

CHAPTER 2

“What’s up with Trevi?” Marseille asked.

Sphinx shrugged, saying, “Who knows?

She’s a girl. That is reason enough to never

understand her.”

Mama said firmly, “Now, Sphinx — none of that, please.”

“Okay, okay,” Sphinx replied less harshly.

“I think she just needed some alone time. She will be fine out there.”

“You aren’t worried about her being out on the deck alone?” asked Marseille, raising an eyebrow in consternation.

“Oh, no,” Sphinx added quickly. “I mean, what could happen to her on a ship, in the middle of the ocean, with every other living soul in this room. Hey, now I can finally eat in peace without my pesky sister around.”

Sphinx turned his attention back to the food on his plate as Trevi rushed out of the cabin into the cool salt breeze out on the deck.

Goose bumps formed on Trevi’s arms as the coolness of the night air sent a shiver down her back. She didn’t care one bit. The cