fiona moves to the back of the statue.

Blink

The statue is pointing at her again. "So it is me." She walks up to the Weeping Angel's ear and whispers with as little air as possible, "Do you want me to go with you?"

The Angel's face is covered.

"Will I return safe?"

The Angel's face is covered.

"I don't want to go alone."

The Angel's points to Vastra.

Mother Vastra and Alaya opens her eyes, as they have been listening to the conversation. She walks towards Fiona to be a companion in her travels.

Fiona panics, "No. I will go alone." Before anyone protests Fiona grabs the Weeping Angel's pointing finger.
The Weeping Angel and Doctor Fiona Saint-Clair disappear.

Not a sound is being uttered.

Not a breath of air has been taken.

Vastra is shocked.

Jenny is scared.

Alaya is angry.

"We have no idea. Where? When she shall return. Nothing." Alaya goes to stand near where her wife was standing moments ago.

"Careful Alaya," Mother Vastra warns, "If they return to the exact spot you are hindering their arrival."

Alaya steps back without hesitation. She stares at nothing. She looks towards her Mother Jenny who offers no comfort. She looks towards her Mother Vastra who doesn't have any words or explanation.

Alaya grabs a seat and looks at the documentation again. "There must be a hint in here somewhere."

Vastra goes to her office and brings back all her books and notes on the Weeping Angels. "Alaya dear, can you make room?"

Alaya looks up slightly disturbed. She immediately catches her mother's blue eyes. Alaya stands up and stacks the papers and assists her Mother with the books. Without thought Alaya glides her tongue along her mother cheek, she pulls the tongue back. Alaya tastes fear, anger and there is love.

Vastra does the same stroke on her daughter's cheek to find the same emotion with an added spice of trust. "You trust them?"

"Yes, I will not allow myself to believe otherwise."

"Is that a human quality?" Turning to her wife Jenny.

"When we met, there was trust." Jenny smiles at her wife. "I am going to make tea."

"Mother you use your formidable intellect and combat skills to solve the crimes. This is something we just don't know." Alaya pulls out a seat for her mother, "I am a product of my Mothers. I have amazing strong mothers, who I have just found out have a price on their head in the early fiftieth century. Since I am a product of both please let us all work together. I need, no want, to believe she is safe and well. I must trust the Weeping Angels."

Mother Jenny returns with a tea and coffee tray. After placing on the buffet Alaya pulls out a chair for her Mother Jenny next to Mother Vastra.

Alaya sits down and a crumple sound is made in her skirt pocket. She stands up and digs it out, it is just two words, "I guessed." Alaya smiles and lays it open on the table. "I have hypothetical questions."
Mother Vastra and Mother Jenny look to their daughter.  

"The Weeping Angels allowed her to bring someone. How would you have handled it if I went?"

Mother Vastra sits back, grabs her wife's hand, "We would be doing exactly the same thing we are doing now."

"What if Mother Vastra you went to accompany Fiona."

Mother Jenny grabs her wife's hand, "I hope we would do the same thing."

"Would we?"

Mother Jenny ponders, "No, we wouldn't".

"These are Mother Vastra's books. These are her notes." Alaya points to everything on the table, "The only items I would go over are just Elsie's documents, or shall I say, the Vatican's papers. Something changed and Fiona went alone. Now we have more resources at our disposal."

Mother Vastra quickly got up to pace the room. "Are you suggesting that there is something more at play than just the Weeping Angels against the Vatican?"

"Why would Alaya get a typewriter to fix her future? Is it someone else's future we will not come to know or have not known? Is there any possible way we could find out?" Mother Vastra stops and shakes her head, "There are too many combinations."

"That is exactly what I am trying to explain." Alaya stands up and smiles, "We need to start simple and work our way into details. I suggest we start with the Vatican papers first."

Mother Jenny notice for the first time why her Alaya sometimes has a difficult time explaining herself, it is her other mother.

"Excellent," Mother Vastra and Alaya stack the books and other notes from Vastra's office and place them on the buffet next to the tea.

Alaya pours three cups of tea and hands two to her mothers.

The all sit back and go through each document.

Mother Jenny's human sense of touch to feel each paper. The first document Jenny feels creases and indents to the paper. She grabs more charcoal and a stack of onion paper. By the time all the documents were completed there was a rubbing for each paper. Jenny placed all the rubbing on the ground. "Vastra help me get up on the table."

Vastra looks up from her reading and offers a hand, "What are you doing?"

"I put my hand on all the papers, each had indents. It was like a puzzle."

Vastra and Alaya finally wake from their intensity and stand up and looks to the floor.

\underline{Neque fiduciam hosti lucra}

Alaya looks to her mothers, "Oh God what do we do?"
Mother Jenny grabs a dictionary, turning pages and looking up, "No gains enemy?"

"Close, neither enemy gains trust or don't trust either enemy," Alaya offers her mother Jenny.

Mother Vastra, "It is bad."

The business door opens and closes. Vastra and Alaya lick the air.

Alaya runs down the second-floor landing and there she is, her wife holding her cricket bat. They lock with a hug.

"What happened?"

"I was sent to Swindon. I need money for the taxi outside. The driver is at the door."

"Damfino!" Alaya goes upstairs and returns with money, "It will be OK." Alaya goes to the ground floor door, pays the driver, with a bonus and a thank you.

Alaya runs back to the landing to see her wife angry. Fiona softly speaks, "I think it was a warning."

She embraces her wife, "We have something to show you." Alaya takes her wife hand and helps to stand on the table. "Look." Alaya points to the paper on the floor.

"Who are the enemies? Vatican and Weeping Angels?"

"That would be my guess." Mother Vastra chimes in, "Where did they send you?"

"Swindon. Help me down, please."

Alaya offers her wife a hand.

"Does anyone have an idea what is going on?" Fiona looks to her wife, Mother Jenny and then to Mother Vastra. "I had three hours to think about this but what doesn't make sense who am I? I am nothing. Seriously. I am nobody. It isn't self pity, I genuinely want to know." Alaya looks down to the words. "We can only trust ourselves."

"How did you find these?"

"It was my brilliant wife Jenny." Mother Vastra brags bringing her wife close, "We do not have the same sensitivity as human fingers."

"Amazing!" Fiona bends down to look at the charcoal rubs. "This must have taken ..." She notices the Weeping Angel feet. She stands up and comes close to the statue's ear. "I will not give the Vatican the cricket bat. But you must protect us from the Vatican. The Vatican cronies have threatened to cut off my arms if I did not give them this." She holds up the bat to the Weeping Angels face. "What do I need with a weapon from Weeping Angels? They aren't allow to touch my family." Fiona shift herself, "You cost us ...

"Alaya how much did the taxi ride cost?"

"eight-five pounds."

Fiona turns to her wife, "Seriously eight-five pounds? Did that include the tip?"

Alaya smiles at her wife's coolness, "Yes, that includes the tip."
Fiona returns her attention to the Weeping Angel, "You cost my family eight-five pounds, you must pay us back ... with interest."

Blink

The angel is gone.

Fiona turns to her family, "Neither enemy will have my trust. I just negotiated with the devil, again. I will not give the Vatican the bat and I will not trust the weeping angels." Fiona looks back to the floor and the Latin wording. "This looks time consuming. How did you know what was bring spelled?"

Mother Jenny bends down and picks one sheet up, "Here way in the corner is Latin numbers."

"How did you know that it was about the cricket bat?" Mother Vastra asks Fiona.

"Because they sent me to County Cricket Ground in Swindon." Fiona smiles and grabs the evening newspaper, "They aren't allowed to send our family back in time, so they just sent me to Swindon." She flips the newspaper to the sports events page, "It was the closest cricket match being played." She hands the open section to Alaya, "They could have sent me to India, Pakistan or the West Indies."

"Ahhh!" Alaya yells, "This is the most annoying and irritating life. We get a little moment of sanity and then nothing but heartache and stress." Alaya starts to pace and hits the table with her fist. "Why can't we just have peace?" She turns around to see her Mother Jenny tearing up, her wife just standing helpless and a disappointed Mother Vastra.

Mother Vastra walks up to her daughter, "We struggle because we live, just like everyone else. We suffer because we love, just like everyone else. I understand your anger. I am angry. Your mother is angry. Your wife is angry."

Alaya looks into her Silurian mother's eyes, "How do we win?"

Mother Vastra, "We don't. We survive."

"Nothing more than survival?"

"That is entirely how you look at your life."

Vastra hold her arm out behind her and within moments, like a magnet to steel, her Jenny holds tight. She pulls her wife close.

"Be desperate for life and happiness." Mother Jenny cups her daughter's face. "It will not fail you."

"Let's continue our work tomorrow. I need to hold my wife tight tonight." Vastra looks into her wife's eyes, "Shall we?"

Jenny leads her wife out, "Good-night ladies."

Fiona has not moved but keeps an eye on her wife.

"I am sorry for my outburst." Alaya offers her wife.

"Why? You said it perfectly." Fiona smiles. "Do you not think I feel the same way sometimes? I get so angry I want to hide in the hills to have your to myself."
Alaya walks to her wife and grabs her, "I want that for both of us."

"We are more than ourselves. We need writers to write great novels for use to read. We need actors to perform plays. We need so much more than ourselves. We are more because of the world. Our love is powerful, it makes all the difference."

"That is wonderful to hear."

"I am glad the weeping angels didn't send me to India. I could not image the taxi fare."

"Do not think about being apart again. I thought we agreed, together. Why did you grab the angel's hand? Why didn't you wait for me?"

"Something in my gut said it would be fine."

"Never again, please."

"I promise."

They go up to their bedroom. Tonight is the first night Alaya takes out two night gowns without interruption.

They lay in bed holding each other.

"Fiona?"

"Yes?"

"You truly just guessed?"

"Yes love, I guessed. I hope you aren't too disappointed by your educated doctor simply guessing."

"Not at all." Alaya pulls her wife tight. "Guess away."
"Two weeks. I can't imagine sitting still for two weeks." As Fiona takes her stand and prepares for an attack.

"No, get lower. Watch your centre of gravity." Mother Vastra instructs.

"Like this?"

"Do you feel the difference?"

"I feel my legs not happy about the stance."

"That will go away with time." Mother Vastra smiles, "You are out of shape little one."

"What?" Fiona looks to her wife, "Am I out of shape?"

"You are thinner than I would like." Fiona answers with a small smile.

"I need to get stronger, but is that possible?" Fiona focuses on her stance as her thighs start to burn, "I am ready"

Alaya attacks and within seconds Fiona's buttocks have kissed the floor.

She stands up, "What have I done wrong?"

"You stood up seconds before your attack. Go against your instincts to become taller." Mother Vastra turns to her daughter, "Again."

Fiona takes her stance low, "Ready."

Alaya attacks, this time Fiona goes low and she counters the attack almost flipping her wife but stopping short.

"Good job. Why did you hesitate?"

"I won't this time," Fiona gets into her stance and digs in her heels.

"I am coming stronger this time." Alaya smiles her warning.

Alaya attacks, Fiona goes low and springs up to throw her wife behind. Fiona smiles at her achievement to find herself facing the mat as her wife continued the attack.

Fiona sits up and thinks for a moment. Returns to the stance, "I am ready."

Alaya attacks, Fiona flips her wife, spins around, takes two steps backward and gets into a low stance. "Ha!"

Alaya smiles and looks to her Mother.

"Very good, why did you choose to do that?" Inquires Mother Vastra.

"You and Alaya do it all the time. You always moved away from your target after each attack."

"I think you did very well for today. Alaya and I will work on our hand-to-hand combat."
Fiona goes to the corner to get her things. She turns around to face her wife and Mother Vastra. "I need to learn something."

"What is it?" Alaya asks.

Fiona looks to Mother Vastra and her wife, "How can I keep someone from cutting my arms off?"

Mother Vastra quickly responds, "Simply choose not to fight."

"I was hoping for a tactical advantage, since I know the threat." Fiona looks to Mother Vastra with tears in her eyes. "Knowing is an advantage?"

Alaya looks into her wife's eyes. "Are you prepared to do damage to another?"

"I just want to keep my arms and hands. I don't want to hurt anyone. Teach me how."

Mother Vastra, "Come here and bring your cricket bat."

Fiona is seconds in front of Mother Vastra with her cricket bat in hand.

Mother Vastra goes to the wall with various types of weapons, she pulls down a sword. "This is similar to the blade of the current Swiss Guard." She turns around to face Fiona, "Defend yourself."

"Remember your training." Alaya steps back and clenches her hands.

Fiona raises her cricket bat.

Mother Vastra lunges attacks with the blade to the left.

Fiona quickly rotates her bat to defend her right arm, the blade hitting the cricket bat makes a thud sound.

Mother Vastra attacks from the right.

Fiona quickly rotates her bat to defend her left arm, the blade hitting the cricket bat makes a louder crack sound.

Mother Vastra attacks straight down the middle.

Fiona quickly rotates her bat, but it is too late.

Mother Vastra has snipped off a button, flips it into the air, catching it between her teeth.

"My heart, you were aiming for my heart!"

Mother Vastra hands the button to Fiona and proceeds to walk around Fiona. "Your stance is perfect, your timing to protect your arms is undeniably fast. But you see, these enemies will kill you for your cricket bat. Your arms being cut off will be the death of you. It might be better to let them just aim for the heart."

Fiona turns her head to watch Mother Vastra walk around her, "What are my options?"

"There is only one."

"Don't fight?"

"How can you say that? I will fight?"
"To what end?"

"Until they give up."

"They will never give up. I ask you again, to what end?"

Fiona angrily looks into Mother Vastra's eyes, "Until someone is defeated."

"They will defeat you."

"I have been paying attention. I have been in the dark basement learning to defend myself, my family and my future. If I must take up a sword ..." Fiona drops her cricket bat and pulls from the wall an Austrian pallasch sword. As soon as Fiona removes it from its holder the steel blade is too heavy and with a heavy clunk the blade hits the wooden floor. "ça me fait chie," comes from Fiona's mouth.

Alaya giggles and Mother Vastra lets out a hearty laugh.

Fiona ignores the audience, returns the pallasch back on the wall with all her might and steps back to examine her choices closely. Her focus is drawn up. She grabs the ladder and climbs. She lightly removes the sword from its hooks, brings it down to the ground. Once she is on the ground she lays the sword down, unsheathes the sword and stands. "I will fight with this one."

Fiona raises the sword with two hands, just like her cricket bat.

Alaya notices the subtle smiles on her Mother's face.

Mother Vastra lunges attacks with the blade to the left.

Fiona quickly rotates her blade to defend her right arm, the irons clang.

Mother Vastra attacks from the right.

Fiona quickly rotates her blade to defend her left arm, the irons clang.

Mother Vastra attacks straight down the middle.

Fiona quickly rotates her blade stops entry.

Mother Vastra stands up and asks, "Do you know which blade you have chosen?"

Fiona shakes her head no looking down at the sword.

"You have in your hand a double-edged Claymore from around 1510." Mother Vastra comes closer and points Fiona's sword down. Alaya comes and stands by her wife for the lesson. "Notice the uniform style, the sword is set with a wheel pommel capped by a crescent-shaped nut and a guard with straight, forward-sloping arms ending in quatrefoils, and langets running down the centre of the blade from the guard."

"What is it's weight?" Alaya asks as she is still shocked at her wife's handling with ease.

"This particular one is under 2.5 kilograms. Light and easily manipulated." Mother Vastra adds with pride, "You manipulated it quite well to keep me from obtaining another button."

Fiona shakes her head yes as she looks at her shirt missing one button.

Mother Vastra pulls up Fiona chin. "Little one, you have chosen well. The Claymore is famous for
being used by William Wallace the First War of Scottish Independence."

Fiona smiles, "Teach me. Please."

"Tomorrow."

Fiona, "Tomorrow." She walks towards the ladder to put the claymore in its original location.

"Fiona, your sword belongs here." Fiona turns around and proudly leans the claymore next to the katanas cabinet. She returns the ladder to its original location. She heads toward the door, "Thank you."

Fiona and Mother Jenny made breakfast together, it feels more and more like home. "Mother Jenny, what would my mother think of me?"

Mother Jenny stops cutting the raw meat, "What made your want to know?"

"Upstairs I carried my first sword. I wonder if I my mother would be proud of me?"

"I believe your mother would understand."

"Thanks you" Fiona remained quiet for the remainder of cooking breakfast.

Once everyone is in the kitchen for breakfast Fiona and Jenny serve. Before Fiona returns the kettle of coffee on the burner she counts the mushrooms, "I see five and expect five when I return. I put five on your plate. If that isn't enough, too bad." She offers a smile to her wife.

Once everyone is settled Mother Jenny speaks up, "Fiona has picked up a weapon?"

Mother Vastra turns to her wife, "She has."

"Did she chose wisely?"

"Not at first. She grabbed the first one in her eye sight. It was too heavy and sank to the floor instantly."

"Oh, I heard that it rattled the kitchen. What was her final choice?"

"She took her time, evaluate and examine each one that drew her eye. She did make that climb and retrieved the Claymore."

Jenny smiled. "Fiona, do you know when we bought the Claymore?"

"No."

"When Louisa said you needed to learn to defend yourself."

Fiona froze with her mouth wide open and a mushroom halfway towards the opening. She puts down the mushroom. "Why now?"

"Because you were open. A cricket bat is nothing more than a bat, Weeping Angels excluded, to alter motion. A sword isn't about manipulating motion, it is about fighting and defending yourself and your family."

For the rest of the month, after the sun goes down everyone heads to the upstairs gym to assist in training Fiona.
Alaya likes to attack high, always looking for an advantage with the neck.

Mother Jenny prefers to attack around the waist.

Mother Vastra likes to attack constantly changing her focus.

Fiona think to herself, 'do I have an attack preference?'. "Ouch!" Fiona drops her sword and quickly adds pressure to stop the bleeding.

Alaya runs down stairs for cloth while mother Jenny gets the medical kit off the shelf.

"Let me see the wound." Fiona releases her pressure to Mother Vastra. "You will need stitches," she places Fiona hand back over the wound.

Alaya returns with clean strips of cloth and a cup. She hands the cup to her wife, "Drink this, you deserve it."

Fiona quickly drinks and smiles, "Thank you. How much whiskey do I have left?"

Alaya cleans the wound, "Maybe two servings, possibly less." She watches her wife's face cringe and her eyes tear up. "I am sorry this will hurt."

Fiona nods yes and closes her eyes.

Mother Jenny comes over with her tools. "I need to clean the wound."

Alaya grabs her wife's hand.

Mother Jenny pours alcohol over the wound.

Fiona has a tear running down her cheek and squeezes Alaya's hand.

Mother Jenny neatly stitches the wound, tight and then wraps a bandage.

Mother Vastra bends over to look at Fiona, "You ready to continue?"

Fiona is shocked that she doesn't get a break.

"Little one, if you get hurt in battle ... you will have to fight through the pain. We will not be able to stop the fight to tend wounds." Alaya offers her wife a hand.

Fiona picks up her blade and says softly, "I was thinking. It was my own fault that I was wounded."

"What were you thinking about that had you distracted?" Mother Vastra asked.

"Just wondering if I am a predictable fighter?"

"You swing the same way every time. Change it like you change your cricket bat swings with every bowler."

Fiona nods and readies her sword.

The attacks begin again, this time Fiona pretended everyone was a bowler with different skills.

She pretended Vastra was all speed and bounced on the seam, fast and erratic.

She pretended Jenny was a spinner with a low bounce.
She pretended her wife was throwing high and wide.

Fiona didn't need stitches again,

Each night Alaya kissed the scar tenderly.

It always made Fiona smiled, "Too bad the blade didn't cut my inner thigh."
Fiona came home from a long shift of surgeries. She stomped upstairs, into the drawing room and collapsed onto her wife.

"Rough night?"

Fiona nods yes into her wife's chest.

"Do you want to talk about it?"

Fiona nods no into her wife's chest.

Alaya giggles, "You want to stay right where you are?"

Fiona nods yes.

"Are you hungry?"

Fiona nods yes.

"Can you breath?"

Fiona nods no.

Alaya pulls her wife up, "My dear breathing and eating will keep you alive."

"I just want to feel your heart."

Alaya places her wife back down.

Fiona turns her head to hear Alaya's beating heart and quickly falls asleep.

Alaya continues to read *Ancient Egyptian Myths and Legends* by Lewis Spence using her wife puffy hair as a stand.

Hours pass when the doorbell rings.

Alaya licks the air, it is a telegram, but doesn't dare move.

Mother Vastra comes into the drawing-room and notices her daughter's precarious position. She whispers to her daughter, "Nice book holder." She smiles and goes to retrieve the telegram herself.

Alaya licks the air, her Mother is anxious. She decides to let her wife sleep a little while longer, if it is important Fiona will understand.

Alaya watches as her mother Jenny reads the telegram on the landing. She watches their interaction as Mother Jenny stiffens up and places her hand on her hip.

They whispered, but Alaya could still hear. They are whispering because her Fiona is sleeping.

"We have no choice?"

"It seems not."
"Are we able to gather reinforcements?"

"I will do my best."

Her mothers take hold of each other in an embrace. Alaya's heart skipped a beat watching her mother love each other after all these years.

They walk towards her holding each other's hand.

Mother Vastra hands Alaya the telegram.

10 03
TP Kitchen Garden Gate
2300

Alaya reads the telegram, nods and makes an attempt to get up.

Fiona adjusts herself and curls tighter around her cool wife's body.

Alaya whispers to her mothers, "Tomorrow?"

The mother nod with a smile.

Mother Jenny covers Fiona up with a blanket and both depart the drawing-room closing the door behind them.

Alaya goes back to her book and playing with the long springy hair with her open hand.

She licks her wife's cheek and can taste love and for the first time peace.
Fiona parks her bicycle into the storage area runs upstairs while pulling off her coat and enters the drawing-room to sit by her wife. She whispers, "Hi."

Alaya pulls her wife close and hands her a sandwich.

Fiona bites with vigour.

Mother Vastra smiles.

"In two days we shall be confronting a new enemy. I made inquires of support, for now we should assume that we are going alone. We all know our weaknesses and our strengths, we can do this. I will be carrying the cricket bat?"

Fiona is trying to swallow and holding up a hand like a child answering a question in primary school, "Why would I not carry my cricket bat?"

"You will be a target."

"I am going to carry my cricket bat." She gives a determined look to her family. "I will carry it on my back, like I usually do when I ride my bicycle."

"Will you be open to handing it off? It might be the smartest option when the time comes."

Fiona looks down at her half eaten sandwich and looks up to Mother Vastra, "I am sorry. I do not want anyone wounded or killed because of something of mine."

"We share burdens in this family together."

"It is unbalanced."

"Truly, that is what you see?"

Fiona nods.

Alaya touches her wife's hand and half a sandwich by default, "If you think there is an opportunity for balance in this family, there isn't. We all have issues, burdens, failures, sadness and even embarrassment ... Have you not been paying attention?"

"There isn't a life that doesn't struggle and we seem to prosper with each unexpected demand."

Fiona looks to her wife and offers a smile.

"Your bicycle chain did you break it yourself?"

Fiona nods no.

"If you never broke your chain, how long would you have come to my home?"

"Probably. Yes, after I finished my higher education."

Mother Vastra and Mother Jenny quickly glance toward each other, their ears are attentive.

Alaya shocked, "Why?"
"I had much on my schedule, I barely had time for sleep. My letters were so sporadic, I felt guilty when I could not respond immediately."

August 1911
Paternoster Row, London

It is not unusual to see monks and clergy walking Paternoster Row. Many walk in private meditation while others hold the tradition praying the Lord’s Prayer in Latin.

The publishers and religion coexists on this street for generations.

The only odd thing is a young red-haired woman on her bicycle weaving in and out of pedestrian traffic.

The woman dismounts to enters a publisher's establishment.

A tall monk walks by the bicycle leans down to tie his untraditional clergy garb combat boots. It was quick, no one was actually paying attention, his arm hand pop out of the robe wearing a wide leather pocketed arm bracer he dislodges the bicycle chain one cog to the left. He peeks under the canvas to see the typewriter. 'Yes, this is the girl.' After which He stands up and pretends to focus on what seems to be a worn bible.

The young red-haired woman exits the establishment notices the monk tall blue eyes monk smiling with dimples, "'Guid day.'"

The monk bows and responds in a Scottish accent, "Hello. A Guid day to you too. Where are ye from with that amazing voice?" The red hair is curly but under control. 'Yes, this is the one.'

