

**NEW YORK  
FOREVER  
A MOMENT TO LOVE**

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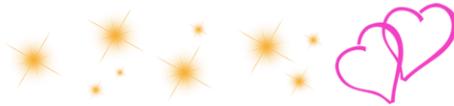


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## *The Dream*



Cristina was excited with the news she had just received, she was jumping and shouting as she entered her little sister's bedroom:

“Amanda! Amanda, my dear!”

“What's going on?”

“You won't believe!”

“What happened?”

“It worked! I made it!”

“What worked? Why are you screaming? You can barely breathe!”

“I'm going to the United States of America! I was accepted for an exchange program and I got my visa for work!” breathless revealed the news.

Amanda raised her eyebrows surprised after seeing her sister so excited.

“Calm down, Cris! Speak slower, no screaming, and breathe. So, you finally got accepted for the babysitter exchange thing?”

She took a deep breath, tried to calm down and explained:

“Yes, I made it! Well, my dream will come true! I'm flying to New York this week already! Everything is already set up.” shouted excited.

“It's great that everything worked out well after trying for so long. But do you really believe that you'll have a future working as a babysitter over there? Think about it, things are not as easy as they seem to be.” Amanda questioned her in an almost demotivating tone.

“Of course I will have a future in the USA! That is all I ever wanted! At first I will stay there for two years. I know that it won't be easy and that being just a babysitter is

not great for those around me and for those that criticize me, but if I don't try this way I will probably regret for the rest of my life." Defended her dreams once more.

Cristina was only nineteen years old and had many dreams she wanted to come true. There were so many expectations held in that girl's heart.

Her passion for the United States began early in life, in her childhood she would always repeat that she really wanted to live in Los Angeles or New York, be a famous actress, and conquer the world. In her teenage years she worked and saved up money so one day she could leave. She studied English for a long time, until the point she was speaking fluently, finally, she acted as if everything had always been about to happen.

Her father Santiago Rodriguez, simple man, owner of a small workshop in the neighborhood Republica, Colombian immigrant that for decades has adopted Brazil as his home, and her mother Sofia Mueller, Brazilian straight from São Paulo, her ancestors are German European, She is a school teacher. At first they didn't approve the idea of their daughter leaving with an uncertain future to a strange land.

"I don't understand you Cris, going to the USA take care of children, if you're going just to be a babysitter you can stay here, go to college and do something better than this." Santiago used to comment not understanding his daughter's reasons.

"I would even work collecting cardboard in the streets if I had to, just to stay in the United States. To be and to live there are the most important things for me. I will go because it is my dream, this is my will! That's why the majority of the people are not happy; they diminish themselves because of the opinion of other people so they are afraid of following their own will. But I'll follow my dreams, even if the whole world is against me" reinforced her idea as someone who defends the most noble ideal.

One day before her trip, anxious, Cristina packed, Amanda helped her to choose the clothes and winter coats and she said:

"You were indeed very brave and persistent in your ideals during all these years, now here we are finally packing so you can go to the so longed America. I remember very well when people asked you why you did you buy so many heavy coats if here in São Paulo is not even that cold."

"They thought I was crazy for spending so much money for apparently nothing."

"You would say that you wouldn't use it here, but only you would be in the cold winter in the USA. Now your time to live your dream is finally here."

"I can't believe I'm leaving to the place of my dreams! I am so happy. I will make a snowman on my front yard!"

“The sparkle in your eyes confirms all your words, my sister. I’ve never seen someone love a country as much as you love United States of America.”

They hugged each other.

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Accompanied of Amanda and her parents, inside of the car, on their way to the Guarulhos International airport, Cristina could not hide her anxiety, observing through the window the things that were happening outside and the avenues that seemed to have no end, she chewed her nails.

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“God be with you, my sister, I wish you the best of luck. Who knows, maybe I will come to visit you there.”

“I’ll be waiting for you, Amanda. We will go shopping together at Times Square, it will be amazing – Cristina affirmed.

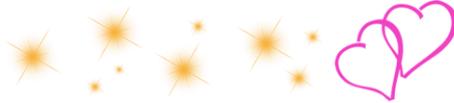
“Daughter, be careful, you will be alone, don’t make decisions without calling me, call me and text me. I trust you!” Sofia gave her a hug, and then gave her a kiss on the cheek.

“Cris, take care. Your dad will always be here waiting for you.” Santiago also gave her a strong hug.

The traveler’s heart was beating faster and faster as she was getting closer to the plane, when she set down she felt the she was on her way to the most unexpected experiences.



*New York  
City*



As soon as she landed on Jon F. Kennedy Airport she felt her face watered by a tear of emotion. When she felt the air for the first time in the avenues of New York City the lady who had just arrived still had tears coming down her face. If all of that was a dream she never wants to wake up.

Inside of Ellen's car, the newest babysitter admired the Queens with sparkles in her eyes, amazed with everything around. The forty minutes to Manhattan were the most incredible; from afar she could see the Statue of Liberty, her heart was beating fast. When they were passing by Times Square Cristina asked Ellen if she could stop the car for a few minutes, she got off the car and took many pictures with her tablet.

It was Fall for the North Hemisphere, the wind was starting to get cold, Cristina was wearing her brown overcoat she had bought 3 years before and had reserved it for this unique moment.

They went straight to the address of her new job. The house of Ellen Olsen, widow, was living in Manhattan for a few years; she was responsible for the family business with the help of her daughters and son in law. The apartment was forty minutes away from the Statue of Liberty. With her lived Joliet, the older daughter, Jefferson, her son in law and the little Carolyn.

"Cristina, this is little Carolyn, our dear baby. From now on you will take care of this little princess and will help us with the tasks in the house." Ellen introduced the little girl.

"I'll love to take care if her. I loved this place and everything I saw so far. I am happy for being here Mrs. Ellen." Cristina thanked her with a smile.

"I have another daughter, her name is Daisy. She lives on her own now. She recently bought a beautiful home in the Staten."

“Staten?”

“Yes”.

“It is not that far.”

“About forty minutes from here”

“Daisy was always so independent and now she helps managing one of her fiancé’s family businesses, besides assisting in the management of my business. My husband’s death was very painful. But with faith and hope we were able to overcome it.”

“I am sorry.”

“When she was twenty and four years old she graduated college of administration thinking from the beginning in taking care of our finances.”

“Awesome! I will love to meet her. From what I heard she really is a wonderful woman.”

“But she didn’t buy a house just because; she is about to get married to her fiancé Eric Preston, have you heard about him?”

“Let me think about it to see if I recognize his last name.”

“He is a young business man, twenty and five years old and very successful as well, takes care of the family business impeccably.”

“Don’t tell me that it is the Preston family that traditionally grows potatoes and makes the most delicious canned goods in Idaho?”

“Yes, it is that exact family! The company’s office is here in Manhattan.”

“Fantastic!”

“She and her fiancé decided to live in this house she bought in Staten. She was in love with the place and the condominium of beautiful houses, you’ll see.”

“I will love it. I am glad to have the opportunity to work with successful people like you.”

“Cristina I liked you. You are a nice, smiling, thoughtful girl. I am sure we will get along really well. The exchange girls are always great.”

“Before my arrival we talked a lot over the internet. You are a wonderful woman; the pleasure to meet you is mine, Mrs. Ellen. And you can call me Cris. That’s my nickname.”

“Look, they’re here! Joliet, Jefferson. This is our new babysitter. She is Brazilian and she came through the exchange program.”

“Nice to meet you Cristina.” Jefferson shook her hand.

“Hello, Cristina. I’m happy my mom hired a person we can trust to take care of my little one.” Joliet greeted her with a smile of thanks.

“I will do my best to deserve the trust of you that welcome me so well in this house.”

“My little girl is sleeping in the stroller like an angel. I will take her to the crib.”

“She is our angel. – Jefferson said, admiring the daughter.

“Cris, do you want to take her? – Joliet asked inviting her to start her job.”

“I would love to! I just arrived, but I need to get used to the work. Excuse me.” Cristina agreed taking control of the stroller.

“I will show you where the bedroom is.” Joliet took Cristina with her hand on her shoulder to guide her.

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“Carolyn is sleeping for an hour. I see that this way I won’t have much work, she really is a cute little girl.” Cristina was leaning on the armchair.

“Soon you will meet Daisy. Eric and she will get married next month, and you will go with me. It will be a great moment for St. Patrick’s Cathedral.” Ellen said sitting on the other chair.

“The most famous in New York! – Cristina exclaimed excited. – I am happy with the invite. The union between two people is a great cause for joy and celebration. It will be an honor to go to Daisy’s wedding. – She thanked. – While you have fun I will be taking care of Carolyn.”

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Cristina came to understand the reality of the babysitter’s hard work, beyond that she helped the two other maids in the house services, but what mattered the most was the fact that she was in the best place in the world, because she always dreamed of living those moments.

Every afternoon, after work, she would go around New York, when she first put her feet on the Central Park’s grass she felt the fall breeze entering her soul in a unique way, she immediately thought to herself: “What a beautiful place to live a great love!”

She diligently managed some household affairs, such as, go grocery shopping, pay some bills, when she stepped in the kitchen she would prepare some Brazilian dishes, that everyone loved. A month has passed since she arrived. That night that the Olsen family was having dinner, Ellen invited Cristina to sit at the table with them.

“There were so many chores and details that I forgot to hire a maid! I swear I forgot this simple detail. I would never manage to take care of that huge house by myself. After my cleaning lady left two weeks ago everything is a mess over there. Soon we will have a new person living there, everything will be more complicated. I don’t even know how to cook.” Daisy said smiling.

Listening to her daughter’s words at the dinner table, Ellen thought for a few seconds and responded with a solution in mind:

“Don’t worry, I have a solution for you, I will find the maids for you, it will be my wedding gift for you, daughter. Wait here.”

“Mom, where are you going?”

“I will bring your wedding gift. Cristina follow me to the library” Ellen stood up and held Cristina by the arm

“What do you mean? Mom, come back here” Daisy was anxious.

“What is it that Mrs. Ellen is going to?” Joliet asked.

“My love, we are talking about my mother-in-law, I have no doubt that she has a surprise for you Daisy.” Jefferson said and he ate some of the food then,

Ellen took Cristina to the Library

“Mrs. Ellen, why did you bring me here?”

“I have a request to make, but you don’t have to accept”

“Tell me what it is, I am curious to know what it is.”

“Daisy will get married”

“Yes, I know that since the day I got here; as a matter of fact I am going to the mall today to buy my dress for the wedding”

“As you heard at the dining table she doesn’t have maids yet. She needs help to take care of her home, and maybe soon they will have kids.”

“I don’t think I understand where you are going with this. Do you want me to help you to find someone who’s trustworthy to take care of her house? Is that it?”

“No, it is not! On the contrary, I have found the right person to take care of my daughter’s house”

“And who is this person?”

“Who is this person?”

“Who else could it be?”

“How can I know? I don’t know anyone else in New York.”

“It is you Cristina!”

“Me?”

“Yes, I want you to go work at Daisy’s house. She needs someone who is determined and trustworthy just like you are. It will be amazing for her to have someone with experience and unique talents in the kitchen; you will be able to teach her how to be a good wife that knows how to take care of her home”

“I am surprised; I was already getting used to work here in your house. I feel like part of the family”

“It will be like that with Daisy as well, I guarantee. So, Cris, do you accept?”

“I don’t know.”

“Please, accept it!”

She pondered for a few second before giving an answer.

“Alright, since it’s a request from you, I accept it!” eased Ellen’s heart

They went into the living room where Daisy was resting from dinner reading a fashion magazine.

“Daisy, honey, here is your wedding gift!” Ellen said, bringing Cristina by the arm.

“What? Mom, Cris is my gift? What do you mean?” Questioned confused.

“That’s right. From now on I work for you! I am your new maid!” She revealed.

“But mom, you love Cris, this isn’t fair. She is your best babysitter and your best cook!”

“Yes, exactly, she is the best home maid I have ever hired in my life, and she is a great company, for that reason I asked that she would work at your house from now on. Just a few days to the wedding, you need to start getting things ready. She will help you to prepare your home. In fact, tomorrow you can go shopping together.”

“It will be great and I will be very happy to help you.” Cristina answered with a bigger smile.

“If so be, that’s fine. Pack your things and come with me! You will meet your new home!” Called Cristina, surprised with the news.

“Daisy, don’t worry, I will hire one more cook and another maid to help Cris to take care of the house.”

“Thanks mom. You are the best mom in the world.” Daisy gave Ellen a hug.

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When the car stopped in front of the house, Cristina looked at Daisy and said excited.

"Mrs. Daisy, you have a good taste for houses! This place is beautiful."

"Yes, I fell in love with this place. Even though Staten Island is not the most well-known place, it has beautiful houses, look at all these trees and nature around here."

"It brings me peace"

"Yes, and I don't care about driving 50 minutes to get to Manhattan. You haven't seen all of it! Wait until we go inside. Oh, I want you to call me Daisy, no 'Mrs.' for me"

"Okay, if you prefer that way."

"Deal!"

"I'm sorry for asking, but how much did it cost?"

"Four million dollars" she answered, leading Cristina to enter the house.

As soon as she entered the room Cristina was overwhelmed with all that luxury and incomparable beauty.

"It is beautiful!" she said with radiant eyes. "The living room is huge and all decorated."

"You haven't seen it all, there are two more living rooms, and the kitchen is spacious and fully planned, with a big counter, electric stove. Almost as big as this room. Come to see!" Daisy smiled.

