

Mama

By Paulette F

Joe sat at his desk. He was deep in thought. He was still looking for Catherine's baby. He was still looking for Catherine. He refused to believe that she was dead. He saw her on the bed, but he would not accept it. Diana told him that she had a baby. Who was the father? Where was the father? Where was the baby? He had to do right by Catherine.

He spoke with Elliot Burch, but he was not totally convinced that he was the father. He also was sure that Elliot had no idea where the baby was. He would find the baby and raise it as his own. He owed it to Catherine. He went over the past events in his mind. The whole sordid affair. Gabriel, Merino, Hanlon. All extreme bad guys. He was furious. It was his fault that Catherine was dead. He should have never given her that book. He knew she was like a blood hound when it came to evidence. He knew she would not stop until she solved the code.

When they raided Gabriel's house, he saw the crib. He knew there was a baby. Diana was being vague about the whole thing. She insisted that there was no baby. He knew she was lying. Who was she covering for? He had to know. He had all Catherine's old cases. All those strange attacks on the bad guys. He had no love lost for those guys. They were trying to hurt Cathy. So, he felt they got what they deserved. But that did not make him feel any better.

His mind went back to that night when Cathy told him about the person who was sick. Who was this strange person, she said she loved. He was going to talk to Diana again. She was stubborn. He picked up the phone and called Diana.

Vincent was feeding Jacob. He was telling Jacob about his mother. How beautiful she was. Diana stood at the door and watched the scene. She smiled. She had fallen in love with Vincent, but she knew he only had eyes for Catherine. So, she kept her feelings to herself. She knew that the only thing that kept Vincent together was the fact that he had Jacob. Jacob looked like his mother, but he had his father's blue eyes. He was beginning to talk and continually called for his

mother. This broke Vincent's heart. He did not know what to do. Diana talked to a child therapist, and he told her that Jacob needed a substitute mother. He was young and would suffer from separation anxiety. She thought about Jenny Arson.

After all Jenny was Catherine's very best friend. She would know everything about Catherine, and she would be able to keep her alive in Jacob's mind.

"Hello Vincent." she finally spoke.

"Hello Diana. How are you?"

"I am good. I talked to that child therapist. She suggested that you find a surrogate mother for Jacob."

'And how will I do that. I do not want Jacob to call anyone but his mother Mom.'

"Vincent, he cannot do that. She is gone. You must think about Jacob's well-being. He will soon begin to ask questions. He already is growing at twice the rate of a normal baby his age. I was thinking about Jenny. Maybe you should introduce Jacob to her. She is the closest person to Cathy beside you. "

Suddenly Jacob started singing his favorite song, Mama, Mama, Mama.

Vincent looked at his son with tears in his eyes. He would think about what Diana just said.

"Jacob, I am so sorry, Mama is not here."

Jacob started crying, Mama, Mama. Vincent got up and began pacing while patting Jacob's back. This usually calmed the baby down.

Mary heard the baby crying and came into the chamber. Vincent handed the baby to her. It seemed that Mary was the only one who could get Jacob to calm down when he wanted his mother. Mary took him out of the chamber. Maybe he should meet Jenny. Maybe she could help him with Jacob.

"Diana can you arrange for me to meet Jenny. She could meet us at Catherine's apartment. Father owns it and it has been left exactly as she left it. I take Jacob there sometimes."

Peter had told them that Catherine left all her assets to Father through a trust fund with a dummy name. No one could trace the true beneficiary.

Peter had replaced the baby's name with Jacob's name as instructed in Catherine's letter.

Later, Diana put in a call to Jenny. She was meeting Jenny at her office in twenty minutes.

Jenny sat at her desk thinking what possibly could this detective want with her.

She remember this was the woman who shot the guy who killed Cathy. She was having these strange dreams about a baby and a tall strange man. The man always has the baby. In the dream the man and the baby are standing in a cave. Cathy is standing beside the man. She has this dream at least once a week. What is Cathy trying to tell her.

Diana walked into Jenny's office. She flashed her badge at Jenny.

"My name is Diana. I would like to talk to you about Catherine Chandler."

"She is dead."

"Yes, but I have some information for you, but we need to go somewhere more private."

"Okay. Let me tell my secretary I am leaving."

Diana took Jenny to Catherine's apartment building.

Jenny looked around.

"Why are we here?"

"You will see."