Fiona looks up to the almost six foot tall man, "I was born in Tobermory on the Isle of Mull."

"That is a pretty place. Not far from Iona Abbey. I have been there. Do you miss the air?"

"Yes, I do. But I am here for an education. I plan on returning to the Highlands when I am able."

"What brings you ..." He no longer has her courtesy.

The young woman looks past the monk down the street, she brings her attention back to the monk. "I am sorry, I have a schedule to keep."

The monk moves to stand behind the young Scottish woman, lowers himself to eye level, almost laying his cleft chin on her shoulder. He examines the shared street view. He smiles as he sees Alaya behind the curtains at Madame Vastra and Jenny Flint's home holding a cup of tea. "Oh, do you have a friend expecting you?"

Fiona blushes.

The monk smiles as he senses the young Sottish woman's body temperature rise and her cheeks flushed.
"Is the the one behind the lace with a tea cup?"

"She is there already? My vision is a bit lacking." Fiona's heart flutters.

The monk nods. "Why don't you go and say hello?"

"Oh no. I must not."

"Why?"

"My studies, my obligations and my work. I have no time for such luxuries as ..."

"Romance?"

Fiona is stunned. "Social opportunities." She looks at the monk squinting to focus on the woman in the lace woman. "What kind of a holy man are you?"

"I am not a proper holy man, not originally from here. Are you an earnest woman?"

"I gather by your choice of footwear and your words." Fiona wonders why she is confessing such matters to this monk, "Yes, I am earnest."

"I come from a place where individuals do not use quaint little categories to define their lives."

"Where might that be?"

"Would you believe colony far far away and way into the future?"

Fiona thinks for a moment. "I can accept that answer, as I have for others that have entered my life."

"Good. Now what are you going to do about your window woman?"

"Nothing. Like I said, no time." Fiona gives a look of anxiety, "I am so sorry I am truly off schedule." She mounts her bicycle and grabs the handle bars.

"The woman in the window deserves a chance to be patient." The monk looks straight into the deep green eyes, "She is more than a hung painting behind lace."

"She is not a painting, she is a sculpture." Fiona smiles at the blue-eyed monk, "She is my Galatea."

"Luckily there is is no god required to bring her to life. All you have to do is knock and correspond at your leisure. It is a safe opportunity to develop a friendship without giving up your schedule. Have the courage."

"Correspond?" Fiona smiles at the new option fluttering around in her brain. "Guid Day."

The monks watch as the young red-haired woman mount bicycle and to pedal two rotations and the chain fall off completely. He observes the fruits of his labour as the young woman drags the heavy bicycle to the front of house number 13.

The monks walk away, smiling under his hoods as the sound of Alaya's giggle emanates from
inside the 13 Paternoster Row.

He goes around the corner into a close, pulls the robe over his head and hands it to a thin beautiful man enjoying a bar of chocolate and plants a kiss on the chocolate dipped lips. "Thank you," He walks away, leaving a stunned half-dressed monk.

He looks down at his tattered brown journal and crosses out another task from his list.

"What changed your mind?" Mother Vastra asks.

"My bicycle chain broke."

"Bicycle chains break all the time. Were you encouraged? Inspired?" Mother Vastra's curiosity is on high alert.

Fiona remembers the unorthodox monk, "A tall monk with blue eyes and charm."

"I want to hear this tale of the blue-eyed charming holy man," Alaya says with a bit of jealousy.

"Oh?" Pulling her wife close, "He had a broken Scottish accent, blue eyes, tall almost six feet and wore military type boots underneath his cloister robe."

Mother Vastra smiles as another puzzle piece has been added to the mystery. "We must focus." She smiles at her daughter's wife, "Fiona, please allow me to carry the cricket bat?"

Fiona smiles to herself, "Mother Vastra, may I use your katanas?"

Mother Vastra squints her eyes, "I am at a loss in response. I am caught."

"I will concede that there might be a situation where the cricket bat must be wielded by someone else, all I ask is that it remains in our family?" Fiona acknowledges as she takes a small bite from her sandwich.

Everyone nods in agreement and secretly hope there isn't a situation that anyone wants to pick up the cricket bat out of Fiona's hands.

"Good, now let's get back to the telegram. The date and time are obvious. This location, Kitchen Garden Gate, is the quandary? Practically every estate has one." Mother Vastra looking at the large street map of London.

Fiona takes another bite of her sandwich and chews while she watches the Flint Family solve a new riddle.

"What about those no longer estates? Parks?" Mother Jenny offers.

Mother Vastra loves when her wife speaks up and was about to hold a brain session with her wife but stopped herself. It would be better to let her daughter find her words, 'I like her words'.

"Would a park have a kitchen?" Alaya asks her mother Jenny. "We know it is a garden gate."

"It could maintain the name even though the kitchen is no longer existing." Mother Jenny smiles at her controlled wife, she can feel the Silurian's desire to comment. "So what would have a garden gate?"
Alaya thinks out loud, "Estates ... Land ... Lots ... Allotments ... Parishes ... Plantations ... Plots ... Paddocks ..."

Fiona waves her hand as she is trying to chew and swallow her food, "I played at Richmond Park for a cricket match. There is a lovely field perfect for cricket." Fiona announces and gets up to point the location with her free hand.

"Here we go with cricket, again." Mother Jenny shakes her head while rolling her eyes.

"There are gates all around Richmond Park and it is right next to Teck Plantation." Fiona points to an open area within Richmond Park.

"Is there a kitchen garden gate?"

"I do not know."

"Let's go and investigate."

"Alaya, please may I make another sandwich before we go?" Fiona asks before she takes the last bite of the one in her hand.

Alaya smiles as she hands her wife a tin and canteen, "This is warm hot chocolate."

Fiona starts to tear, "You are amazing." She kisses her wife with such happiness she didn't care what her wife's mothers thought ... her wife deserves more than just words.

They get in and out of the taxi going around Richmond Park and all around Tech Plantation. There is it, a gate, hidden in the back, off the path.

It opens to rolling fields with a thick forests barrier.

Alaya takes her wife in hand as she walk to around examining and studying the area.

Mother Vastra and Mother Jenny walk in the opposite direction surveying the land.

Soon after thirty minutes they meet up to continue around back to the original gate.

All four get into a taxi and return home.

"I am sorry, I must get some sleep." She kisses her half-Silurian wife good night.

The three remain sharing notes, making adjustments to their map and even setting up a battle plan.

It is past two in the morning when Alaya slips into the bed.

Fiona is fast asleep, but soon moans contentment when her wife's cool body is covering her back.

Alaya holds her wife tighter than usual and hopes that the hospital keeps her busy the next few nights.
The Night Before

Fiona parks her bicycle in her usual spot and works her way to the drawing-room to find it empty. She enters the kitchen to find, hidden under a white cloth, a sandwich which she grabs and takes a big bite. She hears a thud above and smiles.

She comes into the gymnasium to see Alaya, Mother Vastra and Mother Jenny all aggressively sparing.

Alaya finishes her sandwich, tightens her cricket bat on her back and unsheathes her Claymore. She faces her wife with a smile.

"No, your stance is all wrong." Alaya points to her wife's feet, "I can easily defeat you."

Fiona shifts her feet and offers another smile to her wife.

"Better."

Alaya comes to attack, Fiona counters and avoids contact. She smiles.

"The fight it is not over by avoiding one move." Alaya scolds her wife as a child.

Alaya attacks again, Fiona stands and defends herself.

Alaya's blade comes down harder and Fiona drops the Claymore out of her hands.

Alaya waits for Fiona to pick up the blade and attacks again with the same strength, the Claymore does not fall.

She attacks again, harder. Fiona stands firm and counters pushing the blades away from her body.

She attacks again, Fiona stops the blade from reaching her right shoulder and pushes the blades down.

She attacks again. Fiona stops the blade from hitting low and pushes with all her strength the blades away.

Again and again Alaya attacks.

Each one harder and faster.

Fiona defends herself, never attacking.

"Why don't you fight back?" Alaya asks her wife.

"I am a doctor, I must not do harm." Fiona responds with sadness in her eyes. "You know this."

"Your enemies do not. Are you going to hope someone is out of steam? Walk away from exhaustion?" Alaya speaks with harshness.

"If I am not attacked why would I raise my blade."

Alaya looks over her wife with villainous eyes and reminds herself, 'I must make you stronger.' She attacks again and again.
Fiona's instincts are not to attack.

Alaya is frustrated, "You are weak, you should not fight."

"I am not weak." She stands taller and prepares for another onslaught of attacks by Alaya.

Fiona's adrenaline kicks in, with every approach she monitors and protects herself. Never allowing any flaw to be disclosed. Not sign of weakness. No tears.

Alaya eyes burn and her blade swings harder.

Fiona stands steadfast and maintains her position.

Alaya feels her blood pulsating, takes in a deep breath and does not withhold anything.

Fiona shields herself and even pulls the cricket bat off her back with her other hand to fend off Alaya's onslaught blade.

Alaya slams the blade down again, again, again and again until Fiona is down on one knee. Alaya pulls back her blade and begins to bring down her full wrath like a hammer.

Jenny screams, "Vastra!"

Vastra instantly pulls a staff off the wall and smacks both women back. Alaya goes down against the mat and Fiona slams against the wall.

Both women are huffing and puffing.

Alaya sits up on her knees and looks down at her wife.

Fiona puts down her Claymore and cricket. She crawls quickly to her wife and holds her tight. She knows her wife is making her stronger or to grow courage to not fight, "Please don't break me."

Alaya grabs her wife like a precious lost stuff toy, "I am so sorry. I should make you stronger gradually, not in one night."

"I held my own," Fiona whispers.

Alaya yields, "Yes, you did."

Mother Vastra interrupts, "Alaya you have much pent up energy. Do you want to spar with me?"

Fiona holds her wife's face in her hands while she responds to Mother Vastra, "No, she is coming with me." Fiona stands, assists her wife to rise and leads down into the kitchen.

Alaya heart pounds as she sits at the table watching her wife attempts to make tea with shaking hands.

"You scared me." Fiona stops and looks into her wife's brown eyes. "Who were you fighting?"

Alaya is speechless and attempts to talk, but nothing comes out.

"Who were you fighting?" Fiona asks a little firmer.

"You."

"Me? You want me humbled to the floor?"
"Yes."

Fiona is shocked and begins to focus on making herself a sandwich. "You were angry. Your eyes were ... like fire. The rage." She faces her wife again, "There was no softness, no kindness ... Your eyes." Fiona gets quiet, "I saw no love."

Alaya stands up and pulls her full height to look down at her wife small frame over the kitchen counter, "How dare you interpret what I am doing as lack of love."

Fiona looks up, touches her wife's cheek, "Then who were you fighting?"

Alaya shrinks back into her seat and calms her body.

Fiona patiently waits for her wife to find her words. She goes about the kitchen, brings tea service and the sandwich. She hands her wife tea and takes a bite of her sandwich.

Alaya contemplates her response. 'Do I tell lies? Do I tell her the truth? It scares me to know we have enemies. I need to be strong for us.' "I was fighting the Vatican's men, the weeping angels, the Physician in Bethlem Hospital and John."

Fiona looks to her wife and a tear falls from her cheek as she forces herself to chew.

"We have enemies just because we exist, nothing more." Alaya wipes the tear from her wife's cheeks with a soft flick of her tongue, there is love and compassion. "I want us stronger so that they will leave us alone. To be scared to deal with my family."

Fiona smiles and nods.

"They underestimate because of our gender. We are strong, we can do anything."

Fiona nods.

Alaya melts and replays her attacks moments ago, "You defended yourself well. I am proud of you." Alaya finally offers her wife the smile she was wanting.

Fiona puts her hands on her wife's, "Have you not noticed my eating?"

"You have eaten many sandwiches, we have to make a new loaf of bread every two days."

"I am eating to be stronger. I aim to be by my wife's side..."

Alaya goes to interrupt as Fiona touches her lips with her finger.

"I aim to be by my wife's side defending her."

Alaya sits back and contemplates what she has just heard. She replays all those times they spared, the way she swings her cricket bat, the way she handles the Claymore ... she is defending me ... defending us. When she stood by my side when the Vatican attacked, it was not to fight ... it was to defend me, defend herself, defend the family. Alaya's eyes grew wide.

Fiona watched the process of her wife's epiphany, grinned at the brown eyes understanding and took another bite of the sandwich.
Louisa informs the surgical staff. "I want to wait to see if the child does turn on its own. It is far better than risk infection from an operation." Everyone nods.

Fiona looks up at the clock, 1800 hours, 'my shifted ended four hours ago, but so many surgeries'. "Doctor Anderson, I need a nap. If you need me, I will be in the call room."

Louisa smiles, "Wars always bring up the birth rate." She watches Fiona drag herself away concerned she is working too much and quickly refocuses her attention on the next patient on her rounds.

Fiona used the phone in the call room to inform her wife of the possible surgery before she fell asleep instantly on the cool common cot.

Fiona is woken by a kind young nurse, "You are needed in operating room two."

"Thank you. I will come in a moment." She looks up at the clock 2145. She springs up and runs through the almost empty corridors and enters the washroom.

She enters operating room two and offers a smile under her mask to Louisa. Since Fiona's smiles are always large her eyes squint and the mask pulls from her ears to create a unique crease that is surely in itself a smile.

Louisa smiles back, "The baby has not turned naturally, we need to operate."

Fiona nods.

Forty minutes later a baby is born and the mother is well.

Fiona cleans up while looking at the clock, "Doctor Anderson do you need my services for the rest of the evening?"

Louisa looks at the schedule, "Not until tomorrow morning, We have a hysterectomy at nine in the morning."

Fiona nods, "I will be here at six-thirty." She leaves the surgical area to the locker room. She quickly changes into her cricket outfit, puts the cricket bat and Claymore into her bag and exits the hospital. He passes the bicycle rack and hails the taxi waiting.

While she is in the taxi, she attaches her bag and cricket bat to her back and contemplates the situation she soon will be facing. 'they will not get the cricket bat and will not harm my family.'

The taxi arrives at the back end of Teck Plantation in front of the hidden Kitchen Garden Gate. She exits the taxi and finds three weeping angels stay guard.

"Sir, here is an extra tenner if you stay here at watch this entrance to the count of fifteen without blinking. Not a moment longer or a second too soon. Please after the fifteen seconds please drive as fast as possible honking your horn twice. I want to know you have exited safely."

"Aye I will." She leaves the weeping angels in the eyes of the driver and runs counting backwards fifteen ... fourteen ... thirteen ... twelve ... she weaves in and out of the woods ... nine ... eight ... seven ... there is her family on the top of the small hill three ... two ... one and she sprint faster. She
hears a horn honk twice in the distance 'good'.

She whispers as she stands catching her breath to her wife's side, "Hi. Thank you for the taxi."

"I need you here." Alaya whispers back.

Fiona looks around at the various people. She looks to her right and noticed a familiar face. "Alaya, that man was the six-foot, blue-eyed, charming monk."

"Interesting," replies a calm Alaya.

Fiona notices a subtle look between Mother Vastra and Mother Jenny, 'I will address this at another time.'

"Who are those two women with him?"

"His Co-workers."

"So he was a fake monk?" She looks around there are two men wearing Indian turbans, a woman in a Sari, a British Officer, two kilted Scotsman, a woman wearing a clan print and three others she can't make out. All are carrying various types of weaponry she has never seen before.

The monk says something to Mother Vastra.

In her strongest authoritative Silurian warrior voice, "It is time. This is essential that the bat does not get into their hands. This is an alien threat to our future."

Fiona looks around, not one person is stunned. She whispers to her wife, "They all know?"

"Yes, they all know." Alaya responds with a smile. "It is a comfort to know we might be isolated, but we are not alone."

A familiar tall grey hair man with the same small man with glasses emerge from the forest edge. The two walk up the hill and speaks directly to their Silurian Warrior leader. "We invited .. you here ... to negotiate ... a peaceful ... trade."

Mother Vastra is annoyed because he has not altered his speech pattern. "What is it that you trade?"

"We want ... the cricket ... bat."

"What is your offer?"

"Your ... lives."

"The bat belongs to only one person." Without turning her head, "Little one?"

Fiona smiles, "Yes?"

"Would you be so kind to hand over your cricket bat to this gentleman from the Vatican?"

"No, I am sorry. It is my cricket bat."

The small man with glasses walks towards Fiona.

Alaya quickly places her blade to his throat.

Mother Vastra speaks, "Do you truly want a headless member of the clergy?"
"Your bat is of no use to you. Why would you risk your friends and family's life just because of sports equipment." The small man pleads with Fiona.

"It belongs to me."

"You have aligned yourself with the wrong people. Your mother would be disappointed with your choice of ... husband? wife? reptile? What do you call each other?"

Fiona smiles and realizes he is just guessing.

"My choice, my cricket bat."

"Why not settle down with a proper gentleman who can watch over you, take care of you ... enjoy a life of leisure."

"My choice, my cricket bat."

"You are not only an abomination in god's eyes but you practice bestiality. Your life is cursed."

"My choice, my cricket bat."

The small man turns to his leader, "It seems she has decided her fate." He turns to walk back to return to his rightful place next to the tall grey hair man.

Fiona pulls the cricket bat from her back, whacks his backside and yells. "Carpe natibus!"

The man quickly returns to the grey-hair man and whispers something.

"Yes, you are mistaken about many things. That is just a normal cricket bat. You give that to your religious leaders and you will be the laughing stock." As the two men look at Vastra. "Yes, I have excellent hearing"

"Would you ... allow one ... specialist to ... look at ... the cricket ... bat?"

Mother Vastra nods.

The small man with glasses points to Fiona.

The small man waves his hand and holds up one finger in the air. A hooded monk comes out of the forest and runs up the hill to the two men. "You are ... given permission ... to look ... at the ... cricket bat ... for its ... authenticity."

The small man with glasses points to Fiona.

The six-foot, blue-eyed, charming fake monk comes running over and whispers "I know you."

The monk looks up and gives a terrified look. "I must analyse this cricket bat."

Fiona hands him the cricket bat and the hooded pulls out an electrical device. Everyone one in the groups except Mother Vastra, Mother Jenny, and Alaya do the same. Alaya's sword is ready in case the monk decides to keep the cricket bat.

Everyone is scanning, decoding and probing the cricket bat with their individual devices.

The monk turns around, "It is the cricket bat you seek. It has the time vortex signature." He hands it back to Fiona.
The six-foot, blue-eyed, charming fake monk and whispers to the monk "Stay with us," as he offers his hand.

The monk looks back to his leaders, back to the tall, blue-eyed man who gave him chocolate and a kiss. He grabs the hand both return to their position. He pulls the monk in, kisses him, and says, "Stay with me."

The monk pulls out his sword and stands next to the tall, blue-eyed fake monk's side.

"This is ... ridiculous ... end this." The tall grey hair man says to his small companion.

The small man holds up his hand in a fist.

A quiet mass of hooded monks come out of the forest all around the small hill.

Everyone prepares their stance and buzzing sounds are all around as if unloading a spinning top.

The monks move forward towards the bottom of the hill where each monk pulled from their robe a glowing electric sword.

"This is ... your last ... chance to ... hand over ..."

Vastra quickly stops the dull words, "Shut up."

"Attack!" Yell the tall grey hair man.

The monks run up the hill.

Each person fights using their weapon of choice. With each sound a monk yells in agony, the night flashes colours of red, sparks of green, yellow flames, blue electric discharge and loud popping sounds. It reminds Fiona and Alaya of the fairway at the St. Paul's fete.

Each weapon lays waste to the monk's attack.

The monks coming toward Vastra, Jenny and Alaya are sliced in half within seconds.

Alaya throws her chakram to keep most of the enemies at bay, but those who dare face the same fate as those who face her mothers.

The monks coming towards Fiona are not killed but wounded as gaping holes are located throughout their body. As the first few are humped over she looks towards her wife for a solution, "I will not kill them."

Alaya nods, smiles and kicks them down the hill. "You will bandage them after we are victorious."

The monks continuously come out of the forest running up a small hill like ants.

Soon the army monks have emptied out of the forest.

The monks have their backs to the woods.

Fiona yells, "Everyone close their eyes for two seconds."

"What?" comes from the motley crew.

Mother Vastra commands, "Close you eyes on the count of three."
Each one use their weapons to give themselves space and allow themselves the three seconds before being lashed out with their eyes closed.

"One ... Two ... Three!"

Everyone closes their eyes.

"Open!"

Weeping Angels surround the area behind the monks.

Mother Vastra commands, "We need to do this again. Prepare yourselves."

Each one attack the monks with a new sense of victory.

"One ... Two ... Three!"

Everyone closes their eyes.

"Open!"

The monks are now half the numbers.

Mother Vastra commands, "Again. Prepare yourselves."

Now weapons are lowered as they use physical combat to knock them down the hills. The fate of the monk's lives will be send by stone hands to the past.

"One ... Two ... Three!"

Everyone closes their eyes.

"Open!"

They only remaining enemies are the tall grey hair man and his short companion with glasses. "I see ... you have ... allies."

"We didn't know. Until you unveiled your goals." Mother Vastra laughed at their stupidity. "No one has a way of communicating with these Assassins. They monitor your doings. You brought them." Mother Vastra offers advice, "If you would have done nothing ... the cricket bat would have been yours by simply assuming it was lost or stolen. You have lost lives over this. You have lost!"

"Have ... I?"

Vastra turns to see the Monk rescued by the tall, blue-eyed fake monk is now holding Fiona's cricket bat with a blade to her neck.

Behind him is a Weeping Angel a fingernail away from touching him.

"No! Keep and eye on the weeping angel. Do not let him get away." Mother Vastra instructs everyone.

Fiona smiles to her wife and quickly within seconds is free from the monk's blade. She now faces the monk with an open hand. "Please return to me my cricket bat."

Fiona goes to take it away and the monk raises it against her.
Fiona mimics Vastra's move and swings the Claymore side blade towards his right. The monk block with the cricket bat and protects himself.

Fiona swings, just like Vastra has done time and time before, the Claymore side blade towards his left. The monk blocks with the cricket bat.

Fiona aims for the collar, but the monks slap her Claymore down with the cricket bat.

"Side blade? What? That is is? You aren't willing to kill for the cricket bat?" The monk mocks her.

"No, I made a vow. I am sure you understand vows," Fiona responds

The monk laughs

Not good sign

The monk pulls back the cricket bat to swing at the weeping angel behind him.

"No!" Fiona goes to swing against the monk's forearms and slams the blade into his right wrist slicing through fingers of his left.

The cricket bat falls to the ground with the right hand clasping and two fingers drop in the grass millimetres away.

The monk yells in agony.

Fiona quickly open her medical bag and bandages his nub. She quickly bandages the few fingers.

"We can fix this if we get to a hospital in time."

The monk cries out to his god.

Fiona looks to her wife for comfort.

All eyes are on Fiona as the Weeping Angel touches the monk and he disappears.

"No no no no." Fiona looks at the Weeping Angel. "Where did he go? No person should suffer, not because of me. No one."

She picks up the cricket bat, prying off the hand and cleaning the blood with her alcohol.

She picks up the severed hand and sliced fingers and runs to the nearest tree. She pulls grass up, digging a hole in the dirt, wraps the hand and fingers in cloth, drops them into the cavity, covers the hole with dirt and pats the ground down.

Fiona gets up. sprints and stands next to her wife. "Please ... tell the man to leave us alone."

Mother Vastra stands tall, "I am officially requesting that the Vatican and its subsidiaries leave our family and future generations alone."

"We want ... the cricket ... bat or ... you will ... all die." The tall grey hair man replies with confidence.

"Your fate is resting on my request." Mother Vastra compassionately pleads.

"I must have that bat, it is essential ..."
Everyone closes their eyes for a second and open to see there is nothing on Richmond Fields except the victorious potpourri of personalities.

"It is done." Mother Vastra looks to her small army. "Thank you all for coming to our aid. I will keep my promise."

The small group of people nods and leave the ground. The last to leave is the tall, blue-eyed fake monk who simply winks before he and female companions leave in a flash of light.

Fiona sits on top of the hill and watches the moon low on the horizon. Her wife sits down by her side, "What promise did Mother Vastra make?"

"To bequeath to their institute our library, collection and intelligence after our family is dead and gone."

"They shall have a long wait."