"Please don't mind the mess and the dirt. I would never clean up this mansion by myself."

"It is so pretty that I didn't even notice the mess."

As they were going upstairs the excitement of that young maid increased wildly. Then Daisy stopped in front of a door and said:

"Cristina, this is your room."

When she opened the door, the new employee exclaimed glimpsed through the room:

"This room is beautiful! These walls, this huge bed, the furniture, the balcony is beautiful, and this huge mirror! I can't believe this, this bathroom is amazing. Honestly, I thought I was going to stay in the employee's bedroom."

"The thing is that this is an employee's room. The bedrooms here have this pattern. Come to see mine, it is a lot bigger and prettier than all the rest!" she affirmed.

"Thanks, boss. This is a lot more than I expected." She thanked.

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The routine at the new home started nice, everything was new. Everything was an adventure.

“Today Eric will come to have dinner with me; we will celebrate the few days left to our wedding, I would like you to prepare something very special, something different, a traditional Brazilian dish. Also I would like to have some of that dessert you make, the ‘brigadeiro’.” Daisy made the request.

“I am surprised that you are asking me that. You and he usually go to a restaurant for dinner.” Cristina reacted a little excitedly.

“The thing is that we want to celebrate in a special way.”

“Will he come with you after work today?”

“Yes, we will get here together.”

“Okay then, don’t worry. When you both get here there will be a wonderful meal waiting for you, with romantic music and things like that. Daisy, I think it’s so beautiful the love between you and him. I hope one day I’ll live a love like that.” Cristina said with tears in her eyes.

“Thanks! You have been the most helpful maid I’ve ever had before, besides being a friend of our family. But tell me, haven’t you found a boyfriend here in New York?”

“Not yet, I mean, I met some guys, but nothing serious.”

“Don’t worry. Soon you will find the man of your life.”

“I hope so!” she smiled.

There were so many options of traditional Brazilian dishes that Cristina wasn’t sure of what she would do. But after thinking a lot about it, she prepared as the main dish a delicious filet mignon stroganoff, accompanied by Brazilian style salad, the “brigadeiro” for dessert she put it on little silver cups.

When she saw that Daisy and Eric’s car were getting in the parking lot of the house, she turned off the light, lit the candles and turned on the music “I Have Nothing”. The whole meal was on the table. She remained hidden on the stairs at the top of the stairs, observed the couple coming in; she got excited seeing Eric’s face of surprise when he saw that entire romantic environment that was prepared.

“Honey, this is great! Very romantic! Did you have this idea?”

“Yes. I had the idea and Cris prepared the dinner for us.”

“Hmm! It seems delicious, it smells great. I see that she did ‘brigadeiro’ as well. Amazing! Cristina is a great cook; we have to thank her later, especially for the ‘brigadeiro’, because I love it!”

“Yes, she deserves it. But before we eat, we will dance; she didn’t put this romantic music for nothing.” She stretched out her arms calling him to the dance.

“You are right honey.”

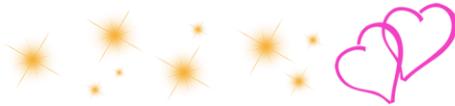
Eric got Daisy by the waist and they started to dance slowly the music that was playing. They had the first kiss of that magical night.

“Tonight is a toast to the great love of my life that is you, Daisy!” He declared.

Daisy kissed him one more time, then they were able to enjoy that special dinner that night that was the most romantic night before their wedding.



## *The Wedding*



“Girl, you’re going to erase all your makeup!” Cristina said while tried to wipe Daisy’s face.

“I’m excited, anxious; I barely feel my feet touch the ground.” Daisy said justifying her tears of joy.”

“That’s normal, today is your big day darling. It is the most important thing in a woman's life.” David, the makeup artist, comments as he arranges the bride's wreath.

“To marry the man I love the most in this world is the most wonderful blessing I could ever get.” Daisy said before the mirror with tears in her eyes.

“My friend, I get emotional with your words, you’re beautiful dressed up as bride! A real princess going to meet her prince. A young couple full of dreams. I always repeat, not out of envy, but because I sincerely would love to live this fairy tale. Even though I don’t have much hope, I want to find a great love.”

“The way you talk seems like you’ve lost a great love.” David said curious.

“Yes, I actually did lose one. A few years ago I loved a man; we couldn’t stay together for many reasons. With him I lived unforgettable moments, and from then on no one made me feel something as strong as he did.”

“That’s sad.” David said.

“We better stop talking about this because this is Daisy’s big day. It is a happy day.

“Cris, you’ve been an amazing friend to me, besides being a very helpful employee; I wish that you find the man that will be happy with you very soon.” The friend wished.

“Thank you a lot. You are the best boss.” They hugged.

“It’s beautiful to see two friends getting excited, but I think you still need something on your makeup, and don’t even think about crying again right now miss Daisy.” David got closer again to the bride to finish the makeup.

“For man everything is so much easier, they just need to put on a suit, shoes and done! The women suffer more, they need to get a different hairstyle, and they have the makeup, dress, shoes. nails, depilation, and the list goes one.” Cristina said excited.

“You’re right, women, and especially the brides suffer a lot more!” Daisy said.

“My daughter, enjoy this moment because it is unique.” Ellen advised her as she entered the room and glimpsed the scene. “Cris, we will go together in the bride’s car”

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At the altar of the St. Patrick’s Cathedral, dressed elegantly in his frock Eric waited anxiously for the arrival of his fiancée.

Cristina got out of the car, wished good luck to Daisy, got in the cathedral and glimpsed with the beauty and majesty of the place impeccably adorned with white flowers, she sat down by the other guests.

Ellen followed to the altar, where next to the best men and maids of honor waited for the entrance of her daughter, who would be led by Jefferson.

The church was filled with guests, mostly New York entrepreneurs and Idaho farmers, friends of the Olsen family and the Preston family. The musicians and the choir waited for the entrance of the bride who after a few minutes was seen at doors.

“Ready, Daisy?” Jefferson asked already arm in arm with her before they entered.

“Yes.” She smiled.

Eric's eyes flashed as they watched the woman of his life approaching dressed in white. The melody and the singing the announced the moment began, it was J S. Bach – “Jesus Bleibet Meine Freude”. The bride couldn’t hold the tears; the voices in the choir were as the angels, as if announcing a miracle.

Cristina cried non-stop, she shed tears of emotion not caring about her makeup that would be blurred in a few seconds, she whispered to herself: “This is the most beautiful scene I’ve ever seen in my entire life.”

Standing up, the guests were watching the bride pass by on the carpet covered with roses; many of them were thrilled with the music and the voices of the choir. Ellen whispered to the maid of honor: “Daisy is so beautiful, that beautiful dress, studded with

crystal stones.” And the maid of honor answered: “The tiara is of brilliant stones, it is shining from here.”

Daisy’s golden hairs were loosed, falling over shoulders. The sound of the violins resounded, and the splendid symphony invaded all ears recording that divine moment.

The ceremony took about 40 minutes; the priest delivered a speech that touched everyone’s heart. Cristina remembered her loneliness and all the moments that she fell in love for men that never loved her.

After being declared married for the ecclesiastical authority, finally Eric kissed his wife for the first time, the other times he kissed his girlfriend and fiancée, but now on Daisy was his beloved woman.

“It is time to throw the roses to the bride and the groom!” Ellen celebrated.

All threw the flowers, and greetings began at the cathedral door.

“Daisy, it was so beautiful. I wish you be happy.” Cristina hugged her with kindness.

“Thanks. I know I will be happy and I wish you the same.” Daisy thanked her.

“Eric, congratulations. You made the best decision of your life. She is the right woman.” Cristina greeted the groom with a handshake.

“Thank you so much, Cristina, for all the friendship that you’ve showed to my wife. It will be amazing having you taking care of our home. Daisy needs you.” He smiled and returned the kindness.

The party took place in the glamorous hall of the Plaza Hotel’s Palm Court. Cristina has never been to a place that was as beautiful as that place was. Chandeliers, armchairs, chairs and tables were impeccable. Besides the glimpse she almost did not participate in the celebration, didn’t dance, ate little, preferred to just observe the moment, introspective, as if it were all a dream.

When the just married couple came to dance the so waited waltz the young babysitter thought to herself leaning on the table: “Will I ever live a love as beautiful as this one is?”

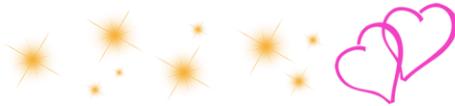
The honeymoon happened in the paradisiacal island of Galesnjak, in Croatia. Daisy and Eric went to the trip right after the party.

The dawn was cold; in hurried footsteps Cristina entered the new house, which was empty. The other maids would come only after the couple would arrive from the honeymoon. She locked herself in her room, threw herself in bed and was thinking about that wonderful day when she saw love happening in the most ancient cathedral in that city.

“The choir, the music, the dress and the love he felt when he saw her entering the church. Some say that I am too romantic, but now know that fairy tales are real, for few, but they do exist.” These were the words of Cristina while she remembered the scenes with her head on her pillow.



## *The Children*



“Cris, would you like to come with us to Manhattan? We are going to see the Statue of Liberty. You’ve been there already, right?” Daisy asked with a smile.

“You won’t believe. I passed by it super fast, saw it from afar, I didn’t get the chance to appreciate, a lot of things to do, I stayed closer to Central Park. I didn’t even go to the Liberty Island.

“What? That’s impossible! Daisy was admired.

“But now I have can go with you guys and make this dream come true in this late Fall, Winter is coming to freeze us all. I will take the opportunity to buy new coats. It will be my first chance to actually go shopping at Times Square!” Cristina answered excited.

“Today you are just our friend!” Daisy said happily.

“Thanks! You have been so good to me, the best employers; I don’t even know how to thank you guys.” She said.

Uneasy Eric waited for the women woman of the house to get ready.

“Finally! I thought we weren’t going to Manhattan anymore. Women always take forever to get ready.” Complained at the same time amused.

“You better get used to it, your wife was the one that took forever to choose a coat, and they are so beautiful that it is hard to make the decision. In the end I made the choice for her.” Cristina justified the delay.

“Cristina, don’t try to put the entire fault on your boss, I know well that women are the same when it comes to beauty. They always want to look prettier than the other women. They compete with each other.” Eric contradicted her.

They all laughed.

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“I can barely believe that I am here! How exciting! I even have goosebumps.” Cristina said with her eyes fixed on the Statue of Liberty.

“I can see the sparkles of happiness in your eyes, my friend.” Said Daisy.

“The Statue of Liberty is beautiful! Oh I forgot my Iphone in the museum’s bathroom, I hope the security guard has found it, I will be right back, I’ll go get it to take a picture. I want a selfie with you guys, my best friends and my best bosses of my life!” Cristina was so excited; she breathed deeply the air of Liberty Island. She felt something different, a kind of harbinger of something good.

Eric! Listen! Our song is playing! We have to dance.” Excited Daisy noticed the song that was starting.

“Yes my love. We will dance right now.” He agreed with her.

“I got it! I am back. This is my first Iphone. In Brazil it is too expensive. I could never buy one there. I heard when I was getting closer. So the song ‘Friends’ by Ed Sheeran is your song. I think this thing of couples having their favorite song is awesome.” Cristina said admiring her bosses’ happiness.

“Yeah, I used to sing to Eric whenever he would say we were just friends, it was before he asked me to be his girlfriend.” Daisy explained.

“Cristina, would you please film us dancing?” Eric asked stretching his arm to give her his Iphone.

“Of course, I will film with my phone and I can send it to you via Whatsapp. I make sure to film every minute of the beautiful moment of yours.” She accepted the boss’s request.

“Thanks.” He thanked her putting his phone on his pocket.

Gently Eric took Daisy by the waist, and began the dance as usual every time the song played. Manhattan was small close to all the emotion that the couple squandered on that body balance, that scene made Cristina a mere spectator of a moment that maybe she would never live.

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“Cristina!” Daisy called her as she entered the kitchen.

“Good evening, boss. I finished cleaning everything around here. I am tired; it was a day with a lot of work. I will lie down. Do you need anything else?”

“Forget your boss right now, business hours are over. Right now I am your friend again. Since I first got married noticed, but now I am sure. I see pain in your eyes every time you say you would like to live a love like the love I have for Eric. What happened? Who was the man who broke your heart? I am your friend and I want to help you be freed from this pain.”

“I appreciate your help. But I don’t think it is convenient to bother you with my sad story.”

“Sad story? It won’t bother me. I really do want to help you to love someone again. You deserve to be happy.”

“Okay Daisy. But I would like to ask you not to comment to anyone, not even with Eric. Please.”

“I promise I won’t tell anyone.”

“Okay then. Here we go. I always thought that your love story with Eric is beautiful, and every time I see your moments of happiness, even the arguments, I think I could have been happy with the man I’ve always loved. He was the man of my life. When we were together the rest of the world disappeared, it was as if there was only him and I. We lived beautiful and wonderful moments and rarely argued.”

“And what happened for you to break up?”

“He had some serious problems in his family, his dad died in a car accident caused by drunkenness, after his mother abandoned the home to live with someone else. The guy I loved didn’t have the strength to face all this and started using drugs and to drink a lot. I tried to help, I did all I could for him to go to rehab, but my love wasn’t enough to cure him. Until one day he left and I never saw him again. My mother has contact with his sister, but she doesn’t know much about what is going on, and ensures that he is still drinking, or even using drugs.”

“And you gave up fighting for him, for your great love?”