They got off the elevator on Catherine's floor. Diana used the key to open the door to Catherine's apartment.

"Jenny remember when Catherine called you and wanted to talk to you?"

"Yes but she got kidnapped before we could talk."

"Well, she wanted to tell you about the man she loved and she wanted to tell you something amazing."

"Yes, I know. "

“Would you like to meet the man?”

“Yes.”

Jenny heard a voice coming from the bedroom. Do not be afraid, Jenny.

Vincent walked out. He was carrying Jacob. He walked over to Jenny.

“My name is Vincent, this is Jacob, he is Catherine and my son.”

Jenny stood looking at the man from her dreams. She stood with her mouth hanging open. Vincent stood quietly waiting for Jenny to get herself under control. He handed her the baby. Jenny sat on the sofa and began to unwrap the baby. Tears were flowing freely from her eyes as she looked at Jacob. Jacob in turn was eyeing her. He suddenly smiled. Mama mama.

Vincent looked at Jenny. “He has just begun asking for his mother. He will begin to cry. I was thinking you were Catherine’s best friend, maybe.....”

Jenny began kissing the baby, this pleased Jacob who began cooing.

Vincent smiled. “He knows you. He is empathetic. So are you. I feel you already knew about us.”

“ I have these dreams. I have been dreaming of you.”

Vincent sat down. “would you be interested in being a part of Jacob’s life? You see we are having trouble soothing him when he cries for his mother. I was thinking that you could help us with him. Act like sort of Godmother to him. Maybe come visit my world.”

“Vincent, do you live in a cave?”

Vincent laughed. “ Sort of. Would you like to visit my world, meet my family?”

Jacob was wrapping his fingers in Jenny’s hair. This pleased Jenny.

“He looks like his mother.” She said tearfully.

“Yes”

“ Meet me here tomorrow evening.” Diana said “and I will take you.”

Jenny knew instantly that she liked Vincent and she loved Jacob.

The next night. Diana took Jenny to the basement of Catherine's apartment building. Jamie was waiting at the threshold for them.

"Hi Jamie." Diana said.

"Hi Diana. "

" This is Jenny, Cathy's friend."

"Hello, Jenny, Vincent and Father are waiting for us."

The three walked to Father's study. Vincent, Father and Mary were sitting with the baby. Jacob was sitting on the floor, playing with a toy. When he spotted Jenny, he crawled over to her, Mama, mama. Jenny picked him up and kissed him.

"No, Jenny," she said softly.

Jacob paid no attention just snuggled closer to Jenny.

The other adults watched without saying a word. Jacob had already made up his mind. Finally, Father spoke.

"Well, it seems that Jake has made up his mind who he wants to call mama. Hello, Jenny, I am Dr. Jacob Wells, I am called Father here in the tunnels. I imagine you have a lot of questions."

"Yes, I mean no, Oh, hell, I have no idea what I mean."

Everyone laughed. Introductions were made and everyone sat down. Jenny never relinquished Jacob. He sat contented on her lap. Jenny cuddled him casually. Finally he snuggled into her breast and began sucking his thumb. He began to fall asleep. Finally Mary took him and went to the crib and placed him down.

Vincent looked at Jenny and smiled. " I see Jacob has made up his mind. I hope it does not bother you."

" This is the most amazing thing that has ever happened to me. I have missed Cathy so much and to see Jake, can I call him that? He looks so much like her." Jenny began to cry. Father rushed to her and wrapped his arms around her.

"There, there. We know this is a lot. We are so sorry to upset you."

“No, no, it is just that I am so happy. I fell in love with Jake as soon as I saw him. We are connected. Some how.”

“Jacob has that effect on some people. But he has never acted the way he has acted with you. It is as if he knows about you.” Father said.

“I loved his mother very much. I knew everything about her. We were connected. I knew she was keeping something from me. But I let her alone. Giving her time to tell me. You see, I have these dreams and Cathy knew about my dreams. She must have known I had some idea but she never said a word. When she finally was going to tell me, she, well she.....” Jenny began to cry again.

Everyone in the room gave Jenny time. Finally, Vincent spoke. “ Well, Jenny, welcome to our family. Would you like a tour. Dinner is almost ready and we can show you around on the way.”

Everyone but Mary left the study. As they walked, Father gave Jenny a history of the tunnels. Jenny was amazed.

They finally got to the dining hall. They sat down, meals was brought to them.

Jenny spoke about her times with Catherine. Everyone listened quietly. Finally Mary brought Jacob in. When he saw Jenny, he reached for her. Mama mama. Jenny looked up. Vincent took Jacob from Mary and sat him on his lap. Since he was sitting next to Jenny, Jacob settled down. Jenny casually played with his hair as Vincent gave him bits of the meal off his plate. Jenny looked at Vincent.

“ Why he has teeth already!”

“Yes he is quite advanced for his age.” Father said, “ we even have to give him solid food early. And he is starting to stand alone and taking steps. In this aspect, he is like his father. Vincent was walking at seven months. He reached all his milestones early. Jacob is reaching his milestones early also.”

Jacob finally could wait no longer and climbed on Jenny’s lap. Jenny nuzzled him with kisses and hugs. The other adults smiled. Jenny settled him on her lap and began giving him bits of food off her plate. It all seemed so normal to her. Every now and again she would kiss the top of his head. When Jacob was full he pulled himself up to hug Jenny. Mama mama he was chanting.

“ No, Jacob, Jenny.” Jenny said between kisses.

“No, Mama.” Jacob responded.

Jenny looked at Vincent. Vincent took Jacob from Jenny. He began to fuss and cry. Mama, mama,

Vincent patted the baby, “ no, Jacob this is not Mama, this is Jenny.”

Jacob stopped crying and looked at his father.

“Other mama, Pa, other mama.” He reached again for Jenny.

Vincent relinquished Jacob to Jenny. He nodded his head.

“ Okay, Jacob this is the other Mama.”

Jacob smiled and settled into Jenny’s arms.

“ I do not know what to say, Vincent is this okay with you? I will more than happy to be that other Mama to Jake.”

“It seems that Jacob has already decided for us. We did not mean to intrude on your life Jenny.”

“Please, Vincent, this is no intrusion. I love it. My days will not be so lonely now. I have missed Cathy so much. You see when she died a part of my life was taken. I even felt it the night.....” Jenny began crying. Jacob also began crying.

Tears were forming in everyone else’s eyes. Vincent hugged his new friend.

Jenny stopped crying when she saw how upset Jacob was. She kissed the tear from his face.

“ Oh, I am so sorry, Munchkin, don’t cry. Mama is sorry.”

Everyone including Vincent stopped eating. Diana finally spoke.

“Jenny when we raided Gabriel’s house, we found some videos of Catherine. Would you like to see them?”

“Yes.”

I will take you to Catherine’s apartment. Vincent can you meet us.

“ Can I carry Jacob.” Jenny asked.

Vincent nodded his head.

They left.

At the apartment, Jenny put the sleeping Jacob in his crib in the bedroom.

The other’s settled to watch the videos. Before Diana turned the television on, she looked at Vincent, “Ready, Vincent.”

Vincent lowered his head and nodded.

Diane turned the television on. A very pregnant Catherine appeared on the screen. She is sitting on a bed crossed legged. She is rubbing her stomach tenderly.

She is talking to the baby. Diana turns up the sound.

“ Munchkin, let me tell you about your Daddy.” She goes on to tell the baby about Vincent. On another tape she tells the baby about Jenny. There are lots of these tapes where she talked to the baby. She tells the baby about the tunnels, Joe, Father. She talks about Mouse, Jamie. She is telling the baby all her memories.

Jenny is in tears as she watches. Vincent also is in tears. His eyes never leaves the screen.

Finally at the end of the tapes. The room is in silence. Finally, Vincent speaks.

“I believe that Jacob heard his mother through the bond. He remembers all the things she told him. Jenny why did you call him Munchkin?”

“ It was just natural. It just came out. I never heard it before, except for the movie. The Wizard of Oz. That was Catherine and my favorite old movie. We watched it together all the time. Oh my God, to see her face again. She looked so sad. Oh my God.” Jenny broke down again. Just then Jacob started to cry.

Vincent told Jenny, “go get him, he is picking up your sadness. He will only want you.”

Jenny goes to get him. She takes him out of the crib and sits on the bed. She just holds him close to her.

Vincent stops Diana from going into the bedroom.

“Give her some time alone with Jacob.”

Everyone sat down and waited until Jenny returned. She had put Jacob back to sleep and returned him to the crib.

She returned to the living room.