"They are patient."
The Morning After

The sunrise peeks over the trees in Richmond Park as the red deer stretch and jump with the morning rays two couples sit on the hill watching dawn waking their London.

"Nothing is a beautiful as nature with the vast colours and smells of morning dew." Vastra softly confides to her wife, Jenny, who is leaning on her side who responds with a simple squeeze of their embraced hands.

Alaya is leaning against a tree as her wife, Fiona, sleeps along her chest and in between her legs. She taps her wife awake, putting a finger to her mouth to remain quiet and point to the does dance along the base of the hill. It was magic.

Fiona detests this moment as she whispers, "I am sorry. I must go to work, there is a surgery I must attend."

Mother Vastra silhouette nods as she hears her daughter-in-law whispers. Soon all four are exit Richmond Park and hail the first morning taxi along their walk.

Fiona goes to the locker room to change out of her cricket outfit into her medical uniform. She closes her locker to find Louisa standing at the end of the row.

Louisa smiles and asks, "How are you?"

"I am fine. Actually better than fine." Fiona laughs, "You'll never guess where I was just moments ago?"

"Please tell me."

"We were in Richmond park watching the red deer play in the morning dew."

"What a wonderful site." Louisa contemplates sharing but decides to risk the intimacy, "I woke up to my love in my arms again."

"We are lucky." Fiona becomes sober thinking about the task ahead, "How old is the patient?"

"Nineteen."

"To have cancer so young, with her husband fighting ... " Fiona looks to Louisa for advice, "Once we repair the body how do we help repair a life?"

Louisa pulls her Fiona close, "We do the best we can, but truly it is up to her. A childless life is not an unhappy one."

"It is if all you wanted to be was a mother." Fiona cautiously remarks, "Too many women have little else in life."

"True. How do you tell a woman, who wants nothing more to smells the lilies of the field that her sense of smell is gone? How do you tell help a painter who has lost use of their fingers? How do you assist an athlete who returns from the war an amputee? These are the trials of their lives."

Fiona nods.

It was a difficult surgery for Fiona. She has performed hysterectomies before but never this young.
She kept her composure as Louisa and her remove the cancerous ovarian vessels. The two small spheres that should be holding possible future children is dark and black with cancer.

Fiona’s throat aches, but reminds herself that they are saving her life. She can have a wonderful life, adopt, or even find pleasure in being an aunt.

She notices Louisa's eyes and offers a muted smile.

"She will live. It is the only solution."

Fiona nods, "I know. Will I ever distance myself from the patient?"

"I hope not." Louisa looks to her stitching, "Assist me in the final stitching."

Fiona quickly goes to work with her needle and surgical thread sewing areas before removing clamps and then turns to her nurse, "Cotton count, please?"

"Twenty-five"

"Thank you." Fiona then uses tiny stitches to close up the flaps of skin.

"Excellent Doctor Flint-Saint Clair." Compliments Louisa. "That is how you distance yourself, by focusing your attention. Allow yourself to be human, sympathetic and even disclose to your family about what you did today. It is times like this you must dig deep and find your physician's soul, the driving force behind your years of education and sacrifice."

Fiona nods.

After everyone cleans up after surgery, Louisa looks at the surgical schedule for the next few days. She picks up the phone, "Mary? Yes, who do you have on call? ... Yes ... perfect. Please have her come in and take off Doctor Flint-Saint Clair off the schedule for the next two days. No, It is my request. No. She has finally reached that moment." Louisa laughs, "I will tell her. Thank you."

She hangs up the phone and looks towards Fiona, "Go home. I will see you in two days."

"Why?"

"You have turned a corner in your career. All great doctors have this moment. Sad to say, many do not."

"What is that?"

"When you become more than your books and education. The moment you become a doctor not by title, but by who you are with every breath."

Fiona smiles and stands taller.

All the nurses pat Fiona on her back, offer handshakes and ever a few hugs.

"Mary says to not let it get to your head."

"How many doctors become more than their training?"

"About one-fourth." Louisa responds in sober tones, "Most become god-like, powerful or even invincible in their minds."
"I feel weaker, as if I could do more." Fiona responds, "But I am limited."

"That my dear is the difference."

Fiona goes back to her locker, grab her clothing and this time to the bicycle rack.

She pedals home as quickly as possible.

She runs upstairs to the Vastra Offices, "Mothers, is my Alaya home?"

Mother Jenny looks at the flushed face, "She is up in the kitchen attempting another desert."

"Please come and let me share with you good news."

All three enter the kitchen to see flour dusting everywhere. "Alaya?"

Alaya turns her head, which is covered with chocolate splashes and white flour speckles, "You are home?"

Fiona rushes over and slides riding the flour into her wife's arms, "I have the rest of the day off and tomorrow."

"What happen..."

Fiona kisses her wife and licks the chocolate off her nose. "I ... became something amazing today."

She pulls her wife to sit, "Please mothers, sit."

Fiona takes a deep breath, grabbed her wife's flour cakes hands and told her family of the nineteen-year-old cancer patient. "... I held her ovaries in my hand. They were not soft like tissue but hard like two rocks. The precious organs were dead, they were killing her."

Mother Vastra pulls her wife in close as both needed comfort.

"It pained me, but I dug deep and did the best I could. She will live a long life, like any other woman. But she will not be able to have her own children."

"This is quite a sad story, please get to the amazing part." Begs Alaya.

"Well, that is part of it ..." Fiona explains what Louisa has told her, how the nurses reacted and even the comment by Mary.

The mothers sit back and beam with pride. "Your mother would be pleased," Responds Mother Vastra.

"Are you pleased Mothers?" Fiona looks to them with wanting eyes.

"Yes, of course." Responds Mother Jenny.

"Definitely." Replies Mother Vastra.

Fiona blushed and wonders if they know how much they mean to her. "Since I have all of your attention I would like to discuss something related. I would like to talk about motherhood." Fiona takes a deep breath and looks to Alaya, "I don't want you to have any more injections." Fiona looks to Mother Jenny, "I know Alaya has in passing talked about expanding your family. Do you feel that it would be possible for Mother Vastra to also not receive her injections?"
The kitchen became quiet, so quiet you could hear the chatter of the ground floor tailor business.

"Did I say something wrong?" Fiona starts to tear up. "I am so sorry."

"No, you didn't." Alaya comforts her wife, "Did she?" Looking to her Mothers.

"It is your mother's decision. If I could, I would hatch one right now if she asked." Mother Vastra looks into her wife's eyes. "What do you think?"

"I guess I am scared. It was a painful memory, nothing like I was told or witnesses growing up."
Mother Jenny looks into her wife's face with tearful eyes, "I want nothing more than our lives, if that means just our Alaya or more. What do you want? We have talked before but never finalized a decision."

"Do you want to be a mother again?" Alaya asks tenderly, "You would have my support."
Mother Jenny, "That sea-ar-ian ..."

"The medical term is cesarean, but most people call it c-section." Fiona corrects soft tones.

"That cesarean, there isn't much pain?" Mother Jenny asks Fiona.

"You will be in discomfort for around three weeks, at the most. You will not have to go through ... One moment." Fiona gets up, kisses her wife, "Dear why don't you finish your concoction and clean up. I will return in a moment."

Fiona returns in a few minutes with a couple books. She smiles as she sees her wife returning to the interesting desert and smiles.

Fiona sits down and opens her medical books. "This one show how the operation will be step-by-step. See how this is open and the baby's head is not going down the birth canal. Based on the documentation when Alaya's head came through the canal caused the most pain." Fiona points to sketches in her medical book. The mothers look at it with interest. "Please let me know if you have any questions."

Fiona leaves the books open on the table as she goes over to her wife. "How can I assist?"

"Oh, it is almost done. I am just finishing the icing." Alaya pours out of a bowl thick chocolate frosting and spreads it all around.

Fiona grabs a dry towel and starts cleaning the floor. "Hey! It is my mess. I will clean it up." Alaya scolds her wife.

"I want to clean it up, that way we can spend time together." Fiona smiles up at her wife. 'Besides tomorrow I have off, would you be open the cinema or reading an adventure tonight?"

"Alaya steps over her wife and places the finished dessert on the table. Mother Vastra goes to touch the frosting with her finger, Alaya slaps it. "Mother I do not know why you would want another child. Mother Vastra sometimes acts like a hatchling herself." Alaya goes back to the counter, stepping over wife to grab a bowl and spoon. "Here mother, you can lick the bowl. Go ahead and spoil your Silurian appetite."

Mother Vastra scrapes the bowl with her finger and offers her wife a lick. Mother Jenny takes the bait and licks the finger clean.
"Fiona, they are at it again." She looks down to her wife, "This is your fault."

Fiona stands as she finished getting the flour off the floor. "Doot you blame ye half-Silurian. They are your mothers." She comes over to her wife, "Besides what will you do when our children arrive in our lives? Shall I keep our affections behind our bedroom door?"

Alaya laughs and pulls her wife close, "Never." She looks to her mothers, "How long do you think it takes for the bacteria to be potent?"

"We honestly do not know."

Fiona tries to understand, "There might be a chance we might not have a family?"

"It is a possibility. Alaya came as a surprise in our lives. We honestly can't offer you any insight. We just know it is possible." Mother Jenny responds.

Fiona sits down and looks to Mother Vastra, "Your research into the bacteria, is there a more potent time?"

Mother Vastra shakes her head no, "The Silurian body functions are regular, no fluctuations. At least I can see."

Fiona smiles, "The female body changes with ovulation."

"Explain?" Alaya and her mothers all sit down and give Fiona their undivided attention.

"Well, it is about ovulation and temperature. I can tell by my temperature when it is best ... optimal ... " Fiona blushes looking into her wife's eyes.

"Time for egg fertilization." Alaya smiles her answer.

"Yes. Fertilization. Funny how some words I can only talk about privately." She looks to the Mothers, "I am much better with strangers. I need to be open with my family."

"I understand," Mother Jenny calmly pulls her wife close.

Fiona is quiet and grabs her wife's hand. "Pregnancy is technically only possible during the five days ... " Fiona casually discusses the entire process of ovulation and answered many questions.

"I believe there is more research to have. Fiona will you join me in a new study on our family?"

Mother Vastra asks with excitement.

"I will do my best, although my free time is limited." Fiona smiles, how can she say no. "Let us plan a schedule tomorrow, write up our goals and possible hypothesis?"

"Excellent." Mother Vastra clasps her hands in excitement.

Fiona looks at the clasps hands 'Vastra clasps her hands in times of extreme excitement. Fiona is the opposite. I wonder if our daughter will follow the pattern.'

"I will have an answer tomorrow at breakfast. Vastra and I have much to discuss." Mother Jenny smiles, "I mean what if it is more human or more Silurian, we need to be prepared."

Everyone nods in agreement.

"That is something we will not know." Mother Vastra pulls her wife in and kisses passionately. "I
love you and that is all that should matter.”

Later that evening Fiona and Alaya are getting ready for bed. Alaya goes to the dresser to pull out two nightgowns. She feels her wife's arms wrapping around her waist. "I guess I should put these away," as Alaya returns the nightgowns to the drawer she can feel warm kisses on her neck.

"I have been thinking." Fiona bites down on her wife's shoulder blade.

"W... what have you been thinking?” Alaya quickly gets naked and lets her clothing drop. She feels her wife's warm naked body on her scales that are flexing with excitement.

Alaya allows her wife to encourages her to lay on the edge of the bed. Fiona straddled her wife's waist. "I know that your crown is sensitive ... but have you ever taken initiative in pleasing yourself?"

"It is almost impossible. I need the scent on my tongue."

"When I was gone ... I would imagine you near and my body would tremble. I could bring my dreams and imagination alive by simply touching myself. Are you able to bring yourself to climax?"

"I have tried, but without our scent present ... I am sexually dormant."

"For over a year, nothing? No want? No Desire?"

"Oh, I desired. I wanted, but it would end in frustration."

"Why did you have an almost naked picture of me by the bed?"

Alaya grew sad, "I don't want to remember those times."

"I ask because want to know. I realized while I was discussing human female ovulation process ... I don't truly understand my wife biologically. So, please tell me why the picture? Did you know what it would do to me physically and sexually? Does it have the same reaction to you?"

"Yes, I knew what it would do to your body. I wanted you to have pleasure and I was hoping my image would give yourself permission to remember us sexually."

"Oh. It did, my goodness it did." Fiona blushed looking down at her wife's beautiful body. "Even now. Can you feel my body's temperature rising being near you?"

Alaya nods, "Can you feel my body temperature react to your warmth?"

Fiona nods, "Your scales pulsate. Why? When?"

"When I sense danger my scales clamp down. Just like your hairs stand on end when you are scared. Right now, they flex because they are more pliable and sensitive. I feel your emotions, your heat, and touch. Go ahead and pet my stomach."

Fiona takes two fingers and guides them across her abs and watches in amazement how the scales almost part ways with her touch. "It is like tall grass in a field, it opens a path."

Alaya smiles, "I don't feel threatened. The scales protect my body. Your touch is not a threat. Feel my belly button."

Fiona touches the ridge of her wife's belly button ... there are no scales. "Soft, no scales."
"We have not figured that out. We can only assume that a belly button is purely human. The Silurian part of me didn't want to create scales around the umbilical cord... hence no scales on the belly button." Alaya smiles, "That is one of the few places there are no scales. I am very sensitive."

Fiona doesn't hesitate, slips down along her wife's body and kisses her belly button.

Alaya moans.

Fiona pops her head up at such a human sound.

She goes back down and kisses her wife's soft skinned belly button.

Alaya moans again.

Fiona takes her tongue, enters the small opening and softly licks inside.

Alaya moans with pleasure.

Fiona moves down in between her wife's legs, finds the soft rose pedal-like scales. She kisses softly.

Alaya makes a deep throat clicking sound.

The room's air is slowly filling up with their scent.

Fiona and Alaya take a deep breath in and fill their lungs with the intoxicating scent.

Fiona moves to her wife's side, "Your belly button... when you touch the soft skin do you feel pleasure?"

"A soft pleasure. Like a warm blanket. But it is not sexual in nature." Alaya smiles, "I would touch my belly button and view your photo to bring me emotional warmth."

"Amazing." Fiona kisses her wife, "Are you able to have sexual pleasure by yourself?"

"I am not. My half-human is limited to my pinks scales, eye color, between my legs, my brain and well the belly button."

"Why have you not sexually requested for more attention?"

"I wouldn't want you to be scared away."

"Why would I be scared?"

"My Silurian side want to pounce. Pounce on you like you were a prey to be eaten."

Fiona blushed, "I am not offended. I like the sound of that."

Alaya sits up, "Are you giving me permission to be more Silurian?"

Fiona looks perplexed, "More Silurian? Have I denied you or held you back?"

"No, I just assumed you..."

"Yoo better be careful with ye words Alaya. I cood handle what ye bring to the bedroom or what every room ye choose." Fiona's knees up and looks down at her wife. "I am yer wife and I demand you to be yerself. Stop assuming."
Alaya looks up, "I don't want to scare ye ... you away."

Fiona looks devilishly at her wife's brown eyes. "I am not going anywhere. Besides, I have been eating my sandwiches."

Alaya smiles and contemplates her next move. She quickly stands up, pulls her wife off the bed like she was nothing more than a pillow and holds her tight.

Fiona instinctively wraps her legs around her wife.

"I believe we should move to the gymnasium."

Fiona bends backward and grabs a blanket, "Just in case we get cold."

Alaya smiles, "If you must."

Alaya carries her wife and blanket to the gymnasium.

Fiona was ready and knew the moment Alaya tossed her to the matted floor she would finally see her Silurian wife in all its glory.
Fiona opens her eyes and looks up at the ceiling. Her room, not her room any more, but it was her own room four years ago. Four years! She takes a deep breath and stretches.

"Good Morning?"

Fiona props her head up and puts on her glasses. "Good Morning." She can't help smile at her tall naked wife carrying a tray of food.

"I am glad you woke up on your own. I dreaded being the one to spook your slumber."

Alaya lays the tray down and pulls the blanket around the two of them. "This blanket was a good idea."

Fiona grabs her tea and recalls the night before. "Last night ..."

"Yes?"

"It was lovely."

"I didn't break you?"

Fiona stands up, checks her body for marks or broken bones. "What about my back?" She spins around, "Are there marks?"

"No, you have no marks." Alaya replies with relief.

"It was ..." Fiona sits back down to cocoon herself with the blanket and her wife. "Nothing I would have imagined. There isn't a book out there to warn ... no, prepare me for such an experience."

Alaya is quiet.

Fiona take a bite of her toast, chews and then sips her tea. "Do you have any questions?"

Alaya giggles, "I am not your staff or your student." She places her chin on her wife's head, "I have to know, did you enjoy yourself? Have concerns? Didn't like something? Do you ..."

Fiona puts down her tea and swivels around to face her wife. "My dear ... it was absolutely amazing. I am the luckiest woman in the universe. You took me to a whole new lever of intimacy. No wonder your mothers can't keep their hands off each other." Fiona cups her wife's face, "Did you hesitate or reign yourself on my account?"

"Almost but this might be my only chance to show my love to you in my own way."

"That is a problem."

"Please tell me, I can make adjustments."

"I now have expectations of my wife. Have you truly controlled yourself all this time?"

Alaya nods yes.

"Have you grown tired of dampening your desires?"
Alaya nods yes.

"Are you looking for permission to be more Silurian in our marriage?"

Alaya eyes open wide, "I would."

"I appreciate you waiting for permission, but please be yourself. I love your Silurian side. Why do you think I watch you and your mother spar? Do you think I was watching Mother Vastra? I find your grace my spiritual awaking and your body wonderfully made. You are my wife." Fiona smiles, "I give you full liberty to be the Silurian wife to me. I don't want you to control yourself around me, that is just nonsense."

Alaya smiles, "Thank you."

Fiona gives her wife a cup of tea and sits up to drink her own. "How do you feel inside most of the time?"

"What do you mean?"

"Do you feel more Silurian, more human or half?"

"It depends."

"When you are around me?"

"It depends."

Fiona rolls her eyes, "Before last night, what kind of wife did you feel yourself to be?"

"Half-Silurian and half-human. Constantly fluctuating between the two. Trying to figure out what to do or not to react."

"What about this morning?"

"I feel ..." Alaya sits a bit taller, takes a breath in, "I feel Silurian."

"That is wonderful. Fluctuating between two identities isn't isolated to your. Everyone feels pulls as to what is expected and what they want. I see no reason you should not be my Silurian wife. Do you?"

"None." Alaya smiles. She flicks the air to taste the intimacy.

"What did you taste?"

Alaya strokes her wife's cheek, "Our scent remains, I smell the tea and jam. When we have intimate conversation, it is as if an invisible rope wraps around each other, to bind us forever. It tastes like ... a library."

"A library? Mmm, I like that and it makes sense. Last night was something so pure almost as if time stopped. We are making our own history."

Alaya nods and smiles with a closed mouth.

"Did you want to taste the air again?"

Alaya nods.
Fiona touches her wife's lips, "I expect you to be my Silurian wife. Taste the air, our emotions, life around us ... please. No more hesitations. No more control."

Alaya smiles big showing her teeth and licks the air.

"How do you feel around your Mother Jenny?"

"I feel my human side. I feel like my body settles down and relaxes."

"I don't relax your body? I sound very demanding?"

Alaya strokes her wife's cheek and frowns, "I did not mean that. You relax me, but you are my Fiona. Didn't you feel different around your mother?"

Fiona nods yes and takes a bite of her almost cool toast. "I miss that feeling."

Alaya licks the air and looks sad, "I am sorry."

"What have you tasted?"

"The first was doubt and then I tasted you remembering your mother."

Fiona lights up, "What does my mother taste like?" Fiona closes her eyes and remembers their long walks along the shores on the Isle of Mull.

Alaya strokes her wife's cheek, "Your memory tastes like hot chocolate with a bit of spice."

"Oh, that is nice. I like your interpretations. ... I would like to know how do you feel around your Mother Vastra?"

Alaya smiles disappears, "I feel half-Silurian."

"She would be the first to tell you that it is accurate. But when you are with me you feel more Silurian?"

"Yes, I feel whole."

"Oh, I see. Most people feel a constant need for a particular parent's favour and attention. Do you feel like you fall short?"

"Don't you see how hard I try? I hang on every word she utters, to my own silence. I try to prove to her that I am equal to my aunts and those from her tribe. Sometimes I think she just sees my humanity. She looks into my eyes and doesn't see my Silurian self."

"You do have your mother's eyes. Those powerful brown eyes melt me. I imagine the constant reminder of your mother having a direct affect on your training. Have you thought about blindfolding her so she can only feel you? Maybe she will sense the strong Silurian side vs the visual human traits."

"I like that idea. I wish I was brave enough."

"Aren't we exercising this morning?"

Alaya looks to the windows, "Soon. I brought your clothing to change."

Fiona quickly stands and to put on her clothes. The door opens and in walk in the mothers. "Oh!"
Mother Jenny turns around.

Alaya quickly yells, "Mother Vastra boundaries."

Vastra slowly faces the wall.

Fiona turns her body around, gets dressed while her whole body blushes pink. "I am sorry. I took long to get dressed."

"Oh it is alright dear." Mother Jenny kindly responds talking to the wall.

"Now we see what turns our daughter's head. Her springy red hair is everywhere."

"Vastra!"

Fiona's face has exploded in red all the ways to her ears.

Alaya smiles, "You okay?"

Fiona buttons up her shirt and pants, "I am decent." She decides on not wearing shoes, like her wife. Fiona looks down at her wife's feet and works her way up to the brown eyes. She whispers, "Beautiful."

Alaya licks the air, she tastes her wife and pulls her in a passionate embrace.

Fiona has become weak kneed. "My dear you are a powerful kisser."

"Everyone get into their positions." Reminds Mother Vastra.

Everyone takes their stance and the morning ritual begins. Their morning workout schedule continued as usual, except when it came to Alaya and Vastra.

"Mother, may I request something?"

"Of course."

Alaya goes to the cabinet and brings out a long black cloth. She goes over to her mother, wraps the cloth around until Alaya is satisfied her mother is unable to see her brown eyes. "It is an experiment."

"Interesting. What is is hope?"

"To learn more about being Silurian."

Mother Vastra nods.

Alaya and Vastra spar, but this time Vastra is licking the air constantly to locate her daughter. Alaya is careful not to let her body make a sound as she moves stealthy around the mat. She attacks. Vastra counters and Alaya is on the ground.

Mother Vastra begins to take off the blindfold,

"No. Please keep it on until our time is completed." Alaya stands and look to her wife with a smile.

"If you feel that this material is my disadvantage you are mistaken."

Alaya works around again and attacks a successful blow. Vastra attacks and her blow is successful but harder than usual.
Round and round the Silurian battle hard and Alaya has become stronger with each failure and attempts to remember her successes.

The sparing goes way into the next hour.

"I believe we need to eat and start our day," Mother Jenny says to her wife when there is a break.

Mother Vastra stands, "May I eat full sighted?"

"Yes, mother." Alaya goes over and unties the blindfold and returns it to the cabinet before she makes discloses her brown eyes to her mother. "I got more out of that session than I have in a long time."

Mother Vastra, "Yes, it was good. I felt my blood move faster. We should do that more often. Next time you are blindfolded."

Alaya nods yes with her back to her mother.

"What were you hoping with the blindfolds?"

Alaya takes a deep breath and closes the cabinet, she turns around and looks into her mother's deep blue Silurian eyes, "I wanted you to spar with me."

"How was this different?" Mother Vastra tilts her head trying to understand.

"I am your Silurian daughter."

"Half-Silurian half-human daughter," as Mother Vastra looks into the brown eyes reminding herself and those present.

"I am your Silurian daughter. Treat me as such. Until you can see me for who I truly am, our sessions you will be blindfolded." Alaya smiles and walks downstairs with her wife. "May I have more than five mushrooms?"

"Of course." Fiona.

Mother Vastra is left stunned and turns to her wife, "What was that?"

"That was your daughter talking to you. Did you fight differently today?"

"I was blindfolded and needed to adjust. I concentrated on her scent and her location."

"How is that different than all those other times?"

"I was ..." Vastra looks to her wife, "I was training your daughter."

"Well, Vastra your daughter doesn't want that kind of sparing. She wants you to spar like you have with your sisters. Are you able to make that adjustment."

"Yes, but I believe the blindfold will help my transition. We named her appropriately. My sister Alaya was a tough warrior, I wanted to be just like her."