“It is not that I gave up, it is just that I couldn’t spend the rest of my life insisting or fighting for someone that told me that doesn’t want do anything and that went through a path with almost no return. He wrecked me. He broke my heart. I have cried too much for him, I don’t cry anymore. I making my dreams come true.”

“My friend, I am so sorry for all this.” Daisy lamented hugging her.

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“Mrs Ellen, it has already been three months since I first came to New York and I feel that my dreams and expectations are gradually coming to reality, I started to save up money to go to college.” Cristina opened up her heart that afternoon to her ex employer.

“I am happy that the experience at my daughter’s house has been good. Daisy only has compliments for you. It will be a progress you start studying. If you want to improve your life here in America, graduate in the university is a great option. Everything is going to be alright.”

“I am not that perfect, sometimes I make things that Eric doesn’t like. But I am learning. Your daughter is more than my boss, she is a wonderful friend.”

“And how is your heart?”

“What has my heart? Don’t worry, I don’t have any heart problems, I have good health.”

“I want to know if you haven’t found a boyfriend here yet. You are a beautiful brunette. American guys love brunettes.”

“I met some guys, but it didn’t work with any of them.”

“I don’t know why, you’re so nice and funny.”

“The problem is with me, Americans guys are not the problem. I just haven’t found my great love yet.”

“Daisy told me everything about what happened with your ex boyfriend back in Brazil.”

I can’t believe she did that! Daisy will pay me for that! She promised she wouldn’t tell anyone. She lied to me.”

“Don’t say that! She just wants to help you. I was really upset for you not telling me your problem. I thought we were friends.”

“I never imagined that my amorous misfortune was in the interest of my mistresses. Let’s talk about something else. I want to forget this.”

“Okay, however you want it, I apologize.”

\*\*\*

Daisy got home earlier. Eric had to stay a few more hours at the office because he had some meeting schedule for after work. Cristina was shopping at Times Square, still upset because her secret was revealed by Daisy.

She was thrilled to see for the first time the intense snow making landscape all white. Christmas was getting closer. The avenues were full with snow. “This is the place of my dreams and that’s what matters”, she thought to herself.

“Cristina, I am glad you are home! I have something very important to tell you.” Daisy rushed at her when she entered the room, she was her confident.

“I also need to talk to you. Why did you tell your mother about my secret? You promised you would keep it between us. You betrayed my trust Daisy; at this point Eric also knows about it right?”

I just wanted to help you. You pretend to be okay, but you are unhappy. Stop lying to yourself. Assume that you don’t have the courage to give your heart to another man.”

“I won’t assume anything! Excuse me, ma’am, I will go to my bedroom!” She left angry.

“Cristina, wait!” She ran after her friend.

Daisy entered the bedroom.

“Your anger will go away, and don’t worry, Eric doesn’t know anything.” Daisy tried to calm Cristina.

“Okay. Forget about it, I just got a little nervous because this story still disturbs me. But you can talk, you seem a little apprehensive, what happened?”

“My friend, the best thing in the world happened!” Daisy started to reveal.

“So tell me, what is it?”

“I’m pregnant for six weeks now.” She smiled brightly.

“What? Already? I mean, are you sure, Daisy?” She asked with surprise at the news.

“I know it’s early. But...And that’s not all. I’ve done an ultrasound, I’m pregnant with twins.”

“Twins?”

“Yeah!”

“So you’ll have to hire another nanny because I cannot handle two babies by myself at the same time.” Cristina said worriedly and even in an aggressive tone.

Daisy laughed a lot at the silly face her maid did when she learned she would have to take care of two children.

“Calm down, you will not take care of the children by yourself, I've decided that I'm going to leave my job to take care of my children. And you will help me. You are the only one I trust, Cris.”

“I understand, but we'll still have to hire another maid to cook, since we'll have kids I will not have time to cook like before. Your mom was going to hire a cook and so far nothing, they settled for me and the cleaners.”

“We'll do it, don't worry. I'm the one who should be nervous and not you, Cris, calm down!”

“I'm not nervous. I'm happy for you and your husband, if you want children, you better have them soon. And does Eric already know?”

“Not yet. I'll tell him tonight. I just went today to the doctor to confirm.”

“Then do it." He will be the happiest man in the world.”

“You know, I plan to stay in full with my kids until they're old enough to go to kindergarten, then I'll be back to work, but only part-time. I will not lose their childhood for nothing of this world, much less for money.”

“Wise decision. The family has to be in the first place.”

\*\*\*

That was Cristina's first Christmas in the United States, she was thrilled with the lights and decorations of New York City, it was all she had seen in Hollywood movies, the colorful lights illuminating the streets and houses, the buildings, the white landscape covered by snow, huge Christmas tree in the corner of the room, a wonderful dinner at the table.

The party happened at Ellen's house, everyone at the table made a toast to Daisy's pregnancy.

“To the new descendants of the Olsen Preston family! Jefferson proposed.”

\*\*\*

Eric left early that morning, was already in his office when his phone rang

“Eric!”

“Cristina?”

“Yes It's me.”

“Did something happen? You never called me at this time.

"Daisy got very ill, she's here at the hospital. I thought you had to be the first to know everything. Come here. I need to talk to you.”

“My God! Is she okay? What happened? And the babies?”

“Calm down, the situation is under control, but you have to come now, Mont Sinai Hospital.”

“I'm leaving right now.”

\*\*\*

He speeded up, wanted to get there soon. He rushed into the hospital, almost tripped over his own steps.

“Cristina, where is my wife? I want to see her now!”

“Take it easy. She is sedated, suffered severe pain, needs rest.”

“Where's the doctor? I want to talk to him.”

“The obstetrician went to do an emergency child birth, but I can explain everything he told me, and you can talk to him later. Sit here.”

“I do not want to sit. Tell me everything now.” He was distressed.

“Daisy is facing a high-risk pregnancy. She will have to stay at rest during the months that are still left for the babies to be born. She will have to be very careful.”

“I do not understand, she's so young, she looked so healthy.”

“These things happen even with young women. It will have to be this way. If she does not follow the absolute rest, she may lose the children and even die. It is serious. It is prudent for you to hire a nurse to apply the medications on her and help her with bathing and whatever else is needed. I'll take care of the house and the rest.”

“Yes, I'll do it as soon as possible, I do not want my wife to suffer.”

“I'm going home now, you can stay here and wait for her to wake up and talk.”

“Thank you for being by her side during these difficult times.”

“You do not have to thank me, I do this with my heart. See you.” She said goodbye, then left.

“See you.” Eric watched her leave.”

\*\*\*

The traditional celebratory party of the company was approaching. Every year the Preston family celebrated its annual turnover and honored the best executives of the previous year. Eric would be one of the honorees at that time.

“Dad! I already said that this year I will not go to the party. Cancel the honors. We'll talk about this later. Goodbye.” Eric hung up the phone.

“Eric, why did you hang up the phone like that?” Daisy asked frightened.

“He insists I go to the company party. I never missed any of them, but this time I am not going, I would never go without you, my love”

“But you have to go. You will be one of the honorees, it's not fair with your father. It will be beautiful.”

“Try to understand me, I do not want to leave you here. After the celebration, there will be the big ball, how can I go without you? I've never been to parties without you.”

“It's simple, you can get another company. But you will have to go anyway, I do not accept that you miss your big moment just because I can't get out of this bed.”

“Have you gone mad? I'm not going with my cousin Shirley, even if all the dollars I have in the bank depended on it, I can't stand her. I've been to parties with her and he did not even stay close to me, getting there she started flirting with the executives. It made me feel ashamed.”

"I'm not talking about Shirley.”

“You're not?”

“No.”

“Who then?”

“Cristina will accompany you to this important party. She is my best friend and she has all my confidence to watch over and protect you against the devouring looks of the company secretaries. Cris is perfect, besides being a great company. It's decided, you go with her.”

“Cristina? But will she accept it?”

“Yes, I'm sure. This is my request. I'll talk to her tomorrow.” She breathed in relief that she had found the right company for her husband.

\*\*\*

Cristina woke up early, prepared her boss' breakfast as she did every day, with fruit, juice, toast. She went into the bedroom to take the meal. Eric had already gone to work and did not take the idea of being accompanied by his maid very seriously.

"Good morning, boss. Here is your breakfast. I worked hard on it. I want my godchildren to be born strong and beautiful as their parents." She set the tray on the bed next to Daisy.

"Good morning, Cris. Glad you're here."

"I'm always here."

"I have a special request for you. A request from a friend." Daisy introduced the subject.

"Now I'm curious, what is this request?"

"Every year there's a party at Eric's company."

"Ah yes. I know. And what do I have to do with it?"

"You have everything to do with it. This year I will not be able to go."

"Of course, you have to stay very still in this bed."

"Yeah, that's why Eric does not want to go without me."

"He's being nice. He does not want to hurt you or go without you."

"But he has to go, this year the party is special, he will be honored, closed incredible contracts for the company. He has to go. After the honors there is the ball and he does not want to go alone or with Shirley.

"Who's Shirley?"

"Shirley is a boring cousin who just want to flirt with the executives."

"I still have not understood what I can do to resolve the situation."

"It's simple! Cris, you're going with Eric to the party."

"Me?" Cristina was frightened by the invitation.

"Yes, you are the only person I trust to watch over you and protect you from the looks of the company secretaries who harass my husband all the time."

"I'm flattered by your invitation, but I don't know if I can represent someone like you who is such a fine, elegant woman. I can't do that"

"I don't think you understand me. This is not an invitation. I demand that you go."

"Are you serious?"

"Very serious. I only trust you. I want Eric to go, and it has to be with you, Cristina."

"I don't even have an expensive dress to wear."

"Don't worry, I have many. Open the door to my closet." Daisy asked, pointing the direction.

Cristina opened it and went into the closet.

"Do you see a black dress, studded with crystal pebbles?"

"Yes, it's beautiful."

"Then take it to your room. You are going to wear it next Saturday."

"I don't know what to say. I am getting nervous."

"Calm down. My makeup artist will come and prepare you up for the weekend. You're going to look beautiful."

\*\*\*

Cristina's heart quickened, David finished the makeup when Ellen entered the room:

"Cris, Eric is wondering if you're ready. He's waiting for you in the living room. Daisy wants to see you before you leave."

"I am ready. But I'm nervous."

"Take it easy and enjoy it. I'll be here with my daughter keeping you company. The new cook has arrived too."

"Then I'll go talk to my friend there."

"Cris, you look beautiful! It will be a success."

"Thank you, Mrs. Ellen!"

"Go and say goodbye to Daisy."

\*\*\*

Cris knocked on the door.

"You may come in."

"Excuse me, boss." she entered.

"It took you so long that Eric went up again to give me another goodbye! Cris, you look beautiful."

"Thanks. You're making me blush"

"What are you waiting for? It is time to go!"

"Stay well my love. I'll be thinking about you all the time." Eric said goodbye to his wife, kissing her.

“That's right. I know that, dear.”

“Let's go Cristina?” Eric smiled at her.

“Let's go boss.” She smiled shyly.

\*\*\*

Inside the car, sitting next to Eric, Cristina felt strange.

“Is everything alright?” He asked her as he drove past the first hundred yards toward Manhattan.

“Yes I'm fine.”

“You're so quiet. Why do not you tell me something. It's fifty minutes to Manhattan, that silence consumes me.”

“I'm just nervous. I never imagined that I would sit here, by your side, like this.”

“I've ridden you several times.”

“But it's different now. We're going to a party together. It's different than you giving me a ride back from the market.”

“Relax, woman. We are friends and we are going to a party, there is no reason for you to be nervous.”

“I do not want to disappoint.”

“And you will not. I'm sure you will represent my wife with great dignity. Now relax and enjoy the moment. Be yourself.”

“That's right. I'll be myself.” Cristina smiled.

\*\*\*

“Eric, my son, I'm glad to see you here. Today is the great night of your honor. You did so much for the family company, I would be sad if you weren't with us.” Henry Preston hugged Eric.

“Dad, thank Daisy who convinced me to come. Oh, before I forget, this is Cristina. A family friend and my wife's best friend. Cristina, this is my father.”

“We met at the hospital once, and of course at the wedding, it was quick, but I remember you. Nice to see you again.”

“Welcome to our company party, Cristina.”

“Thank you.” She thanked him.”

\*\*\*

Arm in arm Eric and Cristina headed toward the other guests, everyone wanted to greet him, the beauty of the companion was praised by the guests.

“It's everything alright?” Eric expressed concern about his partner in the evening.

“Yes, I got nervous for nothing. I'll get some canapés for us.” She rose from the table. Kelvin approached.

“Cousin!” He called for Eric.

“Kelvin! What a surprise. You've never been to company parties.”

“Your aunt forced me. You know what she's like every time she tries to get me a millionaire girlfriend.”

“Yes, I know how she is.”

“And tell me, who is the one who came with you? Don't tell me you've changed your wife!”

“Don't be silly. That's Cristina, my friend and Daisy's best friend who's in absolute repose. My wife is facing a high-risk pregnancy, she can barely walk alone.”

“I didn't know that, I'm sorry, I hope Daisy gets better soon. This friend of yours is very beautiful.”

“Yes, she's really pretty, and she's smart.”

“She's following you today, give me her phone number later.” Kelvin asked as he admired Cristina from a distance.

“Of course. I'll do that later.” Eric assured him.

“I'm going to let you spend the night with your friend. I have to let some executives know how awesome they are.” He smiled. “We will talk later.”