“Well, I guess, I will have to be careful of my feelings, Munchkin, can feel what I feel.”

Vincent smiled, “well I guess you do. Now we have some decisions to make about how to work this out. Jenny, how would you feel about moving here. The apartment across the hall is for sale and it has two bedrooms. That would give you access to Jacob and you will be near the tunnels.”

Father spoke, “ I will purchase it in your name. We have plenty money, you will have no expenses.”

“Okay, I will do anything for Jacob. Just one more thing. Joe Maxwell and I, well we are together. I think he would love to meet you and Jacob. He has been looking for him. I have not talked to him yet, as a matter of fact, I have been avoiding him. You see I love him and I cannot lie to him”

“Okay, but we will have to meet him before he sees Jacob.”

“Okay, let’s get me moved in and then we will set it up.”

Three weeks later, Jenny and Joe are finally done arranging the new apartment.

Joe wraps his arms around Jenny.

“I am still trying to figure out how you found this apartment.”

“You know Dr. Peter, Cathy’s doctor. Well, he owned this one and Cathy’s. He offered to sell it to me. I just wanted to be near something of Catherine’s.”

“There is something you are not telling me Sweetheart.”

“ I will tell you tonight at dinner okay?”

“Okay, but in the meantime, you owe me baby, pay up,”

He dragged Jenny into the bedroom.

Vincent had completed Jacob’s room at Jenny’s. The crib and rocker was placed near the French doors. Vincent had a key to the French doors of Jacob’s room. He could come and go without disturbing Jenny.

Jenny was finishing up dinner when Joe came in. He walked up behind Jenny and put his arms around her waist. She spun around in his arms and planted a sensual kiss on his lips.

“Hi Lover, taste this.”

He tasted the bit of food, “ almost as good as you.”

The table was set for four.

“Jenny why four settings?”

“I want you to meet some people.”

“ Another secret? I swear, you and Radcliffe with your damn secrets. I have had enough of secrets, Jen.”

“ I promise you no more secrets after tonight, okay Honey?”

“ okay, Jen I mean it no more.”

“Okay, can you open the wine so it can breathe.”

Jenny puts the high chair by her seat. Joe notices, but says nothing. He continues to open the wine. Suddenly there is a knock at the door.

Jenny goes to open the door. “Hello Father. Joe, I would like you to meet....”

“Hey, I know you. You are the old guy who helped Diana and me get that scum Gabriel. Dr. Wells.”

“Yes, how are you Mr. Maxwell?”

“Joe. Call me Joe.”

“Well, Joe, I have some things to tell you. I do not want you to speak until I am done. Understand?”

“Yes, Sir.”

Joe sat down on the sofa. Father sat in the huge lounge chair. He began at the beginning. How Vincent and Catherine met to the end. He explained Vincent’s uniqueness to Joe. Then he came to the baby, he told Joe how Jenny got involved.

“Would you like to meet Vincent and Jacob?”

“Yes very much so.”

Just then Vincent came out of the spare room with Jacob, who saw Jenny and began cooing Mama, Mama. Jenny went over and took Jacob who was putting wet kisses all over her face. Joe was dumbfounded. He looked Vincent up and down. Vincent stood still giving him the opportunity to do just that. Then, he turned to the baby,

“This is Catherine’s son?”

“Yes, “ Vincent said “and mine.”

“Well, I will be.” He smiled. “ I knew there was a baby. I wanted to find him and do right by him. I wanted to know him and spend time with him. Tell him how wonderful his mother was.”

Suddenly, it was all too much for Joe, he broke down in tears. Jacob looked “ Uncle Joe!” Everyone in the room looked at him. Joe stopped crying and looked at the baby.

“Did he call me Uncle Joe?”

“Sit down Joe.”

Vincent told Joe everything, about the tapes, the trouble with Jacob and finally how Jenny got involved.

“ We feel that maybe you could be a part of the village taking care of Jacob. He has already chosen you to be his uncle. He is empathetic.” Father spoke.

“We can make arrangements for you to come below. And join our family, since you are a part of Jenny, it would only be right.”

“A part, I plan on marrying this woman if she will have me. Jenny, I was going to ask you tonight to marry me, I have this for you.” He reached into his pocket and pulled out a ring box.

Vincent took Jacob. Jenny rushed into Joe’s arms.

“Yes, I will marry you.”