"Well our, your Alaya wants to be like her Silurian mother."

Vastra licked the air. "Let's go eat."
Jenny pulls her wife down and kisses her. "I am proud of our family. Do you truly believe we are ready for more?"

Vastra picks up her wife, "My dear Jenny Flint, shall we ever be truly ready?"

During breakfast the Mothers announce their decision to no longer take the injections.

Fiona jumps up and down with glee. Alaya enjoys her human wife and even more that she can be her Silurian self ‘no matter the color of their children's eyes I will be their Silurian mother. I hope I do not require a blindfold to see their spirit.’

Alaya looks to her Mother Vastra. "Alaya, maybe we both should be blindfolded. You tongue will become more sensitive."

"Not yet. I like your training today. When I am ready, I shall wear the blindfold."
She looks to Flora and Louisa as they scrub their hands fingers to elbow. "At least you are together. I truly miss my family. This war is getting on my nerves."

Louisa smiles, "Poor Flora she could be anywhere, but she is with us trying to repair broken bodies." She looks to her Flora, "You truly could be home with a good book."

"I know," Flora smiles, "I am not willing to wait another hour before the on-call anaesthesiologist makes an appearance. This way we can go home sooner with each other."

Fiona looking into the operating room, "This poor soldier, he is not even seventeen. His mother is in the waiting room." She looks at Louisa.

The phone rings and the wash room nurse answers, "Operating room four. Yes, I will pass it on." She hangs up the phone, "There is an official Christmas Eve Truce through Boxing Day!"

Louisa looks to her staff, "This is good news. Let us take care of our brave soldier."

The surgery was uneventful but successful. Alaya accompanied Louisa to the waiting room to update the mother who is dressed for a party. "He will be fine. We had to amputate his right arm just above the elbow. There will be therapy to help him adjust to using his left hand."

"My boy can do anything." The mother boasts.

"May I ask, what is your form of family income?" Louisa asks, "It will help in his recovery and to adjust his therapy."

"Our family income has been mainly import and exports. We shall welcome him with open arms." The mother gets quiet, "We have to be careful with our verbiage. He has a good future ahead of him, I will make sure of that."

"I like your attitude." Louisa smiles, "A nurse will come get you as soon as he is available for visitors."

"Oh, no. I just wanted to make sure he was fine. I have parties to attend." The woman waves leaving two stunned physicians.

"Even my mother isn't that callus." Louis scoffs and they head back to the locker room.

A nurse meets them halfway, "I am sorry to inform you that you have no attending tonight." Louisa looks irritated, "Do you have the on-call sheet?" She looks at the paper and hands it back to the nurse. "Thank you. I will inform the next Doctor on rotation."

"Who is the unlucky one going to spend Christmas Eve at the hospital?" Fiona asks sympathetically.

Louisa opens the locker room door. "You are next in line."

"After I change I will call my family." Fiona understand the reality of working in a hospital. "I am disappointed in some of our peers."

"I am sorry dear but please know it can't be helped. I will be home tomorrow morning..." Fiona listens to her wife's encouraging words, "That sounds wonderful. Thank you. Happy Christmas."
Fiona returns to her locker, "I shall read this to the patients. May we pull them all in the same room?"

Louisa grabs the phone, "I think that is a marvellous idea. Hello, yes move all the patients into room 102 at seven pm. Bring chairs, put patients in wheelchairs. Doctor Flint-Saint Clair will be reading from her collection. Yes, the staff may attend. Leave a notice at the front desk. Excellent."

Fiona leaves the locker room and heads to the nurses station to complete paperwork, go over her rounds and prepares for a long night.

"You ready?" Flora peeks into the locker room.

"Yes, just let me make one more phone call." Louisa smiles holding out her hand for Flora to grab and whispers, "Happy Christmas." Flora kisses her Louisa's lips. "Hi, This is Louisa. Happy Christmas to you too ..."

Fiona goes through her notes. She finishes writing the sentence and attempts soften her cramped hands. She looks to the head nurse, "Why can't we use typewriters? I shall need surgery on my hands if they stiff up this much."

The head nurse responses laughing, "Whomever grabs the shortest straw dictates for each of our shifts."

"Pity the person who always gets the small straw. Who has it tonight?" Fiona asks, "That way I can just go to them."

"I drew the small straw, so I hope I don't see you tonight." The head nurse lets out a giggle.

"Truly your laughter and high spirits is needed, especially for those here during the holidays."

The head nurse blushes, "Thank you so much.

The phone softly buzzes, "Nurse Station B. Thank you, we are on our way." She hangs up the phone, "Doctor Flint-Saint Clair they are waiting."

Fiona blushes as the opens the door to 102 to see staff, soldier and residue family filling every empty space with chairs. "Happy Christmas." She gathers her courage, "First let me welcome you all to the Endell Street Military Hospital entertainment lounge." Everyone laughs, "I know this is the last place you want to be for the holidays ..." She scans the small crowd and notices a familiar face, Mother Jenny. "... since we are all stuck here I have a few requests. First, you may not under any circumstances ruin stitches. Two, be patient with me because although I love books I rarely have such an audience. Third and final, I know many of you are in pain please focus on my voice and for the next few hours I can assist you to find a little peace."

Fiona clears her throat, takes a drink of water and looks to Mother Jenny.

Mother Jenny looks to her right to the brown eyed woman who smiles brightly.

Fiona blushes a moment and begins, "Marley was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge's name was good upon 'Change, for anything he chose to put his hand to. Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail ..."

... He had no further intercourse with Spirits, but lived upon the Total Abstinence Principle, ever afterwards; and it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim
Fiona closes the book, "I just want to wish all of you from the staff here at Endell Street Military Hospital, my family and myself a Happy Christmas. Now get some rest and heal."

Fiona leaves room 102 and directly to the head nurse. "I am so sorry, that took longer than expected. It is always quicker in my mind. How can I be of assistance?"

"Nothing, everyone was in that room."

"Everyone?"

"Everyone."

Fiona blushes, "I hope it was enjoyable."

"You did more for the patience than any dose of morphine. You should read it every year."

"We agree."

Fiona spins around to that familiar voice. She puts out her hand towards the tall brown eyed woman and squeezes. "That is a wonderful gift you attending. I must thank Louisa. I am still here till relief comes in the morning. I am sorry Christmas Eve is ruined."

"It wasn't ruined, it was quite fun. All those people in that room wanted hope and to be rescued, even for a moment, from their current situation. The nurse is correct, you should do it every year." The brown eyed woman beamed with pride.

"What about our family and traditions we want to have?"

"This is our tradition. Next year we should bring cookies and punch." Mother Jenny offered.

The head nurse hands Fiona a clip board.

"I am sorry, but I do have rounds to make. I need to make sure everyone is back in their bed safe and sound." Fiona stands a little taller, her duties call. "I will phone in a few hours."

Fiona watches the three women leave the floor.

"Who were they?" The head nurse asked.

"My family."

"That was nice of them."

"It was." Fiona turns to the head nurse, "Let's start in 102 and work our way around. Ready?"

She fought against the crowd coming to visit their loved ones, "Pardon me ... excuse me," and with a few Mother Vastra approved moves Fiona is outside. She gets on her bicycle and heads home.

She pedals efficiently and is home under ten minutes. She pushes herself up the stairs when her body screams to halt. Fiona sits down on the landing between the ground and first floor. She yells softly, "Alaya!" and lays against the wall.

Moments later Fiona is being carried up to her room. She opens her eyes, "Hello my brown eyed Silurian. I am very tired."
Alaya smiles, "Yes dear. How is my green eye Scottish highlander?" She takes her wife's clothing off.

"Sleepy. But I have off for two days!" Fiona holds up two fingers, "Two"

Alaya lays her wife down, covers her up and whispers "Happy Christmas."

Six hours later Fiona wakes up, puts on her robe and scuttles to the kitchen. She goes to the lukewarm hours old coffee and proclaims out loud, "I will drink anything to wake me up."

There is a bang on the ceiling. She looks up and smiles.

She makes her way up to the gymnasium to find both Mother Vastra and her wife blindfolded. She smiles at Mother Jenny who puts her finger to her lips.

Fiona nods and sits herself down in the corner with little sound possible.

"Hello Fiona." Alaya says quietly as she licks the air, "Happy Christmas."

"Happy Christmas" Fiona whispers back.

Mother Vastra lunges straight for Alaya. Alaya sidesteps to the right.

Alaya licks the air trying to find her mother.

Mother Vastra does the same and bends her legs to move right.

Alaya attacks, grabs her mother's waist and pulls her down.

Alaya takes off her blindfold and stands. She offers her mother a hand.

"How did you know?"

"I felt your feet movement."

"How?"

Alaya sits down on the mat, "Give me your feet mother." Mother Vastra give her daughter her feet, "You have padding to run and grip on any surface." Alaya gives her mother her feet, "My feet have nerves that are sensitive. I feel hot, cold and I have even ticklish areas."

Vastra grabs her Daughters foot, "I know all about your ticklish feet. Tell me how you felt my movement."

Alaya gets wide eyed, "I can feel the move here on my balls of my feet and tips of my toes."

Vastra pulls her daughter's foot in a lock, "Who taught you that?" Vastra starts tickling her daughter feet like when she was just a baby.

"No! Stop!" Alaya yells as she is laughing, "No! Stop! Please!"

"Who taught you this about your feet?"

"No! Stop!"

"Who?"
"My wife! My wife!"

Vastra smiles, "I hope you never get captured by our enemies, they will tickle secrets out of you." She stands and offers a hand to her daughter.

Alaya grabs it and Mother Vastra pulls her up, "You are a great Silurian." Vastra hugs her daughter and pats her on her back. "I am proud to have you next to me in any circumstance."

Vastra turns offers her wife her arm, "Now that the little one is home may we have our Christmas Dinner?"

"Of course," Replies Mother Jenny as they walk down to the drawing room.

Fiona is staring at her wife who is dumbfounded.

Alaya stands there looking at the empty mat where her mother just stood, she clasps her hands.

Fiona runs over, "What is it?"

Alaya looks up, "I am giddy like a child. I feel like for the first time since I have been home from NNYU like I am their daughter. Completely their daughter. I am grateful for you in my life, without you I would not have the courage, the insight. You are my companion in all aspects of my life."

"I am concerned that you gave me up too easily ... Ticklish Silurian." Fiona smiles as she pulls her wife downstairs, "I am hungry."

Alaya pulls her wife back and kisses Fiona with full confidence in her place in the world.

The kiss brought Fiona weak to her knees. "I am afraid you'll have to carry me."

Alaya picks up her wife, pulls her into her chest and looks down, "Where are ye headed my Scottish girl?"

"Anywhere you go, we go together."

"Together."
The alarm goes off at 5:45 am exactly, just like every morning since the Silurians stopped taking injections.

Fiona turns off the alarm, puts on her glasses and opens her mouth.

Alaya opens the side table drawer, pulls out a thermometer, shakes it and puts under her wife's tongue.

Fiona closes her mouth.

Alaya hands her wife the clock to watch the second hand.

Alaya pulls out the calendar, graph paper and pencil. She does the same thing every morning - she watches Fiona hold the thermometer in her mouth and moves close enough to watch any mercury movement.

Fiona likes the closeness but has to control her mouth and no smile.

After a few minutes Fiona removes the thermometer and announces the reading.

Alaya writes it down on the calendar, makes a tic on the graph paper and both begin to examine the new data. There are changes, which isn't what they hope.

Fiona puts on her housecoat, glasses and slippers. She goes over to the vanity and from the top shelf pulls out a clipboard with notes. She heads into her old bedroom which is now the family’s gymnasium. She looks at her notes and begins her search where she left off. On her hands and knees feeling for loose boards starting from the twenty-fifth section towards the window. She rolls back the padded mat and to check each floor board section with each roll.

'Nothing. Damn.'

She makes notes, goes back to her bedroom, puts the clipboard back on the shelf, takes off her glasses, slippers, housecoat and returns to her wife's coolness.

Alaya pulls her wife close, "Any luck?"

"Nae," Fiona whispers a response with a touch of irritation.

Alaya smiles as her wife's irritated untamed hair takes over the pillow, it seems the hair matches the emotions of her Scottish wife.

They soon wake and go down to breakfast to see the mothers sitting in the warm kitchen drinking tea and holding hands.

"We don't usually see you both up so early on a Sunday." Alaya teases.

Vastra shoves her graph paper and calendar in Fiona's hand, "Please look at this."

Fiona and Alaya look at the mother's graphs, calendar to double check.

"I am sorry I have to ask," Fiona looks to the mothers, "Same time every day?"
Both nod.

"The same amount of sleep?"

Both nod.

"Do you feel ill Mother Jenny?"

She shakes her head no.

"To be honest I had wondered. I mean have you not noticed your hair?"

"My hair?" Mother Jenny looks at Fiona puzzled and walks out to the landing looking in the mirror. "It looks the same as it always does."

Fiona smiles, "Count for me your grey hairs."

"Oi, don't remind a woman she is getting older." Mother Jenny returns to look at herself in the mirror. "Vastra! Look!" Vastra comes to her side, "Vastra help me take down my hair." The few pins come out and they both examine the long hair.

"There are no greys!"

"Alaya, please retrieve my medical bag from my desk." Fiona requests, "Mothers please return to the warm kitchen and Mother Jenny sit down for me."

Alaya returns with the large black bag. Fiona opens her medical bag open and pulls out a stethoscope to listen to Mother Vastra's stomach. She attempts to cool the drum with her hot breath, "Sorry, this will be a little chilly."

Vastra is by her wife's side, holding her hand while waiting for any information.

All is quiet as Fiona places the drum on various locations on Mother Jenny's stomach.

Fiona places the stethoscope in Mother Jenny's ear and moves the drum to the right side and a few seconds then the left.

"Now Mother Vastra your turn," Fiona moves the drum to the exact locations.

Fiona takes back the stethoscope and listens again. She looks up to the Mothers and nods. "Did you hear?"

"Very strong heart beat, just like a Silurian," boasts Vastra.

"Mother Jenny, has anyone in your family ever had twins?" Fiona smiles while waiting for an answer.

"I don't know my family tree very well."

"That isn't one heartbeat, it is the beating of two."

"Our child has two hearts?" Mother Jenny gasps.

"No Mother Jenny, you are having twins."

Vastra grabs the stethoscope and listens again. "How can you tell?"
Fiona whispers, "The one on the left is deep while the right is softer."

"Twins?" Mother sits back and stares into nothing. "Twins?"

"It is nothing to have a large batch, Silurians lays multiple eggs we should be proud." She pulls her wife close with a such a grin it would scare any child away.

Marginal consciousness would the best way to describe Jenny. She just sits in disbelief.

Vastra moves herself face-to-face with her Jenny, "Dear Jenny Flint, this is wonderful news. Yes, twins."

Jenny looks at her wife, "Why must my pregnancies have to be such a surprise. Why can't I just have another before contemplate a third?"

"Twins might not be common, but it is quite natural to have twins." Fiona comforts Mother Jenny.

"Come with me dearest," Mother Vastra leads her wife for more privacy in the drawing-room. "Help me build a fire."

"We will start breakfast. Mother is eating for two ... three." Alaya smiles at her Mothers.

"Let me keep these for a moment," Mother Vastra holds on to the stethoscope.

Fiona and Alaya watch from the kitchen as they get their last opportunity to peek as the door closes of the drawing-room. They witness Vastra gently putting the stethoscope into her wife's ear placing the drum on the heartbeats. Jenny begins to cry and soon a smile.

Fiona cuts mushrooms and starts to tear herself.

Alaya stops cutting the raw meats trays and runs over to comfort her, "What is wrong?"

Fiona turns to Alaya, "Forgive me, I am jealous."

"We shall keep trying, being with you is such a gift. If we never have any offspring I am every so happy. I love my Scottish wife."

"Am I ... we ... can we be doing something wrong?"

"I don't know." Alaya holds her wife close. "It could be me. I am half-human, maybe my bacteria isn't strong enough for procreation."

"No it is exact potency as your Mother's. I have see the blood samples." Fiona looks into her wife's eyes, "I am terrified to request this ..." Fiona looks down and whispers, "Please talk to your Mother Vastra and find out if there is a ..."

Alaya smiles at her wife's sudden shyness but terrified at the prospect of Fiona's next words.

"...position or technique ... which is more potent." Fiona moans as she buries her head in her wife's chest. She continues to talk but with each word Alaya's chest scales vibrate, "I just don't understand. They might have the solution."

"I am sorry your words tickle my scales," Alaya lets out a giggle. "We will ask. I will not have that conversation alone."

Fiona looks up at her wife, wipes her face, kisses her on the lips and cleans her hands and finishing
preparing breakfast. "I just want to let you know," Fiona concentrates on the food in the frying pan, "I am have no issue with the way we are intimate."

"I know dear." Alaya jumps as she just got her arse pinched by a red-headed Scottish married woman.

Breakfast is served and the four women have much to plan as their family will expand by two in approximately four to five months.

After Fiona cleared the dishes she sat down next to her Alaya. They both look at the Mothers. Mother Jenny notices and pulls her wife back to her seat. "What is it?"

Alaya and Fiona begin to blush.

"So, we are curious." Fiona says in such whisper Alaya could barely hear.

"What?" Mother Jenny leans in, "Please attempt another pass just a little louder."

"We are curious." Fiona says louder but now keeps her head down.

"About what?" Vastra quickly laughs at how uncomfortable the two women have become. "Out with it to release your agony."

"This is agony." Alaya pulls her wife close.

Fiona looks to the wall and rattles out of her mouth, "What sexual positions do you practice. We are concerned we aren't doing it right."

Jenny and Vastra burst into laughter.

Fiona and Alaya shrink back into their seats, both with faces of deep red tint.

"We are serious."

"You are?" Mother Jenny taps her wife shoulder. Vastra looks at Jenny with a smile, "Apparently they are serious."

Vastra snaps her head toward the two women across the table. "Oh."

Silence.

Alaya grabs her wife hand for comfort.

Silence.

"I don't know how to respond," Mother Jenny looks to Vastra for assistance.

"I don't know either. Which is more important to know our intimacies or theirs?"

Jenny's eyes get wide, "We don't do anything unusual. Do we?"

Vastra shakes her head no, "The bacteria enters the body through fluid exchange. Do you exchange fluids?"

"We kiss and touch each other."
"To a satisfactory end."

Both nod yes.

The energy in the room has altered from playfulness to uncomfortable as all four shift in their seats.

Jenny begins to blush while Vastra scales turn a bit darker green.

Silence

"We have no literature, books or resources to understand the ... bacteria exchange. We assumed just stopping the injections should be efficient enough." Fiona looking to her wife for encouragement.

"Silurian's have two ..." Vastra starts to begin a lecture on Silurian anatomy.

Fiona interrupts, "She has three."

Alaya smiles and nods, "It is true."

"Three?" Mother Jenny's curiosity has been awakened.

"Crown, belly button and genitalia." Fiona answers in her Physician mode.

"Belly button?" Mother Vastra turns to her wife, "I don't have one of those. Does yours produce pleasure?" Mother Jenny shakes her head no. Looking back to Alaya, "What is that like?"

Fiona responds for her wife, "It is one of the few places that is exclusively human."

"What are the other places that are human?"

"Feet and hands. I prefer the crown, the other are not as intoxicating or as intense for my Alaya."

"Oh?" Jenny is leaning in as if they were in a secret club "What do you do?"

Fiona gets quiet and looks up to the Mothers, "I ... drink in the scents, play with the folds of skin orally. Underneath the folds I discovered the blooming bulbs. I call them bulbs because they start out small and the grown as the scent increases." Fiona stared into Vastra's eyes as she tries to convey the personal information as if she is talking to another Physician. "It is a radically difference of intensity compared to other parts of Alaya's body. As I am human I have more Erogenous body part, but I am limited to my genitalia for my ... pleasure. There is full circle of excitement, plateau, orgasm, and resolution." Fiona looks to her wife, "I don't mean to sound so scientific about this. Know this, my wife is a gifted and generous lover. We have no issue with intimacy, it is about getting the bacteria into my blood for fertilization."

Jenny leans over to Vastra, "Do you have the bulbs?"

"I don't know. It could be a human quality."

Fiona looks to her wife and smiles, 'I hope they aren't human qualities. My wife thinks herself Silurian, she likes spoils of our intimacy to be Silurian.' She looks to Jenny, "Is there anything other than kissing and general intimacies?" Fiona blushes, "I feel like I am invading your privacy, but I need to know? Anything other than what schools girls talk about in the changing rooms?"

"I don't think so."

"You like to be nibbled on your buttocks, even when I leave mark with a bite."
"No, everyone does that." Jenny is remembering her mother and father's playfulness with grabing her mother's buttocks.

Fiona smiles. "I like to pinch my wife's buttocks, but I have never found mine to be sensitive enough. It must be genetics." She holds her wife's hands tighter.
"Alaya has never bit ..." Fiona's eyes light up, stands up and looks to Mother Vastra, "May I please use your laboratory? I have a hypothesis. Want to help?"

Mother Vastra stands up and they walk to the laboratory side by side, "What are you thinking?"

Fiona stops in her tracks, "Alaya dear, I will need your assistance. Do you mind?"

Alaya jumps up. "You coming mother?" As she looks to mother Jenny, "Please?" She puts out her arm and her mother takes it and they follow the two to the laboratory.

"I was thinking about the buttocks." Fiona continues to discuss with Vastra her thought process.

"Surely the human buttocks isn't the link to fertilization."

They enter the laboratory. Fiona respectfully ask, "May I lead this?"

"No, but if you leave a mark, skin is punctured. That puncture might be the difference in how the bacteria is passed."

"The blood stream!" Vastra blue eyes get wide, "Of course. What do you need from me?"

"I need blood samples and mouth cultures from both you and my Alaya."

Fiona quickly gets slides cleaned and prepared.

Mother Vastra pricks her finger and a single drop of blood drips onto the glass slide. She hands it to Fiona who places a thin glass cover and places on the table. She takes a piece of paper and marks a "V" with a pencil.

Fiona cleans, with alcohol, a thing long medical spatula, waves it dry, and tell Mother to open. She scrapes the inside of Mother Vastra's mouth and places the mucus onto a glass slide, covers with a second slide and places it next to the blood sample.

"My dear Alaya, we will to exactly the same with you."

Alaya nods.

Soon there are four slide two of blood and two of mucus. One of each by a paper with the letter 'V' and by the letter 'A'.

Fiona and Vastra set up their individual microscope.

"First let us compare blood samples."

Fiona places the 'A' blood sample slide on her microscope while Vastra does the same with 'V' slide.

Fiona and Vastra go back and forth continuously to view the blood samples.

"There is no difference." Fiona remarks.

"I agree."
"Alaya would you like to see?" Fiona holds out her hands for her wife to join her. Alaya smiles and quickly looks in both slides, compares not once but four times. She looks to her wife smiling, "They are the same."

"Now the mouths." Fiona looks to Vastra.

Fiona places the 'A' mucus sample slide on her microscope while Vastra does the same with 'V' slide.

Fiona and Vastra go back and forth continuously.

"Exactly the same." Fiona remarks and Vastra smiles.

Fiona immediately blushes, "Therefore we can assume that the main differences of our intimacies is my wife has not broken my skin and if you have, what I am calling, bulbs have not been ... investigated orally." She looks to her wife who is also blushing, "At least that is for now all I am comfortable disclosing."

"I would not mind learning about your mating rituals." Vastra says while shrugging her shoulders, "I find it as a scientist fascinating."

"Mother Vastra," Fiona looks directly into her powerful blue eyes, "I wish I was brave as you, but this conversation was quite taxing on my emotions. If this does not produce the effects we desire within three months, you and I shall talk scientist to physician." Vastra begins to talk but Fiona puts up a hand to stop her, "We need to document this information, especially since this concerns our family members. Would you be willing to collaborate at a later time?"

Vastra responds with defeated body language, "I accept and look forward to our future scientific research." She offers a hand to shake.

Fiona shakes Vastra's hand and then pulls her in for a hug. "Thank you for understanding."

Fiona turns to her wife, holds our her hand and exits the laboratory, "What shall we do with the rest of our afternoon? I do not have off for another ten days."

Alaya smiles, "Rio Cinema showing a suspense called, The Quiet Little Angel."

"Perfect!"
What Am I Doing Wrong?