“That's right, cousin.” He greeted him with a slap on the back.

\*\*\*

The long-awaited ball began shortly after the honors. Cristina's heart quickened, she felt uneasy, the couple of friends sat at the table with the members of the Preston family.

“Look, Eric! They're playing the music of your wedding! Bach- ‘Jesus bleibet meine Freude.’ It was a beautiful song, that day was unforgettable!” - Cristina commented without any intention.

“It's my surprise to you, my son. So you remember the happiest day of your life.” Henry revealed.

“Thanks Dad!

“Not at all, my son. I am proud to see the great man you have become.”

“Dance with me, Cristina?” He stood up and held out his hand to her.

“Me?”

“Of course. Is there another Cristina here? Tonight you're my company.”

“Since it is so, then let's dance this beautiful melody. But wait! How do you sing a cantata?”

“I do not even know, we just dance. Like waltz. Come on!” Eric took her hand.

They went to the center of the room, Eric held her by the waist, she felt a princess in the arms of the prince, the song entered deep in her soul of dreamy woman. Gradually several couples were already dancing around. But the Preston family's eyes focused on the young couple dancing there for the first time.

The lights of the great chandeliers illuminated the looks of Eric and Christina who irradiated each other's faces with smiles.

“The night is wonderful.” She remarked as she was cradled by her pair, she could barely feel her feet on the ground.

“I fully agree!” Eric said.

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They danced three more songs, the clock showed two in the morning when they decided to return home. On the way they remained silent, she ended up sleeping on the way.

“Cristina, wake up!” Eric nudged her shoulders.

“What?” She opened her eyes slowly.

“We're home. We're in the parking lot.”

“I'm sorry, Eric, I fell asleep. Let's go in.” She got out of the car.

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They entered the living room. They turned on the light. They were face to face. Eric moved closer to her.

“Cristina, I really loved your company. It was great to be with you today. Thank you.”  
He said with a sincere smile.

“It was my pleasure. Besides, I could not deny a request from my mistress. You are my best friends.”

“And I thank Daisy for getting rid of me spending the whole night with my annoying, unpleasant, unpalatable cousin. Believe.” He smiled once more.

“She told me about this cousin, Shirley!”

“That's her.”

“I'm glad to have represented my friend on this night so important to you.”

“And you represented her very well, elegantly, you looked very beautiful in this dress.”

“Thank you, Eric. I felt like a princess dancing in that huge hall, under those chandeliers. It was awesome.”

“And you're a princess, you'll soon find your prince.”

“Maybe one day I'll find it. I confess that this was the most beautiful and exciting night I've lived since I got here.”

“And have no doubt that other incredible moments will come. And by the way, my cousin Kelvin, one of the stockholders, was very interested in you. But you know how it is, young men are a little cowardly. I left your number with him, you will get a message soon.”

“All right then. Thank you for everything and good night, boss.”

“Good evening, Cris.” He smiled, kissed her in the cheek and went to the bedroom, Daisy was waiting for him.

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He walked in slowly, as quiet as possible. He switched on only the lamp.

“Eric. It's early, my love!”

“I thought you were asleep, my dear.”

“I could not fall asleep, I am so anxious to know what the party was like. Did Cristina do well?” Daisy leaned back on the bed, asked curiously.

“The party was wonderful. The dance was also fantastic. My dad asked to play the music of our wedding. And Cris did very well. She was super stylish and aroused jealousy at the secretaries that were cheering for me to come alone to the party, or to Shirley, which

is the same as going unaccompanied. In fact, I thank you very much for saving me from such a nightmare.”

“Good to know it was great.”

“It was great because I did not go with Shirley.”

“Her ear must be red now. Poor thing.” - Daisy commented laughing low.

Eric sat down next to his wife in bed.

“I thought about you all the time. I can’t wait for our children to be born soon, my love, and you will be well. I miss you everywhere I go.”

“I’ll be fine, and our children as well.”

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The following months were of pampering and care for Daisy who had a delicate and caring pregnancy. Sometimes she had to stay in the hospital and most of the time Cristina was by her side.

Finally the day of childbirth had come. Everyone and especially Eric were apprehensive. Ellen, Joliet, and Cristina also accompanied Daisy to the hospital.

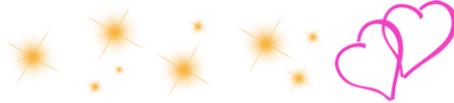
The delivery was previously scheduled, a cesarean section would be performed. The babies were very big. The future father came into the operating room to keep up with everything, he was more anxious than his wife.

The new mother wanted to see the faces of her children as soon as they were out of her womb, she could not wait, it was her twin couple. At first the doctor withdrew the girl, at that moment Eric and Daisy's eyes shone like the beacon that illuminates the sea in the night of starless sky, then placed it in the arms of the mother and then in the arms of the father, finally removed the boy, the two babies were strong and very healthy, both with blue eyes like the father. The boy was called Matthew Theo and the girl Sally Aveline.

The first few days with the kids were incredible for both Eric and Daisy and for Cristina who had never seen such happiness in a couple's life, sometimes she felt a little intrusive in attending such special moments in the family's life.



## *The destiny of the Olsen family*



Spring Saturday dawned, it was a perfect day to stroll with children who were already grown, four years old. Waking to the side of the woman he loved was the greatest blessing in Eric's life that morning, still in bed, he kissed his wife and stroked her hair like never before.

"It's good to be awakened like this, with such care." She said, yawning. "It's been four years since our marriage, and despite our sporadic disagreements, I still love you the way we did." She kissed his cheek.

"My love, you deserve every kiss and every affection in the world." He emphasized, kissing her once more.

"You're so sweet today, more than usual. What time is it? The children must already be awake. Today we have to take a walk, in the afternoon is Cris's day off, she needs rest too."

"Daisy, my dear, you are the best woman in the world, and the best mother, always worried about our children. I would never love another person in my life as I love you. Without you, I'm nobody." He kissed her hand.

"How much romanticism today. You are also a fascinating man, and an incredible father. Without you our family would be nothing. I want to enjoy a lot with the children today, on Monday I will return to work. I'm going to Chicago early, and I'll be back at the end of the day. It's a 2 hour flight, I want to be home as soon as possible."

"I still believe you do not have to go back to work now." Eric disapproved of his wife's decision.

"But, my love, I do. It's a way I have to feel like a more useful woman, it's my career, you know? We will have a meeting at the Chicago branch and I said we would represent

the company there. These trips are rare, but do not worry, I'll go back and forth on the company's private plane, without all the layovers. It will be fast." She assured him.

"A whole day away from you is very difficult to bear." He smiled and kissed her one more time.

It was an unforgettable Saturday, Daisy, Eric and the kids strolled in Central Park. Had lunch at the famous Bouldin New York City restaurant. The four of them were around the table, Eric declared with his eyes shining:

"This is the first time we've gone out for lunch with the kids since early spring. Time goes by so fast, now we have our family. This is wonderful."

"You're so sensitive today, hearing about your feelings increases my love for you." Daisy smiled.

They made a surprise visit to Ellen. This was a rich and happy family, not only because they had so much money, but also because they loved each other.

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It was Monday morning, finally after a long four years, Daisy returned to work, got up very early, her flight would leave at 7 o'clock in the morning. Eric accompanied her to the company's private boarding area.

"Come back soon my love." He said goodbye.

"I'll see you today at the end of the day at our house." She assured him, then hugging him.

In Chicago she arrived quiet and at peace with herself, after all she was an accomplished woman, had an excellent husband and wonderful children, and had the confidence of her maid Cristina, who was, above all, her best friend.

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Late afternoon arrived when the nanny drove to pick up the kids at school. After they got home she gave them a bath, some hot chocolate, then put them to see cartoon on the cushions of the floor of the room.

"Cris, what should I prepare for dinner?" Lucy, the cook, asked as soon as she saw her near the stairs.

“Pick what's best, Daisy did not tell me anything today, she left very early, went to Chicago, must be back soon.”

“Yeah. Are you feeling okay? You look afflicted, Cristina.”

“Suddenly I felt an uneasiness, a tightness in my heart, a strange sensation, but it shouldn't be too much. I'm going to stay in my room for some time to see if that goes away. Could you take care of the kids while I take a rest?” Cristina asked as she felt the strange sensation.

“Okay, go rest, I'll take care of them.”

Cristina was already on her pillow when the phone rang, her heart suddenly accelerated, got up in a hurry and answered the call.

“Hello.” She said in a trembling voice.

“We'd like to speak to Mr. Eric Preston.” Said the voice on the other side.

“He's not in the moment, who am I talking to?” she asked, her heart racing.

“Who is this?”

“My name is Cristina Müller, I am housekeeper and friend of the family.” She answered almost without a voice.

“We're from the Chicago police. We have news to give to the family. The plane where Mrs. Daisy Olsen Preston was in an accident. The pilot had to make a forced landing and the impact was intense. Your boss is now hospitalized at Mercy Hospital and Medical Center in grave condition, it is the best and largest hospital in the city. We call your boss's work, but he's gone, and his cell phone is off.”

“Yes, sir, he must be getting home by now. Thanks for the info. Soon I will return for more details.”

“Not at all, miss.”

Cristina's heart quickened even more with despair, she did not know what to do or what to think. It was a tragedy of the worst. Moments before she had even heard the news of the plane crash on the radio, but she hoped it was nothing to do with her friend and boss Daisy.

She took a deep breath and beckoned to Lucy to talk privately in the corner of the hall, so the children would not hear them.

“What is it, Cris? You look more distressed than before.”

“Lucy, a tragedy has happened!”

“Tragedy?”

“Yes, Daisy has not arrived yet because she has been in a plane crash and is in very bad condition in a Chicago hospital.”

“My God! It really is a tragedy! That can’t be true.”

“Eric still doesn’t know, he must be coming home. Keep the kids in the room, when he arrives I’ll break the news. Then we’ll tell Mrs. Ellen and the rest of the family. I’ll pack the boss’s bags, he’ll want to get right to the airport and get to Chicago as soon as possible.”

She took a tranquilizer, prepared to give her friend the terrible news.

The clock struck at exactly eighteen o’clock when Eric entered the door of the room.

“Hi, Cristina, where are Daisy and the kids? I called her cell, but she did not answer. I figured she was already home and I came straight here. What happened? Why are you looking at me like that?” He asked, ignoring the facts.

“I do not even know how to say this...” She looked down at the floor, barely able to lift her head.

“What do you want to tell me? Where is my wife?”

“Daisy has not arrived yet.”

“No? That’s weird. Missed the flight?”

“She has not arrived yet because she was in a plane crash. I’m so sorry.”

“What? What do you mean? What accident is that? She called me saying that she had arrived well in Chicago.”

“I’m sorry to have to say those words. The accident happened on the way back. Soon after takeoff the pilot had to make a hard landing right there in Chicago. Your wife is in critical condition at Mercy Hospital and Medical Center. It’s the best hospital in town. They will take good care of her.” She announced, very shaken by the news.

“I’m going to Chicago right now. I told her she did not need to go back to work, but she did not listen to me!” He screamed in despair, he was sweating, his whole body trembling.

“Calm down. Accidents happen all the time, if it were not for an airplane it could have been by car. It’s a fatality! It’s not anyone’s fault.”

“I’ll pack my bags and go to Chicago.”

“I’ve packed your luggage. It’s all here in the corner. We have to go to Ellen’s house to warn her.”

“I’m going straight to the airport. Call two taxis, one for you and one for me.”

“That's right, but I just ask you to have calm, faith, and patience. For your children, do not despair.”

“Thank you so much for your support. You have been a great friend, I will try to be calm so that everything works out. Daisy is strong, she will recover.”

“Yeah! Let's think like that.”

Inside the cab, Cristina thought of the words she would use to break the news to Ellen and the rest of her family. The cab pulled up in front of the building.

In the elevator she was already shaking with nervousness, could not stay calm.

She took a deep breath before entering the apartment. Ellen opened the door.

"Cris, dear, you here! Did you take the time to visit me and take a tour of Manhattan? C'mon in!" He greeted her affectionately. Cristina entered the room, stood before her ex-mistress who noticed her serious features.

"Mrs. Ellen, I'll get right to it. I'm here to give you some bad news. Your daughter Daisy traveled to Chicago early today, went to a business meeting and on her way back home she was in a plane crash, it happened this afternoon.”

“Oh my God!”

“The pilot had to do a little forced landing after takeoff. She is in critical condition at the best private hospital in Chicago. I am so sorry.”

“My dear daughter! She did not deserve this. That can't be true. Are you sure this happened?”

"Unfortunately I'm sure. They called from the police and from the hospital to tell us.”

“How horrible! My poor little girl, so beautiful and so sweet, she did not deserve such great suffering. I'm going to Chicago right now. I want you to go with me. Jefferson and Joliet are on the coast. I'll let you know by phone.

“Of course, I can rather accompany you. I'll call a taxi to take us to the airport, Eric should be there, if we do not delay we can catch the same flight as him.” On the way we hurried to the apartment to get my bag.

“Yes darling. Call the cab while I pack my bags.”

With her mind extremely disturbed, Ellen waited in the taxi with distressed thoughts as Cristina came in to pick up her luggage, got in fast, put some pieces of clothing in her briefcase and in a smaller bag of personal documents. She asked Lucy to take care of the children during her time in Chicago. When they arrived at the airport Eric was no longer there, he had already boarded half an hour before.

During the trip Ellen prayed for her daughter while Cristina held her hand.

“Daisy is a very strong woman, she is young, she will survive, we must have faith. You will see that soon she will be among us again.” Cristina tried to comfort her.

“I hope so, my young friend.”

After leaving the suitcases in the hotel they went right to the hospital. Eric was already there in the waiting room eager for news.

When they saw him they ran towards him.

“Eric, have you heard from Daisy?” Ellen called to him, already inquiring about her daughter.

“Daisy's still in the operating room, having surgery. She has severe internal bleeding.”

“My God! My poor little girl going through this!”

“The impact was very strong.”

“Let's stay calm, we have to hope. We must believe that she will be okay. How long has she been there?”

“She has been there for two hours.”

“I think she'll get out of there fine. I'm going to the canteen to get chamomile tea to calm us down.” Cristina showed solidarity. She brought the tea cans in a bag. Everyone drank.

An hour later, they were seated when Dr. Simmons arrived to give news.

They stood.

“So, doctor, how was my wife's operation?”

“Everything went fine during the surgery, we did everything we could. She is in the ICU, this type of case is very unpredictable, only time will tell what will happen. It depends on how her body reacts. This surgery is complex, it can take many days to wake up. Her fractured bones pierced some organs that were compromised. You will need liver and kidney transplants. We will keep her body balanced while she recovers from surgery. Then we'll do the transplants. Your wife is in a very fragile condition.

“My God, my wife did not deserve to be like this!”

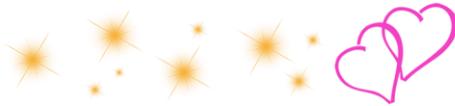
“Let's have faith, she's alive after all.” Cristina stated with conviction of her belief.

“You're right, darling, we'll have hope, she'll get out of here cured.” Ellen agreed.

They hugged each other showing mutual comfort.



## *Difficult Times*



After a month of internment in Chicago, Daisy moved to New York City, stayed in the ICU of Mount Sinai Hospital, one of the best and most expensive hospitals in the world.

Dr. Smith called Eric to talk and said that Daisy was awake, conscious, but very weak. She spoke with difficulty, at first she did not even understand what was happening, she did not remember the accident.

With his heart beating harder, not with joy, but with sadness, face blushing with horror, Eric entered that ICU room, moments before already dressed in a mask and blue clothes watched his beloved by the glass of the door, he needed to talk with her, the woman he loved the most in the world was in the worst of situations, and the fear of death haunted everyone.

“Daisy, my love, can you hear me?” he whispered at her ear.

“Eric, you're here.” She said weakly.

“Yes, my love, it's me. I'm here.”

“As it is, look how I look. And you told me so much not to go back to work.”

“Do not worry. It's going to be okay. As Cristina said, what happened was a fatality. It could have happened by car, or even at home.”

“Cris, how's she doing? She is a true sister.”

“She's here, and she's helped us a lot.”

“Eric, love of my life. I'm really bad. I know I will not last long. So I ask you to let Cristina help you care for our children until they grow up. I do not trust anyone else. I want you to bring them here so I can say goodbye to them.” She begged for breath to speak.

“Don’t say that, you're not going to die, you'll be better soon. You will return to our home and take care of our children. I'll bring them here to see you. That way you get better faster.” He said, trying to comfort her as he ran his hands over her head.

“I'd like to talk to Cris now in private. Can you call her?” She asked.

“Of course my love. I'll call her right now.”

In the waiting room Eric addressed the nanny.

“Cristina, Daisy wants to talk to you now.”

“With me?” She asked in surprise.

“Yes. Then she wants to talk to you, Ellen.”

In slow, anxious steps, Cristina walked to the ICU room where Daisy was. When she reached the door she took a deep breath, looked at the glass before entering, she needed courage.

She entered the room and approached the bed.

“Daisy.” She called out her friend's name.

“Cristina, is that you?”

“Yes my friend. It's me. I'm so sorry about what happened to you, I saw the news of the accident on TV.” She said, moving closer to the bed.

“We all mourn. I am so weak that I cannot express the sadness I feel for knowing that I will never see my children or my husband again.”

“Don’t say that.”

“My life was so wonderful, I would like to live longer, see my children grow up, get married, be a grandmother. But unfortunately it will not be possible. So I want to ask you a big favor, the biggest of all, is something very important.” Daisy spoke weakly.

“Ask for what you want. Hear you speaking like this breaks my heart.” Cristina gave in with tears all over her face.

“I really feel I will not survive. And I want you to promise that you will take care of my children until they grow up, and so will my husband. I only trust you.”

“But you cannot die. It's not fair, Daisy.”

“Please, promise me. It's my last request to you.”

“Okay, I'll do what you ask, I promise I'll take care of your children, but I cannot promise anything about your husband.”

“Cris, remember when I was facing the risky pregnancy and I asked you to go to the ball with Eric?”

“Yes, I remember well, because that night was beautiful.

“So I was trying to you two closer because I was afraid to die and leave him alone. Cris, take care of Eric. Stay with him. Be a family for me. At first he will resist and will not accept my departure. But little by little the love will come.”

“My friend, all this you’re telling me is absurd. But I understand your fear. Anyway, I’ll take care of your family like I always did, being a good maid.” She patted Daisy’s hair.

“Now call my mother here, I’ll soon be able to say no more.”

“Yes, I’ll call her.” Cristina left the room, crying a lot, devastated, tears streaming down her face as the river flows in the stream.

In the waiting room she found Eric and Ellen extremely distressed.

“Mrs. Ellen, your daughter’s waiting.”

Ellen went to the bedroom already with tears in her eyes. It was her beloved daughter who suffered sadly in that situation.

“Daisy.” She approached the bed.

“Mother, is it you?” She whispered even weaker.

“Yes, my beloved daughter, it’s me.” She started crying desperately on Daisy’s bed.

“Mother, don’t be like this.”

“My beloved daughter, you did not deserve this suffering, you are still so young.”

“Don’t cry, I’ll soon be healed, in a better world than this.”

“You didn’t deserve to leave now, so soon.”

“I’m barely able to speak, I want you to promise me one thing.”

“Yes, whatever you want.” She wiped away the tears that were flowing.

“Promise you’ll do everything you can to get Cristina to marry Eric after I’m gone. I want her to take care of my children and let her be their mother. I do not trust anyone else. She will be the best woman in the world to take care of my family.”

“Daisy. I’m suffering a lot. But if that’s your wish, I promise I’ll do everything I can to get them together, even though I know it will not be easy because Eric loves you so much.”

“Even if at first she or he does not want to, do everything, try to the end, as long as they live, get them closer, make them fall in love.”

“I promise that I will do everything to fulfill your will. My daughter, I love you.” Daisy hugged her.

“I love you too, Mother. Always tell my children that I have loved them very much and that I will love them forever.”

“Yes, I will.” She had tears in her face from her daughter's suffering. “Your sister is coming to see you.”

“Good to know, I want to talk to Joliet and say that I love her very much and I also love Carolyn.”

Two weeks later Daisy took her last breath and left. She died in the bed of that hospital before the woman who gave her life, Ellen began to shout.

“Daisy! Daisy! My daughter, do not go away! Do not abandon us!”

The nurses, the doctors, Eric and Cristina heard the screams and they all rushed to the ICU room where Daisy's body was.

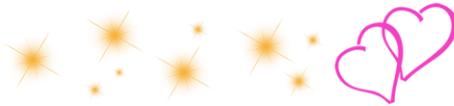
Joliet and Jefferson arrived shortly thereafter.

Eric bent over his wife's body and wept desperately for her name.

Everyone around him was terrified, suddenly everything had changed.



## *Bitter Memories*



The children did not go to Daisy's funeral, that's what she wanted. Dressed in black, they said goodbye to the young woman who had her life interrupted in a tragic way, kneeling while the coffin was placed in the grave Eric threw roses saying.

“Daisy, my love, I will never be able to live without you.”

Ellen, also leaning over the pit, with tears covering her face, threw flowers, saying.

“Go in peace, my daughter.”

Joliet, inconsolable at her sister's death, was supported all the time by Jefferson, who said hugging her strongly:

“I am so sorry. But I'm here by your side, to support you, give you the strength to overcome all this pain.”

“My sister is gone forever!” Joliet sobbed as she cried in dismay.

The next few days were the hardest, sleeping and waking without the beloved wife next to him was the worst of punishments for Eric.

A month after Daisy's death, he had not yet returned to work, was barely out of the house, and barely ate something. He felt defeated, his life completely lost its meaning.

Cristina used to take the children to Ellen's house every weekend, it was the way she found giving them a little motherly tenderness.

The clock was marking noon, Cristina fondly prepared the meal for the master, set it on a tray and took it all to his room.

“Excuse. Here is your lunch. I prepared your favorite Brazilian dish, and ‘brigadeiro’ for dessert.” She set the tray on the table.

"Thanks, but I'm not hungry.”

He was in his pajamas, sunk in the sheets that carried so many good memories, but that moment of regret had become the most cruel memories for that man. Good memories often hurt more than bad ones.

“Eric, I know it is not easy to sleep and wake up without the woman you love, look aside and see your bed empty, but you need to eat, need to go back to work, to follow your life. If not for you then do it for your children who need their father now more than ever!”

Eric looked deep into Cristina's eyes, began to cry saying:

“Why did she leave? I will not bear it! I will not!”

At that question Cristina felt her eyes watering, in an attitude of compassion she moved closer to him and hugged him, Eric said:

“Please, help me, I do not want to die either.” He pleaded, resting his head firmly on his friend's shoulders.

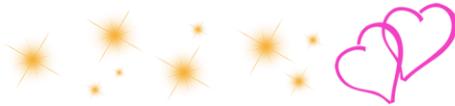
“Yeah, I'm here to help you. I will take care of you and your children as Daisy asked me.” She assured him, holding him affectionately.

Two weeks later Eric returned to work, but without the joy and spirit of before. He became a bitter, serious man, distant from family and friends. He even distanced himself from his children, worked late locked in the home office, even on weekends.

Ellen tried to unite the bitter young widow to the solitary babysitter. But he gave no chance, remained secluded in his suffering.



## *Discovery*



Six months after Daisy's death, Eric Preston's heart and soul were still gray. He tried, but could not be happy again. With great difficulty, almost thinking of giving up the plan, Ellen managed to convince her son-in-law to spend a few days at the family beach house in Miami.

The idea was to pretend that everyone would go there, but Cristina and Eric would be alone in that paradise. It would be a great chance for them to get to know each other better.

“I'm glad you agreed to go to Miami to spend a vacation. You need to be distracted, have more contact with nature. The beach will do you good.” The nanny nodded her approval.

“Cristina, I honestly do not have the mood for walks. I'm just going because my mother-in-law insisted so much that she convinced me. She said that children need to have good memories of beach trips with their father.” He said quietly at his private study desk, he hardly looked at her face.

“And your mother-in-law is quite right. Matt and Sally need good memories of their father, they need your presence too. I'll pack our bags today. Ellen is very pleased to see you more willing to re-socialize with the family. Don't forget that we are not strangers.

“I'm trying to raise myself up only for my children, not because I feel any pleasure in living.” He emphasized bitterly.

“The reason you decide. Ah! I almost forgot, Mrs. Ellen asked if there is a problem in going to Miami on different flights, she will be on an early flight with the children and you and I will go on another flight together. She did not get tickets in the first class for the same plane.”

“No problem. I can go with you on another flight.”

“Alright then. To Miami, there we go!” She smiled in vain, disappointed to realize that her optimism had no effect on her boss. Face down Cristina left the office, closed the door, was thoughtful.

Eric and Cristina boarded the early morning, sat side by side, forty minutes flying, and he did not utter a word, his indifference was absolute, he saw no brightness or color.

Three hours later they landed in Florida, the day was sunny, the sky bluer than before, it was impossible not to feel the calm breeze coming from the surrounding beaches.

Cristina took a deep breath, that was her first time in Miami Beach. She was fascinated even at the contagious sadness radiated from Eric's eyes.

The cab left them in front of the beach house. She was charmed by everything she saw.

“Well, here we are. This mansion is very beautiful, and this garden facing the sea! Transmit peace.” Cristina exclaimed cheerfully. “What a wonderful and huge pool!”

“You're really looking at everything. It had been a long time since I had come here.” Eric commented as he looked at the pool, remembered the days of joy that lived there with Daisy.

“So this is the famous \$15 million mansion your father-in-law had you built before he died.”

“Yeah, that's it. I used to come here with Daisy, especially when we were still dating.” He reminded himself introspective.

“I think you have many good memories of this beautiful place.”

“Yes, I do, and these good memories hurt more than the bad ones.”

“Try to feel peace at least for a moment. That's what we're here for.”

The hours passed and the rest of the Olsen family did not arrive. Cristina's cell phone rang, she was sitting in the garden, admiring the sea. It was Ellen on the other end of the line, warning that the flight was canceled and so they would not make it to Miami until two days later.

“So it's just us here for two days?” Eric asked after having spent minutes beside her, also admiring the sea.

“Yes, Eric, I hope this does not bother you.”

“Not at all.”

“Then I'll prepare something to eat.”

“No!” He caught her hand, preventing her from rising. “You're invited here, we have three maids in this house, including a cook, you do not have to do household chores. Just

call the maid and ask for whatever you want. Stay here with me some more.” He smiled uneasily.

Cristina felt a shiver run through her body the moment Eric took her hand. He almost stammered when he replied:

“If so, I'm glad to know that I can have fun. Since the children will not arrive today we can take a swim in the pool and then walk on the edge of the sea. What do you think?”