After the cinema Fiona and Alaya took a taxi. Fiona begins to instruct the taxi driver, "Please 15 Savile ..."

"No please. 263 Oxford Street. Thank you." She sits back, places her hand to her side and whispers to her wife, "I am not ready to go home, just quite yet. I had my fill of my mothers."

Fiona places her hand next to her wife's and intertwine their smallest fingers.

They arrive at Alan's Tea House and immediately rent the small meeting room in the rear. Once they are all alone Alaya switches off her device to return to her wonderful Silurian self. She stretches her neck and takes a headache pill out of her handbag and swallows.

"How long have the headaches been going on?" Fiona leans over and touches her wife hand without concern.

"It has gotten worse. My body doesn't like it being turned on for more than a few hours."

"I worry that one day you will only tolerate a few minutes."

"Mother is working on enhancing the signal on a lower frequency, making it smaller and possibly an implant. Just like you suggested."

"It concerns me greatly. I don't want that for you or our children to suffer. Is there anything I can do?"

"Not yet. Please keep your ideas coming. There might be a solution in your marvellous brain."

"What did you think of the film?" Changing the subject to something more enjoyable.

The two talked for hours about the film, their schedule for the next two weeks, opportunity for quality time together and how they will prepare for Alaya new sisters arrival.

They didn't notice the time until a knock at the door, "I am sorry we are closing."

Alaya switches on her device, Fiona smiles into the familiar brown eyes and decided to taxi home so that Alaya can switch off the device sooner.

Once they step foot on the landing Vastra pops out of the kitchen wearing the stethoscope, "We are in here."

"Good evening mothers," as Alaya kisses her Mother Jenny on the cheek. "How are you feeling?"

"Better. Your mother," Vastra quickly gives a look at her wife, "... we have been listening to the heartbeats. They are so different. What do you think that means?"

"The heartbeats are strong and sound healthy. One is just softer the other sounds as if it is working hard to be born."

Vastra and Jenny immediately look towards each other and grab each other hands.

Fiona quickly adds, "Let me clarify. According to the Louisa and Flora's documentation you should be experiencing a racing heart-rate, but you are not?"
Mother Jenny shakes her head no, "I am also not as cold."

"I am simply guessing; they might be balancing out your pregnancy effects. It will only be temporary. Twins will be using the double resources. You will be twice as hungry ..."

Vastra points to her wife, "Told you."

"Oi, I am eating for three."

"You will have more restless sleep and I am sorry to say ... but you will frequent the loo more often than a typical single foetus birth. Please don't stop drinking milk or water, but know your bladder will be the limited."

"Great! I shall move a cot next to the loo."

"One more thing, I am sorry to tell you this but your days of being a detective for London's finest is soon over."

"At least I can still work with our family business. Vastra and I have been talking about focusing on the research and detective business more."

"You have?" Alaya sits down next to her Mother Vastra. "Why?"

Jenny touches her wife's cheek, "Be honest with your daughter."

"I have gotten terrible headaches after wearing our perception devices for more than two hours. I can't live like that. We can do focus on our family business and I have petitioned Torchwood for alternative solutions. We have most of our supplies and our pantry is full." Vastra sends a friendly irritated look towards Fiona, "I still have not found my tea supply."

"I have been having more headaches. It has been the past few months."

"Few months?" Fiona turns around from making tea. "That is a few weeks shy of halting your injections."

"Interesting. Have the injections counteract the headaches and fatigue?" Vastra stands up, "Shall we go into the laboratory and run some tests?"

Fiona was just about to say something when Alaya softly says. "We came home to make sandwiches and retire into our room." Fiona takes the hint and begins to make sandwiches. "It will be ten days before Fiona has another day off. I am sure you understand. Also, I would be interested working for the family business exclusively again."

Vastra smiles, "That is what I was hoping. We have much to discuss. Enjoy your night and we can talk about this tomorrow evening together as a family."

Fiona has a tray of sandwiches and a tea service. "Ready?"

"Good night mothers." Alaya kisses them on their cheek and leads her wife upstairs to their room.

Alaya and Fiona finish their light supper on their small bistro set. Alaya gets up adds more coal to the already burning bright fire in their fireplace. "I hate to waste coal, but it is a chilly night."

Fiona comes behind her wife, "How can I warm you up?"

"I can think of a few things."
Fiona pulls her wife to the bed while making a clumsy attempt at undressing herself.

Alaya stops her forward motion, "Having bit of trouble are ye?"

Fiona laughs out loud, "This one button."

Alaya quickly rips off the shirt, button goes flying and plunks on the floor.

"Alaya!"

"Do you need assistance in getting naked or shall I take matters into my own hand?"

"No!" Fiona holds up a hand, "I got it."

It surprised herself but she was naked in less than thirty seconds, "Not having my undergarments torn apparently is an incentive."

Alaya has not made a move towards Fiona.

Silence.

"What is wrong?"

Alaya turns her eyes up towards Fiona's hair as it is still in a bun.

Fiona smiles, "Oh? You want the hair down?"

Alaya smiles.

Fiona takes one pin out of her hair, walks it over to the vanity and places it in the assigned pin box. She returns to her wife to whisper, "One."

Fiona removes another pin out of her hair and slowly places it in the pin box. She returns to her wife and whispers, "Tois."

"Thee." A few strands of hair drop to her right side.

"Foor." Hair now is hanging onto her left shoulder blade.

"Five." Her right shoulder blade is now covered.

"Six." Her left side is down

"Seven." All her hair is flowing all around.

Alaya smiles. "Lovely."

Fiona walks around her wife, "Tisk, tisk. Why are you still dressed? Are you going to make a liar of me, shall you turn into a selfish and neglectful wife?"

Alaya shakes her head no as she slowly takes her own blouse off.

"I am not to be teased." Fiona whispers and pulls off her wife's clothing, ripping, gripping, pulling a moment later there is nothing left but a naked splendiferous Silurian.

Fiona is now aching for attention, but loves her wife so much that she quickly pushes her wife to the bed.
Alaya is facing up.

Fiona climbs her wife passing over Alaya's knees, waist, belly button and even chest as she leans over and dives quickly into the crown. She finds the small bulb and flicks with her tongue, teasing it open. She is pleases and the scent pours out into her tongue and nose. She takes a deep breath and her lungs are filled making her drunk with passion. She thrusts her mouth into the flesh as her wife clicks deeply and her diaphragm bellows out a deep moan that quivers her own body. She stays the course ignoring her own body's needs and wants. She plays with the growing bulb until it is large enough she can take it in her mouth, she gently sucks and her wife attaches her arms to any of Fiona's flesh available. She drinks the scent as if it was water and fills her body with the Silurian gift until her wife's body stiffens. She then gently pets with her tongue continuously when her wife's body collapses. She climbs down, kissing her wife's cheeks until she is directly above Alaya's heart. She lays there listening to the pounding and with her whole body feel the her wife's scales contract and expand with each pulsation. She loves her wife's orgasms, it is always a pleasure.

As the heart starts to settle Fiona climbs down off the chest and places her mouth over the belly button. She lingers over the opening. Alaya finds her strength and grabs her wife's hand. Fiona takes her tongue and gently glides around the outside. Her wife moans softly. She circles deeper and finds the human pink skin with her tip. Her wife moans deeper. Fiona plays with the skin with the tip of her tongue and listens to her wife's moans coming closer together. She sucks hard. Her wife bends and with human moans pouring out of her Silurian mouth. Fiona plays with the human sensitive area until Alaya's scales clamp down like a vault being locked. She remains steady in her task until her wife's body gives in and crumbles beneath.

Fiona climbs back up to the chest and listens to the heart pounding through her wife's chest. As the heart starts to settle Fiona climbs up to kiss her wife on her lips.

"How are you?"

Alaya smiles, "I ... I am pleased."

Fiona kisses her wife and climbs down between her thighs. She pulls her wife to the edge of the bed and knees over and starts moving the rose petals apart until she find the stigma. Fiona kisses it tenderly and notices her wife is making soft clicking sounds. She continues as she take it all in her mouth and caresses it with her tongue. The clicking is louder. 'She is coming sooner than before' and starts to flick it back and forth slowly and gradually faster. Soon the clicking sounds match the flicks and she sucks it soft-like the crown bulb. Alaya stiffens and grabs her wife's hair. Fiona remains steadfast doesn't let go with little movements with her tongue. Alaya's body quits and falls on the bed.

Fiona climbs to her wife's mouth and kisses passionately. "My love. How are you?"

"F ... fine." Alaya's long arms pull her wife's body in closer. "I feel like was in the air like a bird."

Fiona smiles. "I love you."

"I love you too." Alaya swings her body around and quickly licks her wife's cheek.

"What do you taste?"

"Us, love, sex and ..." Alaya takes another taste, "... a hunger?"

"I am not interested in foreplay or soft touches. I need my Silurian to take care of me."

Alaya eyes open wide as she ravishes her wife with her mouth licking every bit of liquid is soon
lapped up. She dives into her wife's sex with her tongue and tastes the immense heat. She removes her tongue and concentrates her tongue on the swollen clitoris while placing one finger into her wife's vagina. Immediately the walls grab her finger and makes attempts to move. Fiona moans deeply.

"Relax my love."

Fiona nods and releases her grip on her wife. Alaya is free and now places two gently inside. Her wife moans. With her lips busy on the swollen clitoris she moves the two fingers in a pattern playing with the wall's ridges. Soon she places a third, the walls opens up for the change. She can feel with each stroke of her bottom lip over the clitoris the wall quiver. She reminds herself, 'You are a Silurian. Follow your instincts.' She pulls out the three fingers and forms a tight arrow with her hand and pushes her way past the opening. Fiona yells out in deep tones. She bends the arrow to form a ball inside the walls. Her wife is breathing heavy. She quickly starts pump her wife with her hand. Pulling back just a bit and lets the walls suck her hand back in.

Alaya starts to click and quickly pulls her crown towards her wife.

Fiona sits up and dives in and finds the bulb to take in her mouth.

Alaya's hand is pushing and pulling in and out of her wife's vagina. The walls start to press down, 'she is close' and she starts moving faster and faster. Soon she can barely move her hand, but she fight and forces her Silurian hand free to pump faster.

Fiona moans turn to wails and soon into silence as she is concentrating on the bulb.

They travel up the hill, reach the top and come down to the bottom together.

They fall into each other's arms.

Alaya continues to play with her wife's sex as Fiona's human body will ride the wave over an over again a few more times before Fiona begs her to stop.

Alaya quickly flips over her wife and bites down on her right buttock until there is blood.

Fiona quickly covers her mouth as she screams and mumbles curses.

Alaya stops biting down but lets her mouth fester with the new wound for a few seconds.

Alaya grabs the cloth and bandage on the side table. She cover the wound with gauze, tape and pepper with kisses.

Alaya pulls her wife up into her arms and licks the tears away. "I am so sorry my love. It had to be done."

"I know."

"I hope it didn't ruin your evening."

Fiona kisses her wife, "You are amazing. I was worried that you would find my desire to be distasteful or unbecoming. I love you inside me, giving you complete control."

"I give your my crown. You do not turn away. We embrace our differences."
"Did you draw blood?"

Alaya nods yes, "I lingered with the wound in my mouth. I am sorry, but I wanted to be sure."

"We will know soon enough." Fiona kisses her wife's lips, "Tell me do you like your arse bitten?"

"I do enjoy your slaps and pinches. I have never thought of bites until my mother said something." Alaya kisses her wife, "I would be interested in exploring in the future."

"We must get some sleep. I know that biting me was difficult and I wanted you to know if this works out ... we can be the best parents by controlling our procreation. All our children will be planned and wanted. I see the horrors of unplanned pregnancy. There are no words I can offer that will express how pleased we are in control. I feel safe and loved. Thank you."

Alaya looks stunned, "I never want to cause you harm." She lays her wife on her side and covers each other up. "Good night and dream well."

"You too my Silurian wife."

Like many nights before and many nights in the future Fiona and Alaya fall asleep in each other arms. This time with a bandage on Fiona buttock.
The alarm goes off at 5:45am.

Fiona beg her wife, "Not this morning, please."

Alaya rolls over, turns off the alarm and returns to the warmth of their bodies. "This only buys us a few minutes. Soon we will have to exercise. It is important especially when I return to the family business."

"Is that what you want?"

"Yes, it is."

Fiona flips around to face her wife, "I support you in any path you take."

"I have never wanted anything more than working with my mothers. It is everything I have worked towards."

"I want you to find your place."

"That is something I believe needs to be discussed tonight. What is your schedule today?"

"I shall be home around six, but I will call you if I am later than eight."

"When will you be finished with this ridiculous schedule?"

"I do not know. I do start my pathology this summer. I will be completely on-call. But I do not know my medical school schedule. I will find out when I see Mary next."

Alaya licks the air, "The Mothers are in the gym."

Alaya and Fiona get dresses, leaving their shoes behind, as their new tradition, and head into the gymnasium.

During breakfast conversation Fiona turns to Mother Vastra. "I will let you know, as soon as possible, when you need to join me for surgery."

Vastra stops her fork midway to her mouth, "Surgery?"

"You will have to learn how to perform or assist me with cesarean section. I can't be the only one in the family with the skill. We have to pass the knowledge down to our daughters. What if I am able to be home ... we shall outlive our friends." Fiona says with sadness in her eyes. "I will depend on you developing your skills."

Vastra smiles, "I look forward to learning."

Fiona drinks her last bit of coffee and places her plate in the sink. "I must be going, I shall be home soon as I am able." She kisses her wife and heads out the door.

"That is exciting. To learn something of the human anatomy that is associated with life."

"You will be the surgeon to your own grandchildren. Are you worried?"
"Unsure. I will do research and go over Fiona's medical books."

"She has placed the books on your desk." Alaya looks to her mother Jenny, "Do you have any interest? We might be called to assist. I am told it takes a steady hand and precision. You have not picked any locks lately, how are your hands?"

Jenny looks at her hand as she sees the effects of pregnancy taking hold of her body as her wedding ring it starting to choke her finger. "Vastra, we must take off the ring before it is too late."

Vastra grabs soap does what is needed to yank off the precious jewellery past the swollen knuckles. Vastra bends down and kisses her wife's fingers.

Alaya gets up and goes to the drawer with miscellaneous items and finds ribbon and hands it to her Mothers. "This should help."

"While we have you alone." Mother Vastra looks to her daughter.

"Oh no ... should I be worried?"

"I am curious, did you bite your wife?"

Fiona nods.

"Did you draw blood?"

Fiona nod, "When I bit her she screamed into her hands with pain. I did what was needed to be done."

"Before you were weaned there was concern that you would have bitten off my nipples." Jenny turns to Vastra, "All those worries." She reaches out to her daughter, "You surprised us all with your tenderness."

"We are very pleased that you are tender," Mother Vastra adds, "You have the perfect combination of humanity and Silurian."

Alaya is pleased and clasped her hands with happiness. "I wish I could prepare you for the twins. Siblings can be very different. What if the twins are more human or more Silurian?"

"We will figure it out. Let's begin our day. How about your and I work on the perception device tests? After which we go to Scotland Yard and see if there are any unsolved mysteries to solve?"

Fiona comes home around seven with heavy footsteps into the drawing-room. She looks to find her Silurian pillow missing. She turns and heads to the kitchen where mother Jenny carry three sandwiches, one half in her mouth, and a glass of milk.

"Good evening mother, where is Alaya?"

"Shum um wif Vafftra."

Fiona smiles, "I can wait until you finish your bite."

Mother Jenny chews, chews, chews, takes a gulp of milk and then burbs with a blushed face, "Pardon me."

Fiona just laughed, "No problem mother Jenny. Where is Alaya?"
"They have not returned from Scotland Yard. They left around two and I expect them home before dinner."

"Thank you. Allow me to assist you." Fiona grabs the plate with the two remaining sandwiches, the milk and walks behind Mother Jenny into the drawing-room.

"I will be fine dear." Mother Jenny gets comfy in her chair. Fiona comes over with a footstool for Mother Jenny's feet. "Fank few." As she fills her mouth with bread and meats.

"Your poor feet are swollen. I will return shortly and give them a massage. Excuse me." Fiona turns and quickly runs downstairs. She notices Miss Gardner and Miss Shaw heading out. "Miss Shaw. I am sorry to ask but has Madame Vastra or Alaya leave a message?"

"Yes." She turns to her Allie, "One moment Dear." Goes to her desk and hands Fiona a folded note. "Good evening Fiona."

"Good Evening." She responds to her friends as she unfolds the paper.

---

**DATE:** 12011916  
**TIME:** 15:12  
**TO:** Hot Water Bottle  
**FROM:** Plaster Wall

*Mother and I are out on a case. We shall be home by 0100. We shall grab food on the street. Take care of Mother Jenny.*

*I will be safe and warm.*

---

Fiona goes upstairs to check on Mother Jenny to find the drawing-room empty. She goes back to the landing to find Alaya's mother coming out of the hall water closet. "Vastra and Alaya will be out late. They have a case and will be following leads."

Mother Jenny runs to the window, "It is too cold! We need to get them home."

"They will be fine. Mother Vastra will look after Alaya. Alaya will do the same for her mother." Alaya attempts to console a panic pregnant woman, 'who will comfort me?'

Mother Jenny is now sitting on the chair next to the window watching any motion on the street below.

'I need a distraction.' "Mother Jenny, let me change and I shall return shortly. I have not eaten ..."

Mother Jenny's head spins around so fast Fiona though she her her neck crack, "Yes, I would like to eat."

"Give me a moment. I shall return shortly."

Fiona quickly goes upstairs and changes into heavy trousers, slippers and a sweater. She sniffs the sweater, it reminds her of Scotland and her mother. 'I need to share this with Alaya.' She goes downstairs into the kitchen to see the Mother Jenny looking into the icebox.

"Mother Jenny! I will make you a good meal for you and the twins." Fiona pulls her away and places her in her seat in the kitchen. Fiona grabs Mother Jenny's feet and places them up on Mother
Vastra’s regular seat. "Stay!" Fiona teases, "Tell me about your day.”

Fiona makes baked pasta while Mother Jenny shares the day from the time she left, Alaya biting confession and the research completed before she took a nap.

"Tell me, what did you do today?” Mother Jenny asked. While Fiona makes tea.

Fiona usually has two other audience members but tells her everything from her rounds, the Military Hospital new casualties and the Medical School responsibilities.

Fiona pulls the hot pan out of the oven and plates two portions. "Would you like to eat in the drawing room? I will make sure the fire is warm for our Silurians when they return home."

"Yes! Please."

Fiona follows Mother Jenny back to the drawing-room and they eat at the table. Fiona reads the evening paper out loud to entertain each other. After dinner was completed Fiona made sure Mother Jenny was properly resting and she went to clean up the kitchen. She returns to the drawing room with tea service and puts more wood on the fire. "What would you like now? Shall I read to you? Play music?" It just occurred to her that she actually doesn’t know what Mother Jenny does when she is alone. "What do you like to do when you have free time for yourself?"

"I usually sew, knit and other things."

"I will read to you while you do your tasks, if you like?"

"What will you read to me?"

Fiona goes to her stack of books she put aside exclusively for entertainment, "I have Anne of Green Gables, Tarzan of the Apes, White Fang, and The Professor ... any of these?"

"Anne of Green Gables is a series of a ginger girl isn't it?"

"Yes." Fiona blushes, "Would you like to hear it?"

"Bring me my knitting basket, please."

Fiona brings over the knitting basket, "Did I offend you little one?"

"No. I became interested in the series because Anne has red hair. But I soon fell in love the story."

Fiona made sure Mother Jenny was settled, comfortable and feet were up before she became comfortable herself.

"Anne of Green Gables by Lucy Maud Montgomery. Mrs. Rachel Lynde lived just where the Avonlea main road dipped down into a little hollow, fringed with alders and ladies' eardrops and traversed by a brook that had its source away back in the woods of the old Cuthbert place ..."

Fiona red through each chapter and looks up to check on Mother Jenny. Nothing unexpected. Although by chapter four Fiona is sitting on the ground, reading the book with her right hand and massaging Mother Jenny feet with her left.

By the time Fiona finished reading Chapter ten Mother Jenny has three loo breaks, two foot massages and another serving of baked pasta.

"... Becoming fiddlesticks! ... " Mother Jenny and Fiona hear their stealthy Silurians run up the
They turn to look at the door and as expected all smiles.

Fiona helps Mother Jenny stand as their wives come to greet them properly.

"Mother Jenny and I stayed up. We were concerned it was too cold and your perception devices would be on too long." Fiona pulls her cold wife closer to the fire. "I missed you and thank you for the note."

"Thank you for the call to let me know you would be late. I checked in with Miss Shaw around six." Alaya kisses her wife on warm lips and moans. "Oh you melt me."

"Do want to be by this fire? I will gladly lay here for the night. It is the warmest room or shall we adventure to our cold room to bury under the covers." Fiona looks into her wife's eyes for honesty and not bravery.

"Yes, I am cold. Being here near the warm fire will be most welcome."

Fiona kisses her wife, "I will be right back. Do you want night clothing?"

"I truly need to warm first."

Fiona runs upstairs, changes into her nightgown and returns to the drawing-room with a bounty of bedding. They make their bed on the large chaise lounge, build up the fire and fall asleep within ten minutes.

They never noticed Mother Vastra holding her wife in the Victorian couch in the same position but with fluffier pillows.
"You need the practice."

"Is this how you gained your skills?" As Vastra points to the small pink form on the table.

"Yes. This is the closest you can get to human skin to practice."

"I would think an ape would be more appropriate."

Fiona shakes her head, "Mother Vastra ... please try it again. Remember, to keep all your incisions a similar depth."

Vastra places the pig foot on the metal table and proceeds to cut strips of skin.

"Watch me suture." With such speed and precision Fiona stitches two strips of skin back to the pig's leg. "Now, watch as I slow down." Fiona sutures another strip. "Your turn," as she hands Mother Vastra the needle and thread.

Mother Jenny watches as the large clumsy Silurian hands attempt to make a few stitches. "May I try?"

Vastra gladly hands over the pig foot to her wife.

Mother Jenny, without pause, repeats Fiona's steps perfectly.

"Show off!" Vastra pulls back the tiny foot and attempts the stitches again. "I need to practice."

Mother Jenny gets closer to her wife to guide the long green scaled fingers and complete a row of stitches worth praising. "I will help you. You have taught me so much in my life, allow me to teach you."

Vastra melts, "I welcome your instruction."

Jenny kisses her wife on her cheek, "After we are done with this pig foot join me in the kitchen for a sandwich. I am craving pork."

Late that evening, when all residents of 15 Savile Row are sleeping the phone rings in Fiona and Alaya's room. Fiona extends her arm out of the blanket, brings in the receiver under the warm blankets. "Yes? Doctor Flint-Saint Clair speaking. Yes? I will be there in less than twenty minutes. Yes. Thank you." Fiona puts the phone back on the side table. "I am sorry dear I must go to the Medical School Hospital," as she gets out of bed to change and freshen up. "After you call the service, inform your Mother she has an appointment."

Alaya sits up, yawns as she dials the taxi service. "Yes, 15 Savile Row. Medical School for Woman. Thank you." Alaya hangs up the phone, gets out of bed and heads downstairs in a stupor. First Alaya knocks on her mothers door softly and listens to the footsteps walking towards the door. She quickly licks the air and knows it it her Mother Vastra. The door cracks open, "You have an appointment with Fiona. She leaves in a few minutes."

Mother Vastra nods and closes the door.

Alaya goes to the kitchen. She bundles two sandwiches, pours cold coffee into a canteen and heads down to the front door to wait. First it is her wife.
"I miss my Silurian wife," Fiona dives into her wife's chest taking in one more moment of intimacy.

Mother Vastra walks into the entrance way, "Alaya, please keep an eye on your mother. She has started to get cold."

Alaya smiles, "I will."

Fiona looks outside, "The cab has arrived." She offers a sympathetic smile as Alaya. "Shall we Mother Vastra? Alaya try to get some sleep dear."

Once the taxi drives off Alaya heads up stairs to her mothers' bedroom. She finds Mother Jenny all bundled up in blankets. She quickly adds more wood to the fire and curls up on the bed and falls asleep in protest. Hours pass as Alaya is woken by curses spewing from her Mother's mouth as she has to use the water closet.

While her mother is busy Alaya adds more wood to the fire for an acceptable Silurian body temperature.

"Is there something I can do for you?"

Mother Jenny shakes her head no as she hobbles back to the bed. "Thank you dear for warming up the room."

"Do you want to stay here or move into the drawing-room?"

"Here for a little while. Your sisters won't stop moving and I need to sleep."

Alaya comes over to her mother's side and lean down to her expanded stomach, "Hey! This is your older sister. If you don't go to sleep and let our mother rest you will have to deal with me. Trust me, you don't want to deal with me or my wife." Only the left side kicks one more time, "You done?" No movement.

Mother Jenny opens her eyes wide, "When you were in my womb did you hear us talking to you?"

"I remember some stuff, not anything specific. I knew my mothers' scents and voices."

"Do you remember being born?"

"I remember feeling lost, I couldn't locate my mothers."

"You knew you had us? I mean, two women? Does it bother you that you have two mothers instead of a father?"

"Oh no, I knew immediately that I had two mothers. I didn't know that there was a difference." Alaya starts to blush, "I never wanted a father. My mothers are the perfect balance of strength and compassion." She moves towards the bed and starts to rub her mother's feet, "I always have seen my mother strong, independent and even invincible."

"I don't feel so strong now," As Jenny smiles at her daughter. "I am tired and hungry."

"Wait here and try to sleep." Alaya tucks her mother into the bed and whispers. "I will return when breakfast is ready." Alaya taps the large stomach, "You two let mother sleep." She puts another log on the fire and goes to the kitchen to make breakfast.

The cold sterile operating room has the usual staff and a tall woman observing in close proximity to Doctor Flint-Saint Clair. "We have the head, everyone prepared?"
The staff responds in the affirmative.

"Here we go!"

Everyone works with speed to extract the newborn, cut the umbilical cord and close the new mother's damaged body.

The tall woman leans over watching each action with particular interest. She has questions; she waits for the appropriate time.

After the successful operation Doctor Flint-Saint Clair accompanies the tall woman out to the taxi stand. "Mother Vastra, I believe next time you should be paying attention to the post birthing process. Note what the nurses do, what they write and steps to make sure the newborn is healthy."

"I will." Mother Vastra opens the cab door and Fiona ducks under her long arms to enter. "Do you think it will be possible to perform any of the operation?"

"I have asked Louisa. Timing is going to be tricky. We are waiting for the perfect time." Fiona looks to her wife's mother, "Do not misunderstand ... I want you to practice this procedure. I desperately need you to be perfect. I am dependent on you to pass the skills down to our generations." Fiona leans against the cold window.

Mother Vastra knows not to ask what is wrong. She has seen that distant look in her own wife's eyes. "My dear little one, your legacy is forever cemented. You Flint-Saint Clair clan shall be the most educated group of women for generations."

"Is it hard?"

"I hold on to each moment and let go for the next."

"Sound exhausting."

"It is exhilarating."

"You do it quite easily."

Fiona turns her head and asks the Silurian, "How do I let go?"

"Look at your education. Do you hold on to each tiny fact in your brain?"

"Of course."

"I am sorry dear, but you do not hold every bit of information in your brain."

"Then what do I do?"

"You know your numbers?"

Fiona gives sarcastic look, "Of course."

"You know your letters?"

"Your point?"

"Do you have to wake up every morning to memorize the order of numbers? Memorize the order of the alphabet? You have outgrown the need for that memory, it grew out of its usefulness. You now
are a physician and learning greater things."

"So you toss out memories?"

"No, but I do let them pass and make room for new ones. I do keep a journal and depend for our future generations for hints and reminders."

"How?"

"I see in Alaya's eyes her mother. I see it in her hesitation, her passion and her laughter. I will find my Jenny everywhere. I grab each moment with her as if it is the very last breath she takes."

Fiona thinks about her wife, 'Vastra? Alaya laughs like her mother. I have not noticed. I need to pay attention. ' "Will you remember me?"

"Little one you have been carved into my heart for a very long time."

Fiona forms tears in her eyes, "I am pleased. I hope Alaya will remember me but not as an anchor to her long life."

"Your love is what inspired songs, poets and even Silurian like me to see good in the world. My Jenny will not be a weight in my long life nor will you be to my Alaya." Mother Vastra smiles, "As far as Alaya's laugh ... yes, you should pay attention, but wait until after your done with medical school. I wouldn't want your human brain to run out of space."

Fiona laughs off Mother Vastra's last comment as the cab has reached their destination.
Breakfast is the last opportunity for the family to be together before the day begins a second time. It was entertaining as two watched Mother Jenny eat five pancakes, all of the mushrooms, around five eggs and almost a half loaf of bread.

"Did mother eat this much with me?" Alaya asks.

"No, it is quite unusual for your mother to have such an appetite." Mother Vastra smiles as she caresses the large stomach. "I do believe your sisters are quite hungry."

Fiona isn't participating, she is just staring at Mother Vastra.

"Fiona, please just ask your question, if you have one." Mother Vaster looking directly into Fiona's eyes.

"I ... I ... it will sound absolutely preposterous. Are you able to read minds?"

Mother Vastra tilts her head back and laughs.

Mother Jenny touches her wife's arm tenderly as she chews, "wevs ... communicate ..." as she points to her head chewing.

Mother Vastra looks at the small hand on her arm. "What my beautiful wife attempts to inform you that I, we have the ability of telepathy."

"What? Since when?" Alaya looks to her mothers sits back with her hands folded and asks, "What else do not I know?"

"Do you read minds?" Fiona asks again defensively.

Alaya stands up and paces in the kitchen, "Do I have the ability to communicate telepathically?"

"I do not know. Have you tried?" Mother Vastra asks her daughter.

Alaya comes over to the table as she slams both hands on the table and looks into Mother Vastra's eyes. "... How do I try?"

'Alaya dear don't be upset, please.' Mother Jenny telepathically talks to her daughter with a smile.

'Alaya dear don't be upset, please.' Mother Jenny telepathically repeats herself and maintains the smile.

"Ahh!" Alaya places her hands over her ears and spins around.

'Alaya dear don't be upset, please.' Mother Jenny telepathically repeats herself a third and final time.

Alaya takes a deep breath and concentrates. She places all her anger and thoughts into the forefront of her mind and lashes them out to the air, 'Mother, I am upset because there is one more secret. What else do my mother's hold back? What other things will I find myself blind-sided with information? Do I scare my mothers? Do I lack their love and understanding? Have I let you down? Have I given you reason not to trust me with information? Am I too human? Am I too Silurian? Am..."
I not enough human? Am I not enough Silurian? Please tell me, I am able to understand any truth.'

Alaya walks out of the kitchen. Moments later there are deep angry sounds coming from the gymnasium as each

Fiona looks up to the ceiling as she remains in her seat across the table from Alaya's mothers. She puts her head down and whispers, "I am too upset to console my wife.'

"Why should you be upset?" Mother Vastra asks.

"I have to go to work." Fiona walks to the doorway and without looking back she responds softly, "Why not just read our minds and figure it out yourselves."

Alaya runs down to the landing, "Are you going to work?"

Fiona whispers, "I am." She turns and leaves 15 Savile Row angry and cautious about her family. Something she never expected to feel.

Alaya stands there on the landing watching her wife leave. She stands there at the landing and is interrupted by sounds in the kitchen.

"Mother what is on our schedule for the day?" Alaya asks with the kitchen door is opened.

"We have to investigate the possible black markets for Scotland Yard." Mother Vastra replies.

"Thank you." Alaya leaves the kitchen.

"Alaya!" Mother Jenny calls to her daughter.

"Yes?"

"Talk to us, please. We heard you." Mother Jenny gently responds.

"Oh." Alaya stands on the other side of the kitchen door not knowing what to do.

"Come back in to the kitchen, please." Mother Jenny begs.

Alaya pushes open the door to see her mothers doing the dishes together. Alaya only sees their backs and moves to sit at the table. This time she decides to sit in her wife's usual seat.

Alaya patiently waits until the kitchen duties have been completed.

Mother Jenny pulls her wife as they sit down to face their daughter.

"We are sorry." Mother Vastra says with compassion and earnest.

"Why are you apologizing?"

"We should have told you when you were old enough to understand. Life got in the way."

"I understand." Alaya replies with a whisper.

"I heard you." Mother Jenny reaches across the table to hold her daughter's hand. "I did."

"What did you hear?"

Mother Jenny carefully asks, "Do you want to verbalize your thoughts?"
Alaya nods yes.

"You are upset because there is one more secret. then you asked a series of questions including why we hold back ... what other things will I find myself blind-sided with information ... are we scared of you ... do you have our love and understanding ... have you let us down ... is there a reason not to trust you with information ... are you too human or too Silurian, enough human or Silurian." Mother Jenny chokes out the words with pain in her chest.

"So you can read minds." Alaya looks down at her lap and understands why her wife has left so abruptly. 'I have to fix this.' "What else should I know?"

"There isn't a list, if that is what you seek?"

"A list, no." Alaya realizes what she has asked and decides to rephrase, "What other Silurian or Human traits do you have that I might or might not have acquired?"

Mother Vastra answers honestly. "You are split down the middle with part of me and parts of your mother. Imagine a bowl of a thousand marbles of which represents myself and another bowl of a thousand marbles. Now pour half of my marbles into another bowl and do the same with your mother's bowl. You ask of us to know which marble is a particular in human or Silurian. There is no answer, because even though your mother and I look quite different we are anatomically quite similar."

"I understand."

"There is nothing of you that is defective." Mother Jenny offers words with tears going down her cheek, "My dearest, you have all our love possible a parent could offer their child. You have never let us down. It was our mistake to not share with you, truly we have forgotten. It was like informing you how we breath. Please forgive us."

Alaya melts with her mothers soft words, "You have no reason to apologize ...

Fiona runs into the kitchen, flops into her wife's arms and quickly buries her head.

"I am quite pleased you are in my arms. I need to know, my Scottish girl, why are you home?"

Without leaving her wife's chest Fiona points to the calendar open to March 1916 with a red circle around today's date. She meekly speaks into her wife's chest and vibrates the scales, "I have off today. My anger got the best of me this morning. Please forgive me?"

"It seems this is a morning for apologising. First my mothers and now my wife." Alaya looks to her wife, 'Everything will be fine. Are you still upset?'

Silence.

Alaya looks to her wife and says in a whisper, "Everything will be fine. Are you still upset?"

"I heard you the first time." Fiona responds looking up at her wife, "I am upset. I have reason to feel violated."

Alaya looks to her mothers smiling and back at her wife. "You heard me?"

"Your wife does have perfect hearing."

"I didn't use my vocal cords to communicate the first time?"
Fiona sits up and looks into her wife's eyes, "I heard you loud and clear. Say something."

'Something.'

"No really, a longer sentence."

'What do you want to do on your day off? How does a picnic sound with a trip to the library?'

Fiona inquires, "Did you ask me what I want to do on my day off? Picnic and then library?"

Alaya nods yes.

Fiona closes her eyes, 'Are you hearing me wife? I am tired. I would be open to the library and picnic but I need to get to bed early."

'I hear you loud and clear. We can just stay home and you can nap on your Silurian pillow.' Fiona eyes pop open and she whispers, "Are our conversations secret?"

"I do not know."

Alaya and Fiona turns to see a blushing Mother Jenny and a darker green scaled Mother Vastra.

"So that is a no?" Fiona smiles to her wife. "I assume, please let me know if I am wrong ... but you have to be a close proximity and available to receive. If not, then Alaya and I would have discovered this ability on our own."

"That is correct." Mother Vastra responds with soft smile. "I can listen telepathically ... but I respect privacy."

"Have you ever listened to our thoughts?" Alaya faces her Mother Vastra. "Ever?"

"Yes." Fiona and Alaya faces become red with anger. "Especially when you were younger. I was hoping to find out if you could speak telepathically. You never responded; we assumed you lacked the ability."

"Clarify if you listened to any of our thoughts as adults?"

"Of course."

"Why?" Fiona dares to ask, "When?"

"From the moment you came into our lives. I wanted to make sure you were not a treat."

"From the moment we started to correspond?"

"Yes. You were without a doubt a conflicted with your time."

Fiona's mouth dropped open. "What?"

"You wanted to write but you didn't have the time. You ..."

Fiona stood up with a flushed face, "No. No more. My private thoughts were mine. Not yours to invade. Did you discuss my thoughts to Mother Jenny?"

Mother Jenny nods yes, "We had to know your intentions."

Fiona gets up and leaves the kitchen. "I need time alone."
Silence.

Alaya licks the air continuously as her wife’s scent slowly moves down the stairs and out the front door.

Alaya is shifting her eyes back and forth to her mothers. "Well?"

"No. If Fiona wanted you to know, she would have told you." Mother Vastra firmly replies.

"You both know her personal thoughts. Now my wife has left the house. How do I fix this?"

"We are responsible and we shall talk to her." Mother Jenny kindly offers advice.

Alaya licks the air, 'She is gone.' She stands up and looks to her Mothers with anger in her eyes. "I am angry. I do not know what to do. I will be in the office doing research. I need to be busy."

Afternoon tea was entertaining as Mother Jenny had three sandwiches, as if she was starved. Alaya offers a muted smile at her mothers as Fiona has not returned home.

"Tonight we shall go to the navy ports to watch the activities."

Alaya nods.

A knock on the drawing-room door. Alaya and Vastra lick the air, 'Miss Shaw'.

Alaya answers the door with her usual pleasantries, "Good afternoon Miss Shaw."

"Doctor Fiona called just a moment ago. I decided to deliver it myself." She hands Alaya the folded note. "Have a good evening."

"Thank you."

After Alaya closes the door she moves towards a window and opens the note.

---

Alaya

I have taken a shift and will be staying the night at the hospital.

Fiona

---

Alaya crumbles it up into a ball, throws it into the fire and returns to the office to do more research. She stays there immersing herself in reading line item entries and cross referencing balance sheets until there is a knock at her door. "Come in."

"It is time we leave, we have the night." Mother Vastra instructs.

Alaya stands and gathers her usual items, puts on her heavy coat and they head out into the night.

Alaya and Mother Vastra are watching the docks. Mother Vastra interrupts the quiet. 'This is where our private communications will be useful.'

Alaya nods as she writes down the various boats coming in and out of port.

'Look at the man who is wearing that black driver cap. He looks out of place.' Mother Vastra points towards a man in a long coat.
'His shoes are too fancy.' Alaya adds.

'Shall name him Mister X?'

Alaya write down in her notes and pulls out folded papers, 'The cargo is supposed to be food. The weight is too much, it seems that the crane is strained.' She licks the air, 'I can't find a scent inside.'

'I do not detect food. I can't make out the contents. We will see if we can come back tomorrow to get closer. The docks aren't business for us and the lights taken away our shadows.'

The captain of the ships comes over to Mister X, "Wir verlassen morgen um fünf Uhr morgens. Achten Sie auf die Dokumente."

"Die Dokumente kommen. Es kann während des Tages nicht kopiert werden. Sie werden aus Dover kommen." Mister X quickly responds.

'We need to clarify this translation and return.'

Alaya nods as they both leave their perch and head back towards Savile Row with a stop at their personal translator, "I am sorry Miss Gardner, we seek Miss Shaw's skills. It is rather important."

Miss Gardner returns the umbrella hook inside the door. "Tori. You are needed."

Allie's companion quickly put on her housecoat, "Allie, thank you. I am ready."

"We are very sorry to disturb your sleep, but your services are needed." Vastra nods to both Allie and Tori.

"How can I be of asstance?"

Alaya reads her notes.

"First I do an exact word for word translation in my mind and then a more structured assumption verbally. Please read it back again."

Alaya read her notes again.

"Was this a conversation?"

"Yes two men."

"That makes sense. The first wanted to make sure that they leave with the documents at four in the morning. The second said that the documents come from Dover which can't be copied during the day."

"Are you positive of the translation?" Vastra asks Miss Shaw.

"The only word I have trouble with is Achten Sie as it could be translated either make or watch."

"Thank you." Mother Vastra turns to leave. "We shall let ourselves out."

"Our apologies for disturbing your sleep. Please know your skills are vital to our work. Thank you again."

Quickly Mother Vastra and Alaya head home. Vastra calls Scotland Yard and updates on their findings. Alaya calls Dover to speak to military security.
"Dover Security will call back as soon as they clarify our qualifications with Scotland Yard." Alaya tells her mother.

"Now we wait." The phone rings, "Not for long." Vastra picks up the phone. "Yes. No, we can assume three or four hours if by car. No trains are running. We will head back to port around three. Yes. I agree." She hangs up the phone.

"What did they say?"

"There was a young female clerk who just got off duty at the Dover military facilities. The military wants us to return to the docks at three to watch any transactions. They are sending a ship to block it's movements on the Thames."

Alaya looks to the clock, that gives us two hours. I will take the car and will return to pick you up at two-thirty.

"I need your head with me when you return."

Alaya smiles, "My mind is always focused when business is concerned. Have I let you down tonight?"

"No. You are an excellent partner." Mother Vastra smiles.

"Thank you. I will see you soon." Alaya quickly leaves their home and heads north driving the Fiat Zero.

Alaya quickly makes sure her device is activated and strolls up to the hospital administration desk. "I am here to see Doctor Flint-Saint Clair."

"Please take a seat and I will see if she is available."

Alaya sits down and watches as the nurse makes a call, talks in the receiver and then places it back onto the hook. "She is in her office. Do you need directions?"

Alaya stands, "No I know where to go. Thank you."

Alaya moves through corridors and flies up stairs until she is standing in front of an office door with the name 'Doctor Fiona Flint-Saint Clair'. She licks the air, takes in her wife's scent and knocks.

"Come in." Fiona whispers from inside.

Alaya enters a dark room and closes the door behind. She turns off her perception device and stands there. All she planned was to get here to be by Fiona's side. Now that she is here, standing in the dark she is lost. 'Be honest.' "I just wanted to be near you. I hated how you left."

"I know. I just wanted to be alone. I do not want to be chased. This isn't some childish act."

"What did you run?"

Fiona lets out a loud sigh. "Your mothers read my thoughts ..."

"Your thoughts are your own. I have never been privy."

"Your mothers have."

"That is true but you punished me. Today you had a day off and you took that away because of my
Alaya decides to find a seat as her eyes focused on the darkness. She can now make out her wife as she is sitting up on a small sofa. Alaya sits down in a chair furtherest away to give her wife physical space. "Have you been crying?"

Alaya smiles as she notices her wife nods yes in complete darkness. "Are you still angry?"

Fiona nods yes again.

"I can't apologize for my mothers, they can do that themselves." Alaya lets out a deep breath, "Do you need distance?"

Fiona nods yes.

"Have you thought of a solution?"

Fiona nods yes, "I am going to stay at Louisa and Flora's for a fortnight."

Alaya stands, "I see. Are you going alone?"

Fiona doesn't say a thing.

Alaya sits back down and balls her hands into a fist. 'Damn it! I can't lose my love. I can't. 'What if we lease a small flat. Something simple like Tori and Allie?"

Fiona doesn't say a thing.

Alaya decides to just sit and relax. She takes in her wife's scent and feels her presence.

They sit in silence for what seems hours. Alaya looks at the clock on the wall, two-twenty. "I am sorry, I must return to work. We have to meet Scotland Yard." She stands, walks to her wife and sits down next to her on the sofa. "Please find your happiness."

Fiona nods yes and leans into Alaya's shoulder. "All I feel is anger."

Alaya wraps one arm around her wife, "I am truly sorry. I must go."

"I do understand. I do this to you almost everyday."

Alaya kisses her wife on the cheek and heads back home to pick up Mother Vastra.

"How is the little one?"

"Let us focus on the job at hand. Please?"

Vastra nods and they go over their plan.

The two remain hidden as they watch the empty dock become an anthill of activity at four in the morning. They wait.

A automobile pulls up at four forty-five and a tall woman gets out with a roll of papers. She walks to the leaders and hands the roll to Mister X and returns to the automobile to wait.

The clocks strike five, Mister X hands the roll to the captain and goes back to the automobile the tall
woman drives.

'What do we do?' Alaya asks, 'We can't let them get away.'

'They won't; we aren't alone'

Alaya licks the air, 'Scotland yard is here.'

'We must never take chances. We have wives at home that depend on us.'

'You do.'

Vastra puts Alaya's last comment in the back of her mind.

The detective partners wait and watch as a navy ship flashes on its lights blocking the now departing ship from movement. Scotland yard moves in and blocks the car with Mister X and mystery woman driver.

Vastra and Alaya emerge from their perch and meet with the Inspector of Scotland Yard. "Are these the two?"

Vastra describes what transpired throughout the night.

Alaya looks towards her notes and offers Miss Shaw's translation and time activities until Scotland Yard arrived.

The three look over as the captain is escorted off the boat and the Inspector is handed the roll of papers. He quickly unrolls it and shows his consultants. "It looks like this information will stay on our side of the pond. Good job. I expect to have your report by tomorrow evening. Good day."

The two head on home. Vastra quickly goes into bed with her wife.

Alaya does not.

Fiona is fatigued but needs to performs an emergency amputation. She completes the operation without incident. After she cleans herself off, change she returns to her dark office. She walks in and turns on the light. Alaya quickly stand with two suitcases. "Together."
Jenny wakes up for the fourth time in the night to use the loo, she senses something wrong. She goes up to her daughter and wife's room and knocks. No answer. Jenny moves as fast as she can and wakes Vastra. "Where is Alaya and Fiona?"

"Fiona took a shift at the hospital. Our daughter probably followed to be nearby."

"No, something is wrong."

"I am sure they are fine."

"Oi! I said something is wrong."

Vastra sits up and compassionately responds. "What do you want me to do? How can I Assist?"

"Help me get dressed and we go to the hospital." Jenny is making a poor attempt of removing her nightgown. "Please?"

Vastra smiles as she remembers the emotional ups and downs when Jenny was pregnant with Alaya. "Yes my love."

Vastra successfully dressed her bulky wife, changed herself back into street clothes and then called a taxi service.

In less than twenty minutes Vastra was holding the front door open for her determined pregnant human wife.

"May I be of service?" Inquires the nurse behind the front desk.

"No."

"I am afraid visiting hours are over." The nurse stands to produce a minor amount of authority.

"I am not visiting," as Jenny works herself to the stairway.

Vastra turns to the nurse, "It is fine. We shall be leaving directly."

The nurse smiles and decides to let the second floor nurse deal with this woman.

Jenny is holding on the handrails as she musters her strength to climb the stairs on to the third floor. "Vastra."

Vastra comes to her wife's aid as she lifts her body up and carries her up to the third floor.

"Oi! I didn't say carry me."

"I saw an opportunity to move swiftly. Time might be our enemy."

Jenny nods, "Thank you. You might be right."

The two look down the hallway and see Fiona walking into her office.

Vastra offers her wife an arm which Jenny gladly takes it for support. They stand in front of Fiona's office and Jenny knocks loudly.
Nobody answers.

Jenny knocks again.

Fiona answers from inside irritated, "Come in mothers."

Jenny enters and points down at the suitcases. She turns to Vastra with tears in her eyes, "See I told you."

Vastra closes the door and calmly responds, "They are adults."

Jenny shakes her head and yells in whispers, "They are family."

"They are adult family members."

"They are all we have." Jenny falls into her wife's arms and cries.

Alaya is standing over by the windows while Fiona is on the far end of the sofa. Alaya and Fiona look distressed.

Vastra, "Inform us of the current situation."

Silence.

"Please." Mother Jenny begs.

Silence.

Neither Alaya nor Fiona dare to look at anyone.

"Help me sit."

"Where would you like to sit?"

Jenny points to straight back chair, "I can easily get out of this chair."

Vastra assists her wife awkwardly as she gets comfortable in the chair. Jenny quickly inquires, "Why do you have suitcases?"

Silence.

"Oi, pregnant woman here ... with twins." She looks back and forth to the young women as they maintain their heads in polar opposites.

Silence.

"Fiona when does your shift end?"

Fiona looks to the wall clock, "It has ended five minutes ago."

"Let's go home." Jenny waves Vastra for assistance getting up.

"I am not going back."

Jenny waves Vastra for assistance sitting down.

"Why not."
Silence.

Jenny turns to her wife for assistance. Vastra asks Alaya, "Are you returning home?"

Alaya, "I go with Fiona."

"Fiona are you returning home?"

Fiona puts her head down and whispers, "No. She is not coming with me."

"Why?"

Silence.