“Good idea.” He miraculously accepted the invitation.

“Why do you call me Cristina, and not Cris?”

“It was Daisy who started calling you Cris, and I'd rather avoid it because it reminds me of her.”

“I understand, but you must free yourself from this memory that enslaves, we're on vacation! Come on!” She took him by the arm.

Cristina dragged Eric into the pool and shoved him into the water. Then she threw herself too, with clothes and everything.

They played water on each other, they were experiencing a new freedom. Now they were approaching, now they were distancing themselves in the pool. There was a moment of insight, like a click on their minds that awakened them to something unlike anything they ever lived, smiled at each other sincerely, they were again young at heart.

Close to each other, still in the pool they stared at each other as if they recognized something special in themselves, their eyes glittering. Eric suggested:

“Shall we walk by the sea? I'm tired of staying in the pool.”

“Yes let's go. I'm happy with the invitation.” she smiled.

The mansion had ten rooms. It was hard for Cristina to have to choose only one.

At sunset the couple of friends walked by the sea with their feet in the sand. There was a moment when Eric stopped, looked into Cristina's eyes and said with a smile:

“Thank you.”

“For what?”

“For all you've done for me and my children. Especially for your company and friendship. It's been so hard to get over Daisy's death.”

“I know. I thank you for everything your family did for me, they helped me stay here in the United States. I also miss my best friend Daisy. I still suffer, but I try to move on.” She smiled in a simple way. “Just listen!”

“What?”

“It's playing one of my favorite songs ‘Laura Pausini - Fans Like Us!’”

“Dance with Me?” He asked with a smile.

“Right now.” She accepted.

For a moment they only looked at each other and what they heard was only the sound of the waves. Without thinking, without measuring consequences and even without understanding what happened, Eric and Cristina kissed.

Slowly their lips touched for the first time, and what at first seemed only a shy kiss was actually a big love kiss.

That was the discovery of that nanny, she already loved the inconsolable widower, all those days of mutual help helped with the feeling of mutual affection and affection.

Eric did not want to take over, but he already loved her, he just did not accept Daisy's death. It was a torment that haunted him, the image of the deceased woman was a tattoo on his mind.

“Cristina, forgive me for this, I didn't understand what I just did.” He apologized for the kiss.

“I'm speechless. I do not know what to say either.” She confessed, smiling sheepishly.

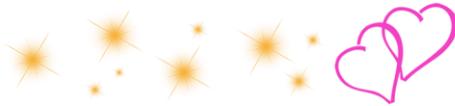
“Then do not say anything. Let's continue our tour, the sea and the sand are wonderful.” Eric suggested taking her hand in his.

Ellen's plan began to work, at least at first, it was enough to leave the two alone to discover some feeling of love. But the days in Miami were brief, and another kiss did not recur.

Soon in the first days of return to New York Eric returned to be serious, depressed and reclusive and Cristina remained as always: in her place of nanny waiting for the orders of the boss. The days in Miami were just a dream.



## *Conflicts*



“Ellen, I need to tell you a secret.” Cristina sharpened the curiosity of her friend and ex-mistress.

“Then tell me now, I'm very curious, what is it?”

“I do not know if it was right or wrong, but it's done.”

“What is done?”

“Eric and I kissed the first day we were in Miami. It happened on the beach as we walked by the sea.”

“What good news! How could you hide such an incredible thing for so long? I really want you guys to be together. It happened as I imagined. That was the wish of my late daughter.”

“Do not cheer up, that was the only time. After we returned to New York he was again the same as before, serious, depressing and reclusive. From what I understand the sessions with the psychologist and with psychiatrists were not able to cure him.”

“I'm sorry he's tough.”

“The worst part is that I found out that I love your son-in-law Eric very much. All these months with him and the children, made me realize that this is the family I want to be with forever.”

“That's wonderful, Cris. I'll help you win him over.”

“Honestly, your daughter's memory will always be a ghost in his life. Eric does not accept, does not open the heart to live a new love. And it's been over a year since Daisy's gone.”

“It's a matter of time and patience. You will see. I'm sure he loves you too, just does not have the courage to take over.”

“My patience is reaching the limit. I have so far supported the children. It is not at all easy to have the man I love so close and yet so far.” She lamented with disillusioned features.

Cristina entered Eric's private office:

“I came by to find out if you need anything, if not, I’m going to my room. I have to study for the college exams.” She explained, he hardly looked at her face.

“You can go to your room, study for your exams, I do not need anything now. He answered sternly.

Disillusioned by his indifference, she left, as usual, her head down. She was suddenly surprised:

“Hang on.” Eric asked.

She turned.

“I have something to say.”

“So tell me, I'm listening.” She remained with her head down.

“Please forgive me for being this way. You're the only one here with me and you see my pain.”

“Yes, I am here, all this time by your side. I take care of your children and give you all the support you need”. She agreed, raising her head.

Eric rose from his chair, approached her, and hugged her as hard as he could, as he had never done before. Once again the eyes of that bitter man and that dreamy woman met, and their mouths kissed, showing that they loved each other.

“Stop this! She tried to reject him.”

“Why?”

“You kiss me and then you ask me to forget.”

“Cristina, that's not my intention.”

“So what is it? Do you think I'm a toy and I have no feelings?”

“If you do not want to, I will not.”

“Eric, am I your maid, the babysitter or your lover? I don’t even know.” She expressed her indignation at the indecision of the beloved.

“I do not see you as an object, if that's what you think.”

“I even understand that you loved Daisy a lot, but you have to accept that she is dead, and you and your children are alive. I'm alive! Do not destroy yourself.” Cristina stepped away from the office, slammed the door.

Excited as well as angry, she locked herself in the bedroom and cried, wept as never before, so close and so far from the man she loved. She no longer knew how long she would endure.

The following months had become confusing and unbearable for the nanny who could not handle the whole situation any longer. Living close to the man she desired and at the same time being so far away was no longer of any use to her until she came to Ellen's house to announce her decision.

“Ellen, I can’t stand what I'm going through. I can’t go on in that house any longer! Eric does not decide.”

“From your looks, I realize the situation is complicated.”

“I can take care of the kids, but not there. I want to work here with you. You can bring the children here every day that I take care of them with much love and affection, but with your son-in-law I do not live anymore! I have not said anything to him yet. I'd rather talk to you first.”

“I understand your situation. And I also agree with you, Eric has to learn to value what life has given him. Pack your things and come here. I'll have the driver bring the kids here every day after school. And at night they go with their father.”

Christina took all her things, packed her bags. She left everything in the room and went to the private office of the boss to give him the news, entered without knocking on the door and with a discouraged expression pronounced his decision:

“Eric.”

“Yes, what is it?” He asked without looking at her face.

“I've packed my bags and called the cab.”

“What?” He lifted his head quickly and was startled by her words.

“I'm leaving this house. I'm going to work for Ellen from now on. Every day, after school, I'm going to pick up the kids at school and take them to your mother-in-law's house, where I live. At night the driver will bring them back. I can’t stand the situation living here with you anymore. Excuse me”. She withdrew furiously.

Eric sat there, unresponsive, listened quietly, his eyes watering. Soon after she left he locked himself in the room and started to break things, threw everything on the floor.

“Dang it! Dang!” he screamed as he broke everything.

For several days Cristina did not talk to Eric anymore, she avoided being around him. When he showed up at Ellen's house to pick up the children, he was ignored by the woman who loved him so much.

There were many times when he, imprisoned in his room, had impulses to send her text messages, but he thought better and did not, he preferred to escape the love he felt for her for being afraid to betray the image of his deceased wife.

A special date was approaching for Ellen, her older niece Karen was getting married in three months, the event would take place in Los Angeles.

“Ellen, I will not stay in the same house or the same hotel as your son-in-law Eric. By the way, I'd rather not go to that wedding. It's a family party, I do not need to go.”

“Do not be so radical, Cris, who knows with this event you come closer.”

“Don't be deceived. Your son-in-law is too attached to the image of his deceased wife and will not open his heart to live a new love. I do not understand this man.”

“If I were you, I'd try one more time.”

“Want to know something? I'm going to Los Angeles, and I make sure we all stay at the same hotel. I want him to feel deeply what it's like to be ignored closely.” Cristina said ruthlessly, after thinking better.

“That's the way it is!” Ellen nodded gleefully, as she definitely wanted to fulfill the wishes of her deceased daughter.

Arriving the date everyone left for Los Angeles in a single flight. Ellen sat down next to Cristina and the children, Eric next to Jefferson, and Joliet with her little girl.

They were staying at the Sofitel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills, one of the most expensive hotels in the city, there would even be the wedding party. Rooms were chosen in the same corridor. Cristina made sure that Eric saw her pass, to ignore him with category, after all, a man has to be brave enough to assume that he loves a woman.

The Sofitel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills was divinely beautiful, with wonderful gardens, splendid pools, magnificent rooms, luxurious and impeccable restaurant, enchanted all the guests who arrived there.

Eric stayed in a room with Matt and Sally, Joliet with his family, Cristina alone in one room and Ellen in another.

After leaving her luggage in the dorm, Cristina went straight to the pool, Eric followed her in hiding, did not want her to notice. From afar he watched her swim like a mermaid in that huge swimming pool.

Cristina soon realized she was being watched by her love and rival, yet she pretended not to notice anything, completely ignored him. Minutes later she left the pool dressed in her robe and followed back to the room, he did not resist and approached her:

“Cristina!”

She turned in surprise, still in the hallway.

“What?” she asked in annoyance.

“Does it have to be like this? You ignore me all the time. Act like I do not exist.” He protested indignantly at his deep contempt.

“You chose it yourself. It could have been all different! Do not complain about it!”

Eric brought his face close to her eyes and declared,

“It's so hard to hide what I feel for you! I wanted so much to live this love of truth and give vent to that feeling that is so strong.”

“It doesn't seem to be.”

“I confess I'm going crazy. I want to have you with me, forever by my side. I know I need to change everything so you realize I'm sure of my feeling.”

“You're right. You really do.”

“I want to love you openly, without sentimental games, to have you at all times, every day, morning and night.”

“Beautiful words, poet! But how can I believe they are true?”

“Have you forgotten the days we had in Miami?”

“No, Eric, I did not forget. Who usually forgets things here is you. Tell me one thing, how can I be sure that tomorrow or later you will not change your mind and leave me?”

“I'm telling you I will not leave you.”

“How can I be sure that our relationship will not be haunted by the memory of your deceased wife for the rest of our lives?” She questioned him fiercely and full of reason.

“I need you to help me get through all this.” He asked desperately in his eyes.

“To help you? In what way? Kissing you for later you ask me to forget and so I go back to being just the maid who comforts you?” She said harshly.

“The truth is that I was afraid, afraid to love you, a monstrous fear of loving again so fast. I should have told you everything. Chris, let's start over, stay with me!”

“If you really love me, you'll have to prove everything you just said.”

“I'll prove it.”

“I have to make sure that tomorrow or later you will not look at Daisy's portrait and cry, hurt yourself, and then leave me, abandon me”

“It's hard for me. She was the mother of my children.”

“Yes, and know that I think it's fair and commendable that you keep in your mind and in your heart the love you have for Daisy. After all, as you yourself remembered, she was the mother of your children, and that will never change.”

“So you understand me, at least in part.”

“You should rather show her pictures of Matt and Sally, tell them stories about the mother they had, and about the time you and she were married. But all this can’t stop you from loving another person, be it me or another woman. I also miss her and bitterly regret the tragedy that happened so suddenly, however I am following my life. After all, we’re alive, aren’t we?”

“You’re right, I’ll prove that I love you. Since the day I saw you with new eyes, months after Daisy passed away, I already loved you without knowing. When I kissed you for the first time in Miami it was a feeling of adventure, love, passion.”

“I feel the same, but only the feeling is not enough to maintain a relationship. There are other factors to consider.”

“I’ll do everything I can to prove to the world that I’ve been reborn to love you. You are my love to start over. I will resume my consultations with the best psychiatrist in New York. I want to heal myself.”

“I hope so.”

“No one will ever want you as much as I do. Let’s be happy together. I swear.” He promised with all his soul.

“I wish you luck in your attempt.” She said unbelieving, heading toward the hotel room.

Knowing Eric as Cristina knew she had every motive in the world not to fully believe that he would be able to get rid of the pain, she still knew that her love for him was not enough to heal him, just as it was not for her former boyfriend.

Discouraged Eric went to the hotel garden where admiring nature reflected on the words uttered by his beloved.

Karen’s wedding took place in the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, that immense and sumptuous church was divinely adorned with flowers and golden arrangements, the most beautiful.

The bride, divinely dressed in white, charmed everyone’s eyes that night.

After the ceremony everyone went to the hotel hall, where the celebration took place. The party started very lively with electronic music, after all the newlyweds were young people who loved shaking.

Cristina sat down at the table with Ellen and the children. Eric was on the other side, at a table with a group of friends.

“Cris, I'm glad to hear everything Eric said to you. It's a good start for him to want to prove that he loves you.” Ellen smiled, sipped her glass of champagne.

“I'm not so confident in your son-in-law's words. I know him very well. Just let him see the picture of Daisy to start crying and whining. I've seen this happening for so many months that it's hard to believe it will end.” She demonstrated her utter disbelief.

“I think you're exaggerating. Let's wait and see.”

“Yeah, let's wait and see!”

“Yeah, we'll see!”

More and more guests arrived, and Cristina's heart quickened in anticipation of Eric approaching. The electronic music began to roll, the guests began to dance and she was still sitting.