"One will talk for a second and the other shuts up. They reverse their roles on the next question. I have no idea how to proceed." Vastra looks to her wife, "Any suggestions."

"We know it has to do with telepathy."

"It is more than just the telepathy." Alaya whispers.

Everyone looked at her waiting for her next words.

Vastra looks at her daughter over by the window only a few steps away but emotionally she on the other side of the world.

Alaya speaks up, "What do you want to do?"

"Be left alone." Fiona speaks loudly and firmly.

"Does that include me?" Alaya asks mildly.

"Yes."

Vastra turns to Fiona. "We have wronged you. We are so sorry. Please do not punish our Alaya."

"You are our Fiona, our Little one. Ask us anything." Jenny begs.

Fiona looks up with bloodshot eyes with dark circles underneath. "What did you learn about me?"

Vastra calmly responds, "You had doubts, limited schedule and you didn't want to be committed to anything except your education."

"What do you believed would have happened if I never have been put into that hospital?"

"You would have stayed the course of your education and we meet two years from now."

"What else?"

Jenny looks to her wife, "Before you went into the hospital?"

Fiona nods yes.

"You were going to stop writing. You wanted the conversation face to face. It was about putting on hold everything. You decided to focus on your education and opportunities."

Fiona looks down and nods yes, "I was loosing focus."
"We know what strength it would have taken you to have that conversation. You fell in love with Alaya early on. Was it love at first sight?"

Alaya turns her head to listen to the response.

"First giggle," Fiona smiles. "I was stronger before they put me into the hospital. I wanted to become something amazing to offer my wife. She needed time to become more for the family business."

Fiona gets quiet, "That place broke me in to tiny pieces. If it wasn't for Louisa, both of your kindness and Alaya ... I would not be the person I am today. I owe you all so much, I am grateful." Fiona tears up, "I fear I have broken Alaya's heart with this new information."

Alaya talks to the wall, "You were robbed of many things. There is a great mystery swirling around my Fiona." Alaya faces her mothers, "She deserves to know."

Vastra tells Fiona about Virginia Woolf, the typewriter, what she said at graduation, the fake monk. ",... the universe or at least someone in the universe had previous knowledge of your life alterations. They might have been helpless when it came to keeping you out of that hospital so they gave your future a little push."

Fiona sits back and whispers, "I have felt out of sync with myself. I feel like I have to catch up to this imaginary finish line that keeps moving."

She looks to her wife with pounding heart. "Oh god." Fiona gets up, runs over to the her bin, falls to her knees and vomits. She begins to wail and cry out.

Alaya runs over to her.

"No!" Fiona stops her wife from coming closer.

Alaya hesitates just for a moment and comes to her wife's side. She begins to rub her back.

Fiona spews again. "Leave me be. Return to your mothers."

Fiona starts to vomit again. "Go back to your mothers."

Alaya stays with Fiona rubbing her back and holding her hair.

Once her stomach has been emptied Fiona stands up, goes to the sink and baptises her face with the ice cold water. She returns to the security of her desk.

Jenny inquires, "We want to know, why do you want to leave?"

"It seems you know me better than my wife, my mother and probably better than myself."

"Have we ever given you a reason that we would use that knowledge against you?"

Fiona shakes her head no.

"Then come home."

Fiona shakes her head no.

"Please tell us why?"

"Because," Fiona looks up to her wife's Mothers, "You hold all the cards. You withhold information, even from your daughter. You don't share, unless a particular question is asked in that particular
structure. You have proven time and time again that Vastra and Jenny is all that you need ... a secret society. To see my wife angry at another secret being withheld made my heart tear. As I sit here feeling angry you disclose information you could have shared with me at any moment. But you didn't."

Vastra sits next to her wife as she holds her hand in silence.

"She worships the ground you walk on Vastra." Fiona points to Alaya across the small office while looking at the Mothers. "Jenny, my Alaya depends on you to help her navigate her human side. As mush as Vastra trains her ... she looks for your tutelage of what it means to be half-human."

Fiona flew her hands up in the air, "Even trying to get pregnant ... I had to ask difficult questions. You didn't offer freely." Fiona stood up and pointed to her buttock, "I had to be bitten! Bitten. I don't like to be bitten in my arse!"

Fiona sits down and takes a deep breath, "Alaya is so proud working with you again Vastra ... she wants so dearly to be your Silurian warrior daughter. Jenny ... my wife finds such peace with you as only a human mother can offer. Today I saw Alaya feel unworthy. Again. She is offered a morsel of information that could be vital in achieving her life's goals, a clue to possible Silurian comradery. Instead she is outside the sacred circle you formed, she patiently waits to be invited." Fiona stands and shakes her head. "Enough, I want out."

Vastra stands up, "You do not."

Jenny waves her wife to help her out of the chair. 'I need you in my life." As she leans over the table to grab the only purely human hand she has touched in almost two generations.

Fiona looks at her, "You only need Vastra."

Jenny cries, "It isn't true. I want you in my life. I do need you."

Fiona slinks back into her desk chair and hides her head. 'I can't watch my wife hurt any more. I can't. I need to be stronger."

Vastra, "Then let our Alaya come with you."

Fiona puts her head up, "I will not. Do you not understand? She wants nothing more than to be your equal. I can't offer her completeness. She does everything for you." Fiona quiets herself, "Allow me put in Silurian terms you will understand ... You are her goddess."

"I am her mother, nothing more." Vastra stands firm holding her wife.

Fiona stands and points to Vastra."No, you are her god. She worships you. Do you not see it in her eyes. She has give up her own voice in reverence. My sweet gentle Alaya willing offers herself in veneration."

Fiona sits back down exhausted. "How would you feel if your goddess kept information from you that would make your life easier, better or even happier ... to only disclose bits and pieces. Those insignificant tidbits made you feel whole. Instead you have all the pieces to the puzzle to make Alaya complete but you withhold, over analyse to the point where nothing is shared or relieved. Then I come along bring to surface missing pieces." Fiona shakes her head, "I am not a catalyst for your use."

Fiona looks at her wife, "I won't watch my wife beg for another crumb of information or attention, it is demeaning."
Vastra and Jenny sit back down dumbfounded.

Silence.

Fiona takes a deep breath, "I mentioned before that you are both very self-sufficient. I was not informing you of a positive attribute. I was disclosing a defect. You took it as a strength while I saw a weakness. You both are viewed as perfect or at least try to be perceived as perfect. There are no mistakes made by either of you. You are always successful in anything you put your sights. One final comment, Vastra, it is time to take off the veil in front of your daughter."

Jenny waves her wife to help her up. "We need to fix this. We have to fix this." She pulls her tall daughter to the sofa.

Vastra looks to Fiona. "Give me and my wife an opportunity for retort. Your words have hit deep and we need a moment to gather our thoughts. Please."

Fiona nods and stands up. "I will be right back with tea. Mother Jenny water closet is to the right."

Fiona returns from the lounge on the ground floor with four cups of tea. All three look dejected. 'Did I do this?' She decides to be verbal with her thoughts so as not to be mistaken, 'You all look dejected. Did I do this?'

Jenny grabs her wife hand, "No. Vastra and I are fully responsible. It is our mistake."

Vastra adds, "We have been talking. All your words, no matter how harsh ... you are right. We don't know how to go about fixing or making adjustments."

Fiona looks to her wife; Alaya looks like a young child who had their toys taken away. "My dear Alaya ... please tell me anything."

Alaya looks up with broken brown eyes, "I ...

Fiona sits behind her desk like a fortress wall and sips her warm tea anticipating her wife's voice.

Vastra speaks, "Yes. It is true Jenny and I do not need anyone."

Alaya looks down at her tea.

Fiona's anger is stirred.

"But we want you in our lives. We want our family to remain intact. Please do you have any solution?"

"My only solution is to leave and let the Flint family go forward without me."

"That is unacceptable."

"To whom?"

"To us. All of us."

"So what I want or need is irrelevant?"

"What do you want?"

"We are going to go round in circles. I have said it plainly and without stutter ... I want out."
"What about what I want?" Alaya asks looking at her wife.

"Please release me." Fiona whispers.

"We go together."

Fiona cries into her hands. "Why can't you just let me be?"

"Because I love you and you love me." Alaya comes to her wife's side and bends down, "You have not been home for a year. Please be patient. We can handle anything. We can solve this together. We can figure this out."

Silence.

"Fiona, Please be patient with my mothers."

Fiona melts into her wife's arms. Alaya's voice covers her like a warm summer shower. Fiona cries softly. "I need to be alone. Please. I offered two students an exchange so that I could take time for myself. I have the next two days and nights off. I am emotionally exhausted."

Alaya whispers looking into her wife's weary eyes, "I understand. I do." Alaya mind is moving searching for a solution for her wife, "I need to take my mother's home. I will ensure you have the time and quiet you need for yourself. Please come with me."

Fiona looks to her wife confused.

"You can trust me." Alaya offers a muted smile.

Fiona nods.

Alaya brings the car to a full stop in front of 15 Savile Row. Vastra helps Jenny out of the car and directly into their home.

Alaya takes her suitcase out, "I will return in a few minutes."

Fiona nods as she lays her head against the interior. She falls asleep straight off to the sounds of the busy street.

Alaya returns to the automobile and taps her wife on her nose. Fiona wakes to a key dangling from her wife's hand.

"What is that?"

"Privacy, solitude and cheap."

Alaya pulls out Fiona's suitcase, "We walk. Are you able?"

Miss Gardner comes out of 15 Savile Row with a smile. "Thank you so much. It will be wonderful to be back in a home filled with noise. My Tori is excited to have all those books." She turns to Fiona, "Please give me a moment to pack a few things up. There isn't much for food, so you will have to feed for yourself."

"Thank you Allie." Alaya walks with her wife to the markets as they go to the grocer, baker, street vendors and purchase two bottles of over priced whiskey. After which they walk towards Miss Shaw and Miss Gardner's loft.
Alaya hands the key to Fiona.

Fiona unlocks the door and enters a small humble loft. "They both live here?"

"Yes. They are saving to travel the world." Alaya puts the food away, opens the first whiskey bottle, "I am sorry it is not your brand. if you need me, ring this." Alaya places the bicycle bell on the bistro table and goes to the door.

Fiona runs over and touches her wife's hand.

Alaya turns and cups her wife's face, "Stay as long as you want or need. It shall be interesting back home, I will take notes."

Fiona smiles, "Thank you."

Alaya exits the small loft.

Fiona closes the door and looks around. She smiles as she sees two chairs, a small bistro set, a bed barely enough for two and books. Tons of books everywhere. She walks to the windows to get fresh air and turns around to see a map of the world pinned to the wall.

The quiet became real as Fiona whistles to check her hearing.

She goes to the counter and pours herself a small glass of whiskey taking it down in her Scottish fashion. "Aye it isn't much, but it 'll doo." She puts the bottle away and cleans the empty glass. She then undresses and flops on the soft bed. 'I love my wife'.

Fiona wakes up after twenty minutes and pushes the bed against the wall. She smiles as she feels the cool plaster wall against her lower back. 'I hope Vastra and Jenny understand. I will not let our children feel less or beg for attention from their grandmothers. I want no secrets held back for their success. I will not let that happen..' 

"Silurian Goddess, please give Alaya the strength to find her words. We need her to find her words." Fiona falls asleep in a soft chant caressing her small stomach carrying two precious gifts. 'Don't worry little ones, your mother will find her words.'
Flint Family

Alaya returns from dropping off Fiona. She returns to her bedroom and removes all personal belong from drawers, shelves and even pictures and carries them to her office.

She then goes down to storage and returns to her office and places a cot, blankets and makes a mini room. She then takes the pictures and places them on the makeshift side table.

She returns to her desk and finishes her report for Scotland Yard on Mister X. She doesn't type as fast as Fiona, but she has always been skilled since NNYU.

She looks around at her office and licks the air. She goes to the shelf, takes the messenger cylinder and places it on her desk.

She looks over her report placing both copies in a folder and seeks out her mother Vastra.

Entering the drawing room Alaya witnesses her mothers sitting close to the fireplace having a private conversation.

"Yes Alaya?" Mother Vastra asks without turning her head.

"I have finished the report for Scotland Yard."

Mother Vastra stands up and reads it herself. "Yes good. We will deliver it together this afternoon."

Mother Jenny remains seated with the puffy ankles up on a footstool. "Is Fiona settled?"

"Yes, she went right to sleep. She is emotionally drained and physically exhausted. We had to spend money on food but at least she is close. I am pleased she allowed for the compromise."

"It is a great idea. I know sometimes I want to be alone with my thoughts. Fiona has always been about her education and then we come into her life ... that damn hospital ... her mother ... and now this."

Alaya nods, "thank you for understanding."

"We have much to discuss."

"Any in particular? My wife threw much information into the air for us to dissect."

"Come and sit down. You mother and I want to talk to you."

Alaya sits in the chair facing her mothers on the sofa. Alaya sits back and places her hands on the arms of the chair, she wants no mistake in her body language, she is open to everything. She must not coil.

"Tell us about NNYU." Mother Jenny grabs her wife's arm and rests on her shoulder. "Please."

Alaya eyes pop open and leans over as if to share a secret, "What do you want to know?"

"You left us at seventeen young girl and returned to us almost twenty-four one year later. We assumed you would tell us details once you were settled, but ... life got in the way."

Alaya sat back and her memory recalls her life's changing moment ... the grease on her face and the
blushing young Scottish woman. She smiles. She snaps out of it and looks at her mother's earnest facing desiring to know their daughter for the first time. Alaya took a deep breath. "It was amazing and sad experience for me. I knew it was going to be an adventure and my mothers prepared me well."

Alaya smiles as she continues, "I knew instantly I wasn't in 'Our London'. I saw species from all around the universe, Silurians, Silurians mixed species. I wanted to make friends with them, but I could not allow myself to indulge."

"Why not?" Demands Mother Vastra.

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**London 1910**

**New York 5,000,000,017**

Alaya grabs hold of the railing as the machine dematerialising from 15 Savile Row. It bucks around as it shifts through time and space.

"I hate to do this to you, but you must keep to yourself. Do not engage with any other Silurian or Silurian hybrid species.

"Why?"

"Because they have been instructed to keep their distance from you."

"Why?"

"Because you told them to keep away."

"Why would I do that?"

"Because they are your future generations. You do not want to build attachments with family that have not been born. It is imperative you keep to yourself. I am sorry. Do you understand?"

"I do." Alaya nods, "May I look at them? Watch them?"

"That just sounds creepy. They have been instructed to not make contact. You must live your life, without doing so ... they might not exist. Besides you are here for an education, nothing more. I will bring your mothers to your graduation. It will be four years before you see them, but for them, it will be just months. There will be a time difference, so keep a journal of some sort."

Alaya nods.

"Now be a good girl and study hard. Also may I suggest you learn how to drive and take up a fun elective. You might like golf, volleyball or something." He looks her up and down. "You must be proud of yourself. Remember to keep to yourself and learn, learn as much as you brain will hold. Be a proud Silurian. Good Luck."

Alaya takes a deep breath, picks up her footlocker and steps out to the street in front of New New York University.
Alaya smiles, "Excuse me." She runs upstairs and returns with a large locked box. She turns the tumblers until the latch opens. She takes out a small device, unfolds to show a viewer screen, and places it on Mother Jenny's lap.

Alaya then looks into the neatly organized box full of what looks like plastic tabs and pulls out the furthermost date. She takes the tab and puts it into the small slot.

The small screen turns on.

"Hi mothers I just arrived. Here is my dorm room ..."

Alaya pushes the large bar on the bottom of the device. "This is to pause and play. If you want to rewind push here."

She puts the large box on Mother Vastra's lap. "This is in order. The dates are noted on each one. I did my best."

Mother Jenny looks to her daughter with tears in her eyes. "Why haven't you shown us this before? We would have loved to see these when you returned."

"You never asked."

Mother Vastra takes her wife's hand, "Do we do the same to you?"

"I only know what I lack in knowledge when you disclose it to me. It frustrates me." Alaya taps the box, "We have a family trait that needs to be tweaked."

Mother Vastra, "May I suggest we take this into our bedroom. I want the privacy to view everything."

Alaya nods and packs everything back into the box. She helps mother Jenny out of the chair and head towards the private master bedroom.

Alaya sets up the device again, remind them of instructions and leaves the room.

After what seemed hours Alaya knocked on their door.

"Come in."

Alaya opens the door and lays the tray of sandwiches and tea on the bed. "Anything else?"

Mother Jenny looks to her daughter with bloodshot eyes, "We are watching you grow up. We missed this part of your life."

"How else was I going to get this education?"

Mother Vastra, "You were brave. More brave than we expected."

Alaya nods, "I will return. I am preparing supper. Is stew acceptable?"

"While we watch the twins are still. They like your voice."

"When I was a fetus I heard voices all the time. Even ..." Alaya blushes, "... intimate times. Luckily I mostly slept."

Mother Jenny sits up, "Are you 'elling me that you," she points to stomach. "They know when your
mother and I ..."

Alaya laughs, "Of course. Don't human fetuses hear the same?"

Mother Jenny shakes her head violently no.

"Oh."

Mother Vastra smiles, "I was incubated but I remember being in my egg talking to my sisters in their eggs. We had long conversations."

Mother Jenny looks to her wife, "Seriously?"

Alaya quickly adds, "I didn't know exactly what was going on. I felt the love, change in temperature and the voices close. Nothing more. It wasn't until I was older that I understood."

Mother Jenny hides under the blankets, "I am embarrassed."

Alaya comes over and pulls the blanket down, "Once I was born I knew who my mother was instantly. I needed to be close to feel you to taste you." She looks to her Mother Vastra, "I knew you were my mother by your scent. I have your scent in my blood. I am drawn to you like a magnet."

Alaya looks sad, "My Fiona is right. I worship you. You are my goddess ... I have felt that about you since the day I was born."

"My blood pulls you close."

"How are we to be equals? How did your sisters become equals?"

"We fought together. When one failed the other came in and gave strength. When I fail my sisters protected me. Each failure we bonded and became stronger."

"We need to bond. Which means you need to allow yourself to be weak."

Mother Vastra smiles. "I will try."

"I will not let you down."

"You will never let me down. To fail or make a mistake will only create the bond we seek."

"Will you disclose to me your failures, mistakes or indecisions?"

"I will."

Alaya smiles at her mothers, "I will return with supper."

Vastra and Jenny take the tea and sandwiches. Jenny pushes the large button.

"... I found out I love to run. I have joined the athletics ... Luckily there are no other Silurians ..."

Alaya closes the door with a smile, she forgot how much she liked to run. "Maybe I should start running again."

She proceeds to prepared dinner. While it was simmering she decides tomorrow she will take the recordings to her wife.

Fiona finally wakes up from her long sleep. She looks around and smiles. No exercise this day or
tomorrow. She has toast and jam. She talks to the Whiskey bottles, "I will have to say goodbye for
now. Once the little ones have been weaned I shall drink the whole lot of you in in a day."

She goes over to the small bookcase and examines each title and realizes the books are not organized
alphabetically. She steps back looks at the map and realize they are organized by location. She comes
to the section she was hoping to find and pulls out the three books with Argentina in the title. She
makes tea and sits by the window and begins to read.

A few hours later there is a knock the door. She gets up and opens to see the Messenger Cylinder
hanging from the door knob.

Dearest Fiona,

I wanted to let you know that Mother Vastra and I have made headway. We know we have to work
on some things.

Please take your time and enjoy your personal sanctuary. My mothers and I understand. We all need
our private time.

I will have a treat for you tomorrow.

Are you able to take more time for a respite? If so, please do.

I love you.

Your Alaya

PS If there is a reply just rings the bell.

Fiona rings the bell without hesitation.

Moments later a soft knock on the door.

She opens and sees her wife smiling, "Please call Mary ask to reschedule. Negotiate for me, even If I
end up being on-call for a month. I do need the rest."

Alaya nods.

"Also tonight, will you join me for dinner?"

"Don't you want to be alone?"

"I do. I also want my wife to join me for dinner. Is that a mixed signal?"

"What time"

"Six?"

"I will be here with dinner." Alaya smiles and waves good bye

Fiona closes he door,'She respects me' and decides to take a nap.

Alaya returns home and knocks on her parents door.

"Come in."
Mother Vastra and Jenny are sitting up close together to watch Alaya's video journal. Mother Jenny with tears in her eyes point to the small viewer, "You are sad right now."

"It will pass." Alaya reminds her mothers. She walks to the end of the bed to announce, "I will be courting my wife tonight."

"I felt the bell." Mother Vastra licks the air.

"Just dinner. She already seems rested and more herself." Alaya attempts to peek at the screen by stretching her neck, "What are you watching now?"

"We are watching you attempt to make an egg holder?"

Alaya giggles at the memory, "It was interesting project to fight gravity without modern technology. It does come in handy. I thought of my mothers flying down spinning in the air using fabric. I did something similar, but the egg could not be scrambled so I had to build my own weight stabilizer."

Alaya moves to Mother Jenny's side, "May I join you?"

Vastra helps Jenny to move to the middle of the bed. Alaya sits up and places her long legs up on the bed.

Mother Jenny touches her daughters face, "This is nice."

The twins kick.

Alaya places her hand on her mother's stomach, "We better continue before they get restless."

The three watch the remaining videos.

The mothers cheer, moan and find pleasure at Alaya's life at NNYU. When it came to meeting Daniela the family simply watched in silence.

Soon it was graduate school and internships and even teaching.

"Go back!" Vastra yells.

Alaya jumps and rewinds slowly.

"Stop. Play." Vastra scrutinizes the video, "Stop. Look. Here." She points to the a section of the video during recruitment week. She is pointing to a Silurian human hybrid with shoulder length red hair and brown eyes. "Look at her! Is there a way to focus our attention to her?"

Alaya takes the device to zoom in. As It becomes clear it is obvious a woman standing in front of booth handing out flyers. Alaya, Jenny and Vastra all laugh. Vastra shakes her head, "Yes that is one of ours." As they realize the young woman is recruiting for women's cricket. Alaya zooms in and can make out the letters on her badge, "Hi. My Name is Jennifer."

Mother Jenny gasps.

They all drink in the picture in complete silence.

Vastra softly brings her family back. "We should continue." As she pushes the button and the video continues.

Alaya was proud of her achievements and forgot how much she accomplished in those six years. After the final video was shown it was nearly five. She takes the device and puts everything back
"May we watch again?" Mother Jenny asks

"I am here." Alaya stands up proudly.

"You are correct." Mother Vastra smiles, "You are here."

"I am going to get ready for my dinner with my wife. Your food is on the stove keeping warm."

Alaya opens the door to exit and turns back to her mothers, "Be kind to our guests." Alaya closes the door behind her to keep the warmth inside.

Mother Vastra pulls her wife close.

"I believe we must learn to like the sport, even if we secretly protest."

Mother Vastra nods in agreement.

"There is a Silurian hybrid who is named Jennifer. I wonder if she has a nickname? Do you think her friends called her Jen or Jenny?"

"Does it matter?"

Mother Jenny smiles and shakes her head no, "That was a gift."

"We should have seen those moving pictures five years ago." Mother Vastra begins to evaluate what she did wrong.

"Please don't." Mother Jenny takes her wife's hand.

"Don't what?"

"Start to evaluate the past. We need to focus on the future. We can learn from our Alaya to keep from doing the same to our growing family."

"We have to be strong for our family and vulnerable. It is an odd combination." Mother Vastra remarks, "It is much easier to pretend to be strong than it is to allow ourselves to be weak."

"Being strong under all circumstances has not worked out the way we planned."

Vastra shakes her head slowly, "We need to be stronger and allow us to be helped. We need to ask for help."

They both nod.

Vastra licks the air and frowns. "The scent of my family is weak."

"Fiona will return. We must be prepared for tweaks, just as Alaya said. Tweaks are easy."

"We will start small," Vastra responds with an inquisitive tone. "I have an idea."

Jenny sits up with a bit of difficulty. Once she can see her wife's face she asks, "What is your idea?"

"We share our journals."

Jenny opens her mouth to protests but then realizes it is a good idea. "It is scary being vunuralble."
"For a human it is scary," Vastra teases her wife.

"Hey!"

Vastra quickly adds, "For a Silurian it is almost impossible."

The twins kick.

"I believe these animals are ready to eat dinner." Vastra picks up her wife and carries her to the kitchen. "It is essential to feed them as quickly as possible. You would have taken too long to hobble into the kitchen."

"Hobble? I am carrying your two half-Silurian children inside here. You old lizard you better make no joke about the way I walk."

Vastra stops instantly, "What if one of our children is all hairy like an ape."

Jenny laughs to hard it starts to hurt her diaphragm. "My dear there is no primate in my family tree for billions of years. If our children will have hair it shall be more like mine and be located in certain areas."

"She didn't have uncontrollable hair." Vastra places her wife in her chair at the kitchen table.

"Who?" Jenny asks.

"Jennifer."

"Thank god!"
Alaya walks in carrying a small backpack, holding a box and a large genuine smile, "Room service."

Fiona smiles in return and lets her wife enter. "You seem to have plenty. How hungry do you think I am?"

"This," Alaya holding up the box, "Is the entertainment."

Fiona closes the door.

Alaya quietly places the box on the bed. Fiona goes to open it but finds it lock.

"After dinner." Alaya teases.

Alaya then goes to the kitchen area and pours from the dewar bottle two bowls of hot stew. "Will you slice bread?"

Fiona nods and slices the bread. The close proximity makes her blush. She remembers her promise to her future family and regains composure. She glances her wife and accidentally cuts her finger. She quickly puts it in her mouth.

Alaya turns to put the bowls on the small table, returns to the kitchen and grabs a cloth. She tears a small ribbon, pulls the finger out of her wife's mouth. "I can smell the blood," as she wraps the ribbon of cloth like a bandage. "You are distracted. I don't believe I would have done any better. My mind is also unhinged." Alaya jokes to her wife, "We can skip the bread or tear it off like the barbaric French."

As they sit and eat across from each other Fiona asks, "What did you do today?"

"I finished a report for Scotland Yard. What did you do?"

"I slept, read and enjoyed the peace and quiet."

Alaya nods.

"Where are you sleeping?"

"I brought up the cot and sleep in my office. I do not mind."

"Did you contact Mary?"

Alaya nods, "Would you like the good news or bad new first?"

Fiona sits back, "Usually I would want the bad news first. Today I want the good news."

"You have two weeks off. Apparently Louisa already called in for your schedule change. You are not on call or available for surgeries."

"That is truly wonderful. Would you mind if I spend it here?"

"You spend it as you wish. I just ask that you do not make any drastic decisions without consulting me, please?"
"Of course." Fiona takes a deep breath, "Now with the bad news."

"You will be living at the hospital for two weeks when you return. It seems we shall not share a bed for a month."

"Two weeks," Fiona thinks about it for a bit. "Two weeks. I believe we can adjust. Maybe we have meals together in my office?"

Alaya nods.

"Who said we shall not share a bed?"

"I just assumed."

"My dear Silurian wife, please don't assume the worst." Fiona smiles, "You must always assume the best. You either follow your mother or you follow me. You have the ability to lead. Assume I will follow ... always."

Alaya's mind wonders as she remembers her education and her time at NNYU. "You are right. Just be patient as I regain my bravery."

"Please be speedy with concurring up your courage." Fiona smiles as she takes a sip of water and finishes her stew.

Alaya takes in her surroundings. Her wife is drinking water, the whiskey bottles have not been emptied, Louisa rescheduled. Something is going on. "May I be so bold to ask questions?"

"You may. I reserve the right to avoid an answer."

"You are drinking water when there is Whiskey bottle within reach and Louisa already called in for your schedule change to Mary. Is there something you are not telling me?"

"What is our entertainment?"

Alaya waits for her wife to answer.

"I am not sure we are ready."

"For what?"

Fiona stands and taps the padlocked box, "What is inside?"

"Me."

Fiona squints her eyes, "Explain?"

"I will show you." Alaya eats her last bit of stew and cleans off the table. "Make yourself comfortable on the bed. We both want to be nearby."

"Oh," Fiona isn't availing herself for intimacy.

"Please?"

Fiona gets on the bed, fluffs the pillows and prepares to share the bed with her wife.

Alaya dries her hands and goes to the box. She unlocks it and pulls out the device putting it on
Fiona's lap. "Wait." Alaya then places the box of strips on the side table. She sits next to her wife and places the first strip in the device.

"Hi mothers I just arrived. Here is my dorm room ..."

Alaya explains how to use the device to her wife.

"Why have I not seen this before?" Fiona hands are shaking with anger and whispers. "You withheld from me." She places the device on the bed and gets up. "What is this?" She points to the device.

"Is my journal I kept at NNYU."

Fiona tears start to flow and her two hands turn into fists of anger.

"I wanted you to see it, but ..." Alaya opens her arms in open honesty. "But ... my sweet Fiona. Life truly got in the way. My mothers haven't seen it until today."

"Why today?"

"Because they asked."

Fiona's face instantly becomes red and her eyes bulge. "No." She shakes her head. "No, this is not happening. You can't hold information back like your mothers. Our children can't ... we must ... Ahh! Alaya!" Fiona puts her hands on the door knob.

"Please Fiona listen to me. Allow me to explain."

Fiona freezes and drops to the floor sobbing. "How can you explain keeping something so important from me?"

Alaya runs to her wife and picks her up. "I am sorry. So sorry."

Fiona cries into her wife's chest, "Why must there be secrets? Why? Is this power you seek over your me to keep me ignorant? What of our children? Will you keep them suppressed until they have proven themselves?"

"No. No. No." Alaya shakes her head and pulls her wife close, "This is my mistake. I came home from NNYU and needed to rest. I was gone for six years. Six years!" She takes a deep breath to quiet her tone, "To my mothers and I were strangers. We were lost trying to fix the discrepancy of emotional void. We were loving and kind. They were too scared to know how much they missed and I ... I was too terrified to show them my lonely life. Then you came along and it was an excuse to just ignore the past and focus on the future."

"I can't the a catalyst for your family." Fiona looks up to her wife with bloodshot eyes, "It has taken too much out of me."

"It was never deceitfulness. My past became irrelevant. Soon I forgot about it like a book read many years ago. Today, for the first time my parents asks about me." Alaya attempts a smile, "Me! They wanted to know about me and NNYU. It has always been about my today or tomorrow, never been about my six years alone. Today they asked."

"Fiona how did you answer?"

"I showed them." Alaya moves towards the bed holding her wife tight. "Do you want to see me?"
Fiona gets quiet.

"I want you as a partner in life, to share my life ... I want to be supportive to you. I am willing to offer you everything, but not lose myself in the transaction. I expect the same from you ... I will not let you lose yourself. I need you whole. I want you whole."

Fiona lays her head on her wife's chest and meekly replies, "Will you stay nearby?"

Alaya nods yes and places her on the bed in the sitting position. "Would you like something to drink?"

Fiona smiles and shakes her head. "Yes, please I would like water."

Alaya looks at her wife inquisitively. 'There is whiskey ready to be dispensed.' She refills Fiona's glass and brings it over. "Do you have any questions on how to use this?"

Fiona shakes her head no and watches her wife move across the room and clean the dishes as she starts the video.

"Hi mothers I just arrived. Here is my dorm room ..."

Fiona feels every gambit of emotion as she watches the brief journal updates of her wife's six year journey.

She laugh when Alaya shares getting on a moving pavement for the first time, trying to learn how to drive and her first case with her internship dealing with a lost pet goose.

Fiona has anxiety when Alaya talks about trying out for track and field, watching to see if the egg cracked in her class project and waiting for the results of her dissertation submission.

She feels stress as Alaya attempts to finish her papers on time, grading papers late at night and lack of sleep during finals.

She is angry meeting that selfish Silvia and jealousy seeing Daniela.

Fiona has tears running down her face as Alaya cries of missing her mothers, her home, felling isolated and lonely.

When there aren't any more videos to watch Fiona looks over to her humble wife. "I don't believe I want to watch them ever again. You were so amazing. I can't imagine."

"You miss your mother."

"I do, but I am not alone."

"My mothers want to see them again. I told them once is enough."

"I can see why they want to see this again. It is their daughter. I would have never seen your life like this. Unless we went to University together."

"I think it is terrible that you couldn't make friends with other Silurians. Who cares if they might be family."

Alaya pops up out of the chair and goes through the tabs looking for that specific video. She places it in the slot, fast forward and stop. "Look here."
Fiona look and at once has a shocked face. "Can we get closer?"

Alaya manipulates the video as she has done with her mothers. It is now obvious to Fiona she is looking at future family member, "That hair, that face ... that could be a family member! She loves cricket! What is her name?"

Alaya zooms in and stops.

Fiona smiles reading the name tag, "That could be our great great great great great granddaughter."

"I am sorry but that is all I have in my video journal. I hope you weren't too disappointed."

"No. I am not. Thank you for sharing." Fiona flops back, "Atlas, I am now officially drained."

Alaya puts everything back into the box and locks it tight. "I will let you sleep. Besides I have to work in a few hours."

"Please stay, just for a bit. Let me fall asleep with you next to me."

Alaya nods and comes to her wife's side. She holds her wife until she falls asleep.

Before Alaya leaves she decides to write a note. She bring the messenger cylinder to the light and opens. A note pops out. Alaya opens it thinking it the last one she wrote her wife. Instead it is in Fiona's handwriting.

What do you think of the names April and Jennifer?

Alaya looks at the note, she looks around the room. Louisa changing her schedule, whiskey hardly touched and upset about their children's future. She quietly returns the note to the cylinder and places it back its original location.

Alaya then goes to her sleeping wife and taps her on the nose. She whispers, "I have to go to work. Ring the bell if you need me."

Fiona sits up, "Do you need to go?"

"I do."

Fiona grabs her wife's arm, "I love you."

Alaya leans down and whispers in Fiona's ear, "I love you Fiona. I am going to be ... me. I will not beg ever again." She kisses her wife and hold back from kissing her wife's stomach.

Alaya leaves the small loft and heads to 15 Savile Row. 'I think our daughters being named April and Jennifer is brilliant!'

Alaya walks in the drawing-room where Vastra is ready to go out. Alaya lays out a map, "I have marked the ten possible locations. We will go together to look at the these five tonight. Tomorrow these five."

"Why don't we just do all ten tonight?"

"Because we have wives that need us home. Five today and five tomorrow."
Vastra nods in agreement, "May I ask how dinner went?"

"After we work." Alaya hands her mother five folders, "Here are the five locations we are going to scope tonight. We can go over them as we drive."

Vastra smiles at her daughter.

Alaya smiles back, "We have work to do. Let's go."

Alaya and Vastra put on their heavy black capes and drive off to destination one not as Mother and Daughter, but for the first time as partners.
Alaya returns to her office after the first five and starts transposing the notes onto the typewriter. She goes back and forth between Vastra and her own notes.

Alaya stops as her mouth vibrates and soon a huge awkward grin appears. She makes a mark on the paper, to return at this particular spot and makes her way to her Fiona.

She passes her Mother Jenny who is eating a sandwich, "Where youf going?"

Alaya teases, "Imf going to see Fiona." She points to her mouth, "She rang." Alaya's smile quickly disappears as her mouth vibrates again and again. "I must go." Alaya runs down the stairs, "Have mother on alert, if she isn't already."

Alaya runs down the hall and doesn't bother to knock and attempts to use the spare key. She stops as Fiona is communicating, 'I am in here.'

Alaya spins around, 'Where is here?'

'Water closet.'

Alaya knocks and opens the door to see her wife in a panic face with the scent of blood. 'I smell blood, more than from your cut finger.'

'Should I call Louisa?'

'No, spotting is normal for pregnancy. I need your mothers to let me know if Mother Jenny spotted this much. If not, you must take me to the hospital. Help me back to the room.'

Alaya picks Fiona up, carries her wife back to the small living space and places her on the blood soaked bed. "Are you able to stand?"

Fiona nods yes.

Alaya stands her wife up, "You can lean on me."

Fiona does just that and leans on her wife's back.

Alaya quickly removed the soiled blankets and replaced it with fresh bedding. She puts her wife back in bed and covers her with a blanket. "Where is the bell?"

Fiona open her tightly wound hand and releases the bell to her wife.

Alaya rings it three short rings pauses three long rings pauses and three short rings. "Mother Vastra should be here shortly."

"You don't seem phased by the pregnancy."

"I was going to send you a message, but the cylinder was already occupied."

"What do you think of the names?"

"Brilliant."
The bell rings, "I will let her in."

Moments later Alaya and Vastra walk into the room. "How can I help Little One?"

"Did Mother Jenny have spotting when she was pregnant?"

"May I look?"

Fiona covers her face with the pillow, "Yes."

Mother Vastra looks under Fiona's clothes and evaluates if this is similar to her wife's liquid measurement. "It seems about the same. It is supposed to stop after a bit. How long?"

"I woke up like this. It is too much."

Vastra, "I believe we need assistance, even if it just to calm our nerves."

Alaya begins to leave, "I will go home and call Louisa."

Vastra pulls up a chair next to the bed, sits down and grabs Fiona's hand. "I believe everything will be fine. We had a scare like this when Jenny was incubating Alaya."

"I know it is normal, I just can't see my own body." Fiona looks directly into Vastra's eyes, "It is also too soon."

"I have been reading the books you gave me to read. We need a second opinion."

Silence

Vastra smiles, "This is going to be a challenge for Alaya and myself. Two pregnant women in the same home ..."

Fiona squints as she is prepared to scrutinize Vastra's next sentence.

Vastra pauses, "It will be wonderful to have tiny ones around the home again. We shall have three ..."

"Four."

Vastra smiles, "Four little warriors to train."

"With cricket bats."

"Did you see the videos?"

Fiona nods her head yes.

"My Alaya was brave. Six years without so much as a hello, a letter or even a hug. She is remarkable."

"I know. It was hard to watch."

"We enjoyed seeing our Alaya grow up. She started out just a little taller than Jenny when she left for University. A few months later we see a tall slender woman. Our hearts broke. When we returned to 'Our London' Jenny and I were lost. We were angry ... all those years we missed. Then less than nine months later she is home. Our daughter was a stranger."
"We can't allow our children to be alone."

Vastra nods and then asks, "But you seek solace away from us and hide here."

"I am not hiding."

"You wouldn't allow us to explain or offer compromise. You threw daggers and walked away."

"I am exhausted."

"All adults get exhausted. Your mother was exhausted and alone. There is always a different kind of loneliness that affect us that are married and we find ourselves without our mates. Your mother was alone for almost eighteen years. That is three times our Alaya. She is a remarkable woman. She was one of us, the family of lost souls."

"She has father now."

"She doesn't have you. She will have to find contentment with your journals, yearly reports and photographs."

Fiona gets quiet.

"We had an empty house for a year while Alaya was at University. She returns. But we don't have her back home two weeks and you come into our lives. You aren't in our lives for very long and then you were gone for a year with your medical obligations. Do not mistake you were missed by not just your wife. My Jenny and I felt a loss. Now you are here away from us, it is unacceptable. We aren't a family."

"I am sorry."

"You now have Silurian blood mix in your body. You shall outlive your peers and friends. My Jenny has faced it, she watched from afar, as each family is buried one by one until there was no one left except Alaya and myself. You will face similar obstacles as Louisa, Flora, Mary and Lou all will be six feet under while you keep your youth. We will make new friends, but we will also bury them. You will will either walk your life alone or with your family."

'Family connexions were always worth preserving. good company always worth seeking.' Fiona quotes Jane Austen in her head.

"A family is a place where minds come in contact with one another. If these minds love one another the home will be as beautiful as a flower garden. But if these minds get out of harmony with one another it is like a storm that plays havoc with the garden." Vastra offers a quote herself, out loud.

"Who said that?" Fiona gets red faced, "Please, stop reading my mind."

"I can't turn it off when we are the only ones in this bitty room." Vastra looks around. "Two people live here?"

"They are saving money to travel."

Vastra nods. "Buddha, was a sage who lived and taught mostly in India between the sixth and fourth centuries. He was a calm man, calmer than you and I will ever hope."

"Aye!"

"Sorry my dear but you unveiled yourself. We both need to learn or as you have said to Alaya, we
must make tweaks."

Fiona smiles, "Yes. I am not sorry I said those things. Just in manner in which they came out."

"I am glad you said those things. In all seriousness," Vastra cups Fiona face, "Little one you must stop this notion that you want to run and hide. You can't run and hide from us and it isn't healthy. Do you want your children to run from you when you are frustrated?"

Vastra sits back.

"No, I want to help them work through ..." Fiona smiles and sits up a bit more, "Do you want to help me?"

"Of course. You are my daughter. I might not have hatched you, but you are one of us."

A knock on the door. "Come in."

Alaya enters and smiles as she closes the door. "Louisa is on her way. She told me to tell you that this happened with mother Jenny. That is why she gave you the two weeks off. Apparently your body will go through tough changes this week."

"What changes?"

Vastra picks up Fiona's hands by her thumb nail, "This for example."

Fiona's eyes pop open, "So soon?"

Alaya and Vastra nod yes.

"Where is my medical bag?" Fiona starts to look around.

Alaya grabs it from the shelf by the door and hands it to Fiona. "Mother Jenny demands that Fiona comes home. She said if she has to come pull you by your red headed hair she will bring you home."

Alaya pauses, "Not exactly. Mother said nuff nuff Fiona numf numf hair. She was eating another sandwich."

Vastra shakes her head, "Those twin are going come out round."

Fiona takes out her stethoscope and attempts to warm the drum. She then places it on her chest. Her eyes pop open. "That's new. I don't feel like I am doing anything for it to beat like this." She looks to Vastra and hands her the stethoscope, "Listen. Is this similar to Mother Jenny's heart with Alaya?"

Vastra leans over using the stethoscope, "Oh yes. That is a healthy Silurian heartbeat."

Alaya gets down and listens to her wife's heartbeat, "It sounds different. It is pounding but not the same when you ..." Alaya blushes while looking up to her wife's eyes. " ... when you are not bitten on the arse."

Fiona smiles as the brown eyes have such power over her. She then tenderly moves the drum down to her stomach. She moves the drum around until Alaya puts up a hand to stop. Alaya smiles and then takes the drum looking for the second heartbeat. She taps around trying to listen, she goes back to the first heartbeat to catch the sound in her memory. She moves the drum again looking for the second it sounds so far away.

The door bell rings. Alaya jumps up, exits the room. Moments later Alaya comes in holding Louisa in her arms.
"I have successfully arrived." Louisa smiles as she pats Alaya on the back, "You may put me down Alaya dear."

"I just needed you here fast." Alaya smiles as she gently surefoots Louisa.

Louisa goes to the kitchen and washes her hands. With her back to the family she asks, "What seems to be the problem?"

"I am bleeding, I just don't know if this is more or less than Mother Jenny. I am concerned." Fiona blushes as she attempts to not sound like a typical panicked expecting mother.

Louisa turns around while putting on medical gloves, "You have every reason to be concerned. That is why I insisted you take the time off. The first few weeks for Jenny were a physically erratic. Your body, at least we hope, will become more stable. Let me take a look."

"May I?" Vastra asks Fiona.

Fiona nods yes as she looks to the ceiling. "I need you to learn, please."

Alaya focuses on her wife, "Tell me what are the children's middle name?"

Fiona smiles as she feels a pinch and her face reacts, "I assumed Vastra. Do you mind?"

Alaya looks to see her mother's head pops up for a moment with a smile.

"April Vastra Flint-Saint Clair and Jennifer Vastra Flint-Saint Clair. Those are good names."

"Tell me when did you first hear voices?"

"Oh, I don't remember a particular time, but I remember hearing voices. I knew my mother Jenny's because it was the loudest. I knew that mother Vastra's voice was important. I believe the earliest voice I remember was Mother Jenny's asking us to go to sleep and I remember mother Vastra tapping and telling us to mind mother because she needed to sleep."

"So it was about movement." Fiona trying to think at what stage, "Human fetuses kicks can take place as early as first trimester. Vastra when did Alaya start movement?"

"That was within the first month."

"Oh."

"How long are you Fiona?"

"I estimate that I am just a few weeks."

Louisa takes off her bloody gloves and tosses them in a bag before speaking to Fiona. She shares a look with Vastra of concern. "I am done Fiona dear. Why not just relax."

Fiona sits up with Alaya's help. "I see your face. Is there too much blood?"

"Lets have a listen. Shall we?" Louisa takes out her stethoscope and listens to Fiona's small stomach. "For someone just a few weeks pregnant you do show a bit. That is a good sign, for a Silurian not a human. If this was a full human child I wold be concerned with the weight of the fetus."

She listens as no one in the room dares to breath.
"This one has a strong heartbeat, very strong." Louisa works her way to the other side, "This little tyke is trying her best to match her sister."

"Please do not mind my feelings," Fiona looks to her friend.

"It is a very weak heartbeat." Louisa says softly.

Fiona grabs her own stethoscope and places the drum next Louisa's. "Come on little one, we want you born. Please join our little family."

"That is your mother Fiona and I am your mother Alaya. Take care of each other."

Fiona arches her back and screams.

"Hold her still." Louisa visually instructs Vastra and Alaya to push Fiona back horizontal with the mattress. "Fiona you must stifle your voice. I need to hear."

Fiona grabs her wife's hands and moans into the pillow. Tears are flowing and her lips are losing their pink shade.

Louisa, "I am sorry ... I must hear. Not a sound."

Alaya comes to hold her wife and Fiona squeezes her hands around her wife's arms burying her head into the Silurian's chest.

"I believe it will be alright." Louisa looks up to Fiona.

"You can let it out now Fiona."

Fiona cries screams into her wife's chest. It takes a few minutes for her to regain her breath and composure.

"What happened?" Alaya asks as she rubs her wife's back.

"The stronger sister just pulled the weaker one close inside the womb. It is not normal fetus activity. It seems she is going to take care of her sister."

Louisa listens to the heartbeats again and they beat together. "One is still softer but it is beating regularly."

The pair of stethoscopes are passed back and forth until it is just Fiona listening to her daughters. "I have never heard of this."

"Flora and I have re-wrote the medical books when it came to Jenny. We believe that nature has a way of taking care of itself. This is not mother nature, this is without a doubt Silurian strength and compassion in the womb."

Vastra and Alaya both suck in air and puff out their chests.

"Let me just check for more bleeding. That was quite traumatic for a womb." Louisa and Vastra look under between the sheets. Fiona and Alaya listen to their daughters heartbeats as they hold hands.

"The bleeding has stopped for now."

Fiona looks up, "That is good." She grabs her wife hand tighter.

"You will not be left alone. Not even for a moment."
"Oh." Fiona eyes become sad. "I … " She turns to Alaya, "I was hoping for peace and quiet. A bit of solitude."

Alaya turns to Louisa, "I have this bell. If she rings it I can come running and be here in minutes."

"What if she passes our from blood loss? What if she is too much pain to obtain the bell? No, I am sorry. My best advice is to move back home and be somewhere central where you will monitored properly."

Fiona becomes quiet.

"It is either home or the hospital. The hospital will not be safe for your Silurian family."

Alaya comes close to her, "I am sorry love, but it is for the best."

"I need to clean this bedding and take care of this place before I leave." Fiona looks at the piled of soiled mess.

"I will see to it." Alaya looks at her mother. "I will bring Fiona home. Where do you suggest we put her? Fiona where do you want to sleep?"

"Didn't you say you had a makeshift bedroom in your office?"

Alaya nods and smiles.

"I would like that very much. When I am out working you and Mother Jenny can keep an eye on each other."

"Then it is settled." Louisa stands up, "Fiona I shall see you in a week. I want to make sure you are able to come back into rotation. You only have a few months before your pathology rotation. You will need to summon all your energy."

Once Louisa has left the tiny loft. Fiona attempts to get up but flops back down. "I do not think I am able to stand on my own.

Alaya turns to her mother. "I am gong to take care of things here. Please do me a favor and prepare Fiona a place to lay in the drawing-room and update Mother. Also explain to Tori and Allie that in a few days they may return to their living space."

Vastra takes her leave, "It will be good to have you home."

Fiona offers a muted smile in response.

Alaya looks at the blood soaked bedding and mattress. "I will have to call the rubbish collector to incinerate this mess. Also, I will have to buy new bedding and mattress."

Fiona gets shy and blushes at the mess she has created.

"This is not your doing." Alaya senses her wife embarrassment, "You just worry about Jennifer and April." Alaya leans in and can feel her daughters to one side of the womb. "You might walk a little crooked for a bit they are both leaning on one side."

Fiona takes her stethoscope and listens again. She smiles and whispers, "Two wonderful heartbeats."

THE END OF BOOK TWO
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