From a distance she followed Eric with only her eyes, and he in turn greeted her only by waving his right hand. Her heart pounded, she did not see him on the other side of the room. The oath he had made her was latent in her thoughts.

The music continued and Cristina stood still. Ellen got up and began to dance, was invited by a gentleman who passed by freight to his table.

Eric danced with a group of friends, the song he played was ‘Icona Po I love it’, in the chorus he moved the body and rattled his head like crazy next to his friends. All his depression seemed to have gone away at that moment of amusement.

Cristina watched the scene, ungraceful, sitting at that table. At last Eric was getting what he wanted: to get the attention of his beloved and demonstrate to her that he was no longer a sad or depressing man.

The next song was "Wake me Up - Avicii", Cristina continued sitting.

Unexpectedly, it began playing "Under Control (Calvin Harris & Alesso - ft. Hurts)”, when Cristina looked she could hardly believe what she saw, yes, it was him, Eric Preston approached her dancing to the rhythm of the music, and making gestures inviting her to dance. Immediately she got up smiling, holding his hand, then also entered the rhythm of the song that said everything about those two.

This was her favorite electronic music that she could hardly believe she was dancing with her new passion. At times the chorus was agitated, then slowed down and so the two lovers embraced, stood face to face, eyes in the eyes.

They were dancing like they've never done before, they were ecstatic, they jumped, they turned, they smiled at each other, and he even dubbed the song as if he was saying it to her.

Ellen watched the jaw-dropping scene, could hardly believe that her son-in-law had the courage to dance with Cristina in public, and full of hug and almost a kiss. She thought, "Eric either loves her very much or has gone crazy for good!"

Everyone in the party watched with curiosity the scene of the Latin American nanny dancing with the millionaire widower. At the end of the song they smiled in a farewell tone, Eric returned to the company of his friends and Cristina returned happy and bouncing to his desk.

"Cris!" Ellen exclaimed.

"Ellen!"

"What happened?"

"Your son-in-law danced with me!"

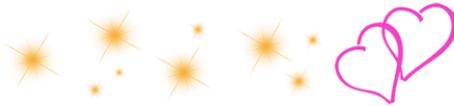
They smiled.

They "Alesso - Heroes (We Could Be) ft. Tove Lo", this time no one danced, they sat at the table, now and then Eric would throw glances and giggles to Cristina who would return with pleasure.

At the end of the party everyone went to the dance floor in a big circle, they danced together the sound that ended the night "Summer - Calvin Harris", Cristina and Eric looked at each other and smiled at each other.



## *New Moments*



Christina discovered love in the most difficult and challenging way possible, it was not in that way that she dreamed that everything would be. Loving a widowed father of two was never part of her life project, but only until she met Eric and everything changed.

She knew that what his feelings for Daisy were something infinite and almost impassable. And how to know if what he felt for Cristina was love, or just a simple lack mixed with love and gratitude?

“Ellen, it's been a week since we got back from Los Angeles, and your son-in-law has not come to see me yet. He did not ask me out, he did not call me. He prefers the photo of his deceased daughter than to love a living woman, of flesh and bones.” Cristina commented irritably, sitting on the couch.

“It must be overwork. I'll bet he calls you in the next three days.”

“We'll see how he intends to prove that he loves me.”

The following day the cell phone of the solitary babysitter rang, yes it was himself on the other side of the line:

“Eric!”

“Yes it's me!”

“What a surprise, I thought you'd forgotten me.”

“Never. I want to know if you'd like to go dancing.”

“Yes absolutely yes. When?” She was stunned by the invitation.

“Tonight!”

“Okay then. I'll wait you here at 10:00 p.m.”

“Yeah. I'll be there!”

Cristina was euphoric and ecstatic, dressed in her best pants and best blouse. She put on her most beautiful jewelry for the occasion, and made the most beautiful makeup, after all it would be a date with the man of her life.

On that night of starry sky Eric arrived driving his new car, a Porsche 918 Silver Spyder for \$845,000, was a stylish man. From the balcony of the apartment her beloved watched him arrive.

She ran to the elevator. Still running, she came to the corner where he was waiting for her.

“Eric, new car?”

“I bought it yesterday, especially to take you out.” He smiled.

“Are you crazy? Spent almost a million dollars just to please me? I doubt it.”

“I said I'd prove my love to you!” he laughed, feeling light beside her.

“You know very well that it's not a car that makes you prove that you love me. But let's go then.” She smiled in a simple way.

Once more they smiled at each other, she got in the car, feeling like a princess.

They went to Boom Boom room, glamorous nightclub set on the 18th floor of Hotel Standard, in the neighborhood known as Meatpacking. The Boom Boom Room had a stunning view of the Hudson River or the Empire State Building, depending on the angle.

As they entered Cristina was thrilled with the surrounding climate. She and Eric went straight to the windows for the view over the Hudson River.

“How beautiful!” she exclaimed excitedly.

“Yes, this vision is wonderful. I hope I'm proving that I love you.” He brought her face close to her face.

“You might be.”

“You do a lot in my house. My life does not make sense, it's empty. In this time we were apart I could not get you out of my head.” he confessed.

“I'll just go back to your house if as your wife.”

“By me, I'll marry you right now.”

The faces came closer and once more they kissed, more tenderly than before.

They went to the dance floor, playing "Outside ft. Ellie Goulding - Calvin Harris." They danced a lot until they could no longer stand.

“What will we do now?” He asked in ecstasy.

“Watch the stars in Central Park.” she suggested.

The couple in love left Porsche and laid down happily on the huge lawn of Central Park.

“It's exciting to look around and see the whole city lit up. Watching the stars with nature all around is even more incredible.” Cristina expressed her tenderness.

“All this beauty is even more beautiful by your side.” He stroked her hands.

It was about 1 o'clock in the morning, and there they were, lying on the grass, alone and loving each other. Eric would have to consistently prove that the wife's death has already been overcome, because Cristina could not bear being persecuted by this past.

“I hardly believe we're here alone, loving each other, watching the stars in the sky.” She said with a smile.

“I feel so good to you that you could have a thousand people around us and I would not mind. Now I realize how much I love you, Cris, how much I need you by my side.” He declared, holding her hand.

The clock struck three o'clock in the morning when Eric left Cristina at Ellen's apartment. Then he went to his lonely home, and when he arrived he went straight to the room where, in the dim light, he took off his clothes and placed them mechanically on the armchair.

Suddenly he looked down at the bedside table, saw the picture of Daisy lying there, suddenly burst into tears.

This time Eric paid more attention to the pillow lying next to him in the bed, it did not make sense to be there, except as a garnish, because only one person occupied that place, which should be rest, but it was a place of affliction and good memories that hurt.

He cried for a few minutes, laid down and fell asleep, overcome by sleep. In fact Daisy was the great love of his life, and that feeling was undeniable. He still suffered too much from this cruel death.

He kept several portraits of him with the deceased wife, continued several times looking at these photos and pouring his pain. But it's not just the photos, he also kept all the things she gave Daisy: her clothes, her perfumes, even business-talk notes, and worse: Eric still wore the wedding ring.

Daisy was the idealization of the 'perfect woman'. To love a person who has already died is more than natural, after all, the same was loved in life. Surely he would never forget her. Love is special precisely because of its ability to hurt when it fails. Learning to move on and forget the person who loved you deeply is an extremely difficult, time-consuming process.

One week after night in Central Park Eric dreamed of Daisy, it was a good dream that ended as a nightmare scene, he woke up screaming in despair that gray dawn. Lucy got up scared after hearing the screams and ran to the master's bedroom.

“Mr. Preston, what happened?” She asked in amazement as she saw him sweating, panting desperately.

He was sitting on the bed, his face wet with sweat, his hand on his head in tears answered:

“Lucy, I dreamed about Daisy! Nostalgia forces me to relive everything in thought, to think of it so that I find it in a dream and once again remember the love we had for each other. I could feel her warmth on my body, as clear as daylight I saw her face and I kissed her. I felt in my heart a strong emotion, as if I had gone back in time, in that time when she was still alive.”

“My God! I'm so sorry for your pain.” Lucy showed compassion.

“When I woke up and did not find Daisy here by my side, I felt a longing and an absurd pain.”

“I imagine. I heard your scream that even startled me.”

“How I wish she were here with me. It is my heart saying that she is and will always be my only passion, my only true love. I will never forget it! I will never be able to love another person as I have loved her!”

“Boss, they say that while we are cultivating the being that left the soul does not rest. Only time can soften a pain, not cure, but relieves.” Lucy tried to comfort him.

“I swear I try, but I cannot.” He declared his weakness.

“When we lose a love, we also lose the past that we planned, the present that needs to reinvent and the future that were our expectations next to the person. You remain stuck with it because you could not give it all up.”

“To waive?”

“It is necessary to accept the facts, to end the mourning and to free yourself to the new reality, new dreams, expectations and plans. As long as your energy is locked in melancholy you will never be free to accept, think, plan and find new possibilities.”

“That's what everyone tells me.”

“Daisy is dead. And everything that exists is only memories in your memory, accept that, bury what has died and free yourself to live a new life. She counseled him again with wise words.

“I know all this, but I can't.”

“Don’t you love Cristina? You were with her yet tonight, right?”

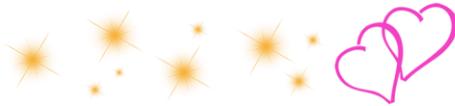
Eric was silent for a moment, reflected in confusion. He answered without hesitation:

“Yes, I love Cristina, I love her very much. But I also love Daisy, and I will never stop loving my children's mother! They are different kinds of love.” He exclaimed with conviction.

“It is reasonable that the love you have for your child's mother remains in your heart. But it turns out that Daisy is already dead. And Cristina is alive. Think better of it and value the person who can bring you back to happiness.” Lucy tried to persuade him and gave him a mother's hug.



## *Autumn in Central Park*



For more than a week Eric did not look for Cristina. And she knew exactly why. She almost lost hope that the relationship with him could become serious and definitive.

She was surprised by the arrival of another fall. Central Park was a beautiful place at that time, the thousands of orange leaves fallen from the trees created the most beautiful landscape to receive the love.

Eric arrived by car to pick her up:

“Central Park?” She asked in surprise at the invitation.

“Yes, we were not there after that night. The landscape is beautiful, we can walk and talk.” He suggested with a smile.

“It sounds like an invitation that cannot be denied. Is it really you? The millionaire widower, arriving in a beautiful car, wanting to take his princess for a ride in the most famous postcard of the city. Eric, you're the dream of every New York girl!” Cristina smiled as she entered the room.

“The other New York girls do not interest me. I just want you!” He emphasized convincingly.

They smiled.

The soft, brief, cool breeze touched the couple's face just as they kissed in Central Park, that late afternoon was promising to reveal great feelings.

At dusk they headed to the Eleven Madison Park restaurant, it was the best in town.

“How beautiful!” She said as she entered the restaurant.

“It's the best of Manhattan!” He assured her with a beautiful smile.

“Dinner must be wonderful, I've never been here before, no millionaire invited me before.”

“Lucky you.”

At one point while they were dining, Cristina questioned him:

“Eric, how do you know you love me?”

He thought for a few seconds and smiled.

“I know I love you because I can’t imagine living away from you. I can’t think of staying without touching you. When I’m with you my whole body shakes. I never believed that I could love another woman like I love you.”

“No millionaire imagines, does he?”

“Why do you say that?”

“Because I was your maid. Which boss thinks he’s going to fall in love with his own children’s nanny?”

“Makes sense, but you’re a nanny who made all the difference. You gave your soul and your heart to take care of my family and me. This is what awakened my love for you. I tried to forget you, I tried not to want you, but I could not.”

“Listening to your declaration of love, I’m very excited. I want us to be happy together, but without ghosts from the past.”

“I confess that after Daisy died I even tried to stay with a colleague of the company, but it did not work out. She did not make me feel anything significant. I did not fall in love. Simply because I already loved you somehow.”

“Surprising your revelation, so you tried to stay with someone before me.” She commented in surprise, feeling a slight jealousy.

“Yes, and it was useless.”

“And the memory of your late wife? Do you still cry for her?”

“I’m not going to lie, I dream about her almost every night. I still feel sadness over your death.”

“Listen, I may not be her, I may not be the mother of your children, but my love for you is sincere. Do not be afraid, let me love you. I’ve suffered too much from love, alright.”

“How did it happen?”

“Daisy never told you?”

“No.”

“She was true to my secret. Another day I tell you how I lost my first great love.”

“I did not imagine you’d lost someone you loved too much.”

“For you to see that you’re not the only one who suffers.” She made him aware.

Embraced in front of the Statue of Liberty, as they watched the waters of Manhattan they talked a little more:

“This whole city lit up is beautiful.”

“Yes, it reminds me of many things from the past.” she agreed.

“That time with Daisy.”

“It was the first time I was here on Liberty Island with you. That day was really cool and fun.”

“Cris, from now on I just want to cry in happiness for loving you.”

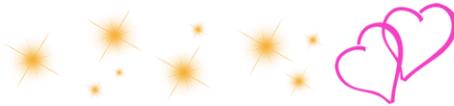
“And I want you to remember Daisy with joy, you have to talk about it to your children. Life may seem cruel on the one hand, but realize, you're not alone, I'm here.”

“You are completely right. I do not know what would I be without you by my side.”

They hugged each other tightly and kissed each other with more love than ever.



## *The Answer*



It appeared that the depressed widower stood firm in his attempt to keep his oath. Cristina was excited about dating for a few months, even told Ellen that she would be asked to marry soon. But something went wrong! For three days Eric did not look for her, and she fulfilling her role as a future wife went to his house.

Eric was in his private office analyzing some company documents, reports, memos, circulars, among other bureaucracies. Opening one of the drawers of his desk, he accidentally found a picture frame, there was a photo of Daisy there, he sat in the chair where he admired the photo with his eyes fixed on the image of his deceased wife. It did not take long and the widower collapsed in tears. He cried a lot as he looked at the portrait.

Unfortunately, Cristina was approaching the office at that moment.

“Do you want me to call the boss? He is not doing very well. I do not want to discourage you. But he was depressed again.” Lucy warned her.

“You do not have to tell me anything. Thank you, Lucy, let me go to the office and talk to him.” She went to the door.

Upon entering the office and come across Eric crying while looking at the photo of Daisy, very disappointed Cristina exclaimed almost shouting,

“I knew it! I was sure you will never forget this woman!”

“Cristina!” He exclaimed, his face washed with tears and frightened that he had been caught committing that crime.

“Eric, listen to what I'm going to tell you, if it's the pain and suffering that you prefer, then keep it up, because I do not want to hear from you anymore! Do not look for me again. I'm not going to compete with the ghost of a deceased wife. Is not fair. You just have to accept that Daisy is dead and I'm alive!” She shouted angrily.

“Cristina, neither you nor anyone else can understand my pain.”

"You think only you suffer! I also lost the man I loved the most in this world. I'll tell you now. I loved a wonderful boy in Brazil. We were happy, but a problem in his family caused him to start drinking and using drugs, he left and left me. His father died in a traffic accident soon after discovering that his mother left him for another man! I learned that even today he is an alcoholic and wanders aimlessly around the world. I loved him more than anything. Even so I managed to overcome and I started to love you. But now I realize that just as my love was not enough to save my ex-boyfriend from alcoholism or drugs, my love is not enough to make you happy again. I do not want a man who will spend his entire life depressing crying through the corners the death of someone who will never return. You know what? You should smile when you remember Daisy. You should be happy and grateful for the children she gave you. You're putting Matt and Sally aside. Days are passing and you do not even pay attention to your children. Goodbye, Eric!" She hurried off and crying with disappointment.

The disillusioned nanny arrived at Ellen's house and went straight to her room. She packed her bags, turned on the computer, and bought a ticket back to Brazil. She would leave in three days.

As soon as she knew, desperate, Ellen tried to convince her friend to stay:

“Cris, what happened? The driver told me that you came back from your boyfriend's house screaming that you're going back to Brazil!”

“What happened is that your son-in-law prefers the portrait of a dead woman to me who is alive! I am palpable, she is just a portrait, a memory that even I do not want to haunt me forever.

“Oh no! It happened again! After all this time!”

“Don't be fooled, I'm sure even after we started dating every night before bed, he was still crying over her. And I do not want to spend the rest of my life competing with the ghost of a dead wife. I'm sorry, I know Daisy was your daughter, but that's not fair to me! I'm going back to Brazil.”

“What?”

“Yes, I cannot take it anymore. If I can't have it I'd rather leave and stay away. I already bought my ticket.”

“Don't do this, Cris! Please! We need you! Tomorrow is Christmas night. We've already planned dinner at Staten with the kids, Joliet and Jefferson. Matt and Sally need

a special night at their house with their father. Did you forget that you helped me organize everything? The children will miss you.”

“No. I didn’t forget. I’ll stay for Christmas. I travel on the twenty-sixth. But my departure is already certain.

“Have you ever tried to be what Daisy was to him? But of course in your own way. What did she do that made him so happy? If you did that might help. It could be that in that way he saw you as an angel who came to save you from this agony. You have been together for months and you still have not got it? You should make him smile every day, show that life is good by your side, show that who lives in the past is a museum and that crying will not bring Daisy back. You should take him to places that please him, to make him feel good. It should make him feel unique and special, just as she probably would. You should tell him every day how important he is since you love him so much. You should make him pleasant surprises, be with him in all his good and bad times.”

“I have to be your deceased daughter. That’s not me, and he has to love me for who I am.”

“It’s really past the time for him to move on! No matter how good you do he’ll never forget how special Daisy was to him. Show him that you are special too, that you are also worth it. Bring him back to life.” Ellen advised her.

“Beautiful words, Ellen, but it turns out I’m not Daisy. I do not stay in this house for another minute!”

“Wait, where are you going?”

“I’ll stay in a hotel until the day of my departure. And don’t worry, I’ll be in Staten tomorrow night for Christmas dinner.”

“Thank you for everything, Cris.” She said, picking up her suitcases.

“Which hotel are you going to?”

“Row NYC Hotel! But please do not tell Eric anything!” She warned.

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Christmas lights colored the entire city of New York. The Preston family home was beautiful, all lit up with those colors outside, the huge tree in the center of the room, the fireplace burning. Cristina had just made a snowman with the kids, Joliet, little Carolyn and Jefferson helped them. Even the intense cold did not discourage them or prevent them from contemplating that unique moment.

Everyone was seated at the table, dinner had just been served. It was only Eric's presence that remained secluded inside the office. He was at the computer, dealing with his business.

Cristina knocked on the door, came in and treated him like her boss:

"Mr. Preston, Christmas dinner is served, your children are waiting for you." The night is beautiful. The city all lit up. I put the gifts under the tree like we do in Brazil." She said, but he did not even look into her eyes.

"You can go ahead and have dinner. I'll stay here, working." He answered without looking at Cristina's face.

"Don't you think of your children?" she questioned him, stirring up a rage in him.

Eric got up from the chair, looked into her eyes and said, shouting,

"I do not want to celebrate anything! Does no one understand me? I want to be alone. I just ask that everyone leave me alone!"

Cristina felt choked, lowered her head, her eyes watering, she left that office with a broken heart for being mistreated by the man she loved so much and before all and explained:

"Children, daddy Eric is not coming. He has a lot of headache." She glanced at Ellen, the other presents looked at each other, understanding the situation.

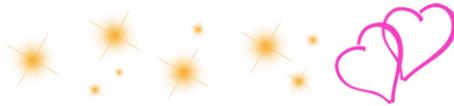
Jefferson whispered at the foot of Joliet's ear:

"How could your brother-in-law have become such a bitter man? Eric does not even care about participating in the lives of his own children."

"He'll never settle for my sister's death. And so he'll miss the greatest chance of his life." Joliet nodded.



## *The Truth*



Ellen's doorbell rang, she opened the door:

“Eric, what are you doing here? Did you come for the children? We've already finished our Christmas lunch.”

“Ellen, I want to talk to Cristina.”

“She's not here anymore.”

“No? Where is she?”

“Cristina went to a hotel. She's leaving for Brazil tomorrow.”

“She is leaving?”

“Yes, Eric. She tired of your rudeness.”

“Tell me the name of the hotel. I need to talk to her.”

“I suggest you go quickly before it's too late. Row NYC Hotel.”

“I'm leaving right now. See you later.” He ran to the hotel.

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As he entered the foyer, he sought his lover on all. He called the receptionist in the corner and proposed:

“I need to see a person.”

“What is the name of the guest? I call on the phone and he comes down or authorizes you to come in.”

“I really need to talk to a woman who is staying here. But she will not want to see me. I'll have to walk into the apartment without her knowing, it's a matter of life and death.”

“Life or death? What you’re asking me is totally against the ethics of the hotel. If I do that, I can lose my job.”

“I’ll pay you three hundred dollars to let me in. Here’s the money. And as for your job, do not worry. If you get fired I’ll give you a new job at my company. But stay calm, no one needs to know anything, it’s between us.”

“Give me a plausible reason why I should allow you to enter.”

“This woman is the love of my life!” He tried to persuade him.

“The love of your life? Now I understand everything. Okay.” The man agreed.

The receptionist put the money inside his pocket and gave Eric a copy of the magnetic card that opened the door to Cristina’s room.

He got into the elevator, got to the floor, went to the bedroom, put the card in the reader, went in, looked for it. Cristina was coming out of the bath, dressed in her dressing gown, went to the bedroom when she was surprised by Eric. Frightened to notice his presence, she glared at him:

“Eric, what are you doing here? How did you know where I was? Who let you in? How did you get access to my room? What absurd is this?”

“Cristina, my love, you can’t leave! Forgive me. I need you.” He begged her as he got closer to her, tried to touch her, but she pulled away. “Before I get kicked out of here, listen carefully to what I have to say.”

You hurt me a lot yesterday. You were rude on Christmas Eve. You only mistreat me.” She responds in a tone of hurt.

“You have to forgive me.”

“Listen to what I tell you. I do not want to spend my whole life having to forgive you.”

“Do not go away.

“I need to be truly loved by a man who loves me completely. I want to have someone who is always on my side, healthy, sure of himself. I want so much more than walking around town, lamenting the disappointment that is wanting you, looking for a look of comfort, someone to dream and be happy with.”

“I love you.

“I want to see far beyond anything I’ve ever experienced, I want more than a dawn of sightseeing and kissing in Central Park. The stars that shine behind the clouds do not light my way.”

“I can still make you happy.”

“What am I to you, a simple nanny who’s in love or nothing but the distraction that comforts you? When we are together you seem to want me, you say that you love me, but then you say goodbye with your crises, and return to your home to cry for a woman who is no longer here in this world. I wanted to be more than your attractive nanny for whom you have a simple passion.” She assured herself.

After hearing the harsh words she uttered, Eric came up to her, holding her by the arms.

"Your absence is the punishment that haunts me. Without you nothing else will make sense. I'm disappointed, very sorry that I hurt you on Christmas Eve and it was not for lack of notice. I took you out of my world and now I'm afraid of everything. You told me to be careful about my actions. But believe me, every day I find myself fighting over myself for the mistakes I am making in not overcoming Daisy's death. It hurts too much to imagine that I can lose you too. I just want your forgiveness!" He begged once more.

"I do not believe a word of what you tell me. I'm tired of all this and tomorrow I'm going to leave for Brazil. I will embark on the first flight. I want to stay very far from here. How do you think I feel knowing that you are still attached to a dead woman, who no longer exists? I can't bear to see you lament the corners and get depressed. Who guarantees me that tomorrow or later you will not leave me because you can't forget it? Seek a doctor to treat your mind."

"I'm aware of what you're saying, I know. I assume, I have all these traumas to forget and overcome. It so happens that when I think I can live a new love completely free from the sad memories of Daisy's death, distrust and fear come to dominate me. That's why I ask you one more chance. We can take time to get over it, but I beg, do not walk away. I understand that you do not want to work for my family anymore, no problem, I'll help you rent a house and get a new job, but don't go. Stay! I beg." He tried for the last time.

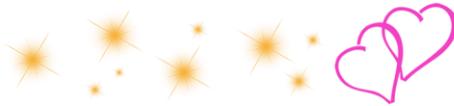
"Enough of those words! Eric, go away, get out of here now! Tomorrow I'm going to Brazil, I decided already! Bye! Please, leave, I'm tired, I have to wake up early tomorrow." She repeated her stern words once and for all.

In a rush, Eric got out quiet, head down, got into the car, drove to Liberty Island, where he sat at the edge of the water and cried, remembering all the good things that had happened to Cristina.

She threw herself on the bed and cried like never before, she felt he loved her, but she could never bear the ghost of memories.



*Be Strong*



The next morning, Cristina woke up early to leave once and for all. She left well ahead of schedule, because she wanted to get out of the situation as soon as possible. Yes, she had made a promise to Daisy, but promises are almost always broken.

Is Eric possible to love two women at the same time? One dead and one alive?

Eric woke up early, was impatient with the departure of his beloved. He still didn't know what to do, until he decided to try it one last time, as he was about to lose forever another soul mate.

He drove as fast as he could to the hotel, he wanted to keep Cristina from leaving. However upon arriving there was informed that she had already gone to the airport. He did not want to give up, drove even faster to the boarding gates.

He parked the Porshe anyway in an improper place, even forgot to turn on the car alarm. He ran wild like crazy through the crowded airport, finding her in the crowd would not be easy.

Desperate to see the flight panel and was relieved to see that Cristina's flight had not yet departed, he went to check-in to ask for boarding information.

"Please, can you inform me if the passenger Cristina Mueller Rodríguez has already checked in? She would board the next flight to Brazil."

"Let me check, sir." - the airline official checked the information in the system for a few seconds.

"So?" Eric was anxious.

"Sir, this passenger has already boarded an earlier flight, there was an empty armchair and she decided to change the passage.

"What? So is she gone?"

“Yes, she's gone, she's not here anymore.” She confirmed to his despair.

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Eric's eyes filled with tears, his cell phone rang, it was Ellen.

“Hello.”

“Eric!”

“Ellen.”

“What happen?” She wanted to know.

“I did not make it in time. Cristina left for Brazil. She took an earlier flight.”

“Will you accept to lose her?”

“No, I don't.”

“What are you going to do?”

“I'm going after her to the end of the world. I will go to Brazil as soon as possible. Now that she's gone I feel a desperation inside my heart. Ellen, it looks like I'm going to die.” He dropped to his knees.

“Do you understand? That's what Cristina wants to show you. She wants you to find that you love her in a way you will never forget. It's the distance test. It's time for you to do the right thing, Eric. You've mistreated her all this time. If you really want to be with her, you'll have to fight to prove you've changed.

Ellen hung up the phone.

**TO BE CONTINUED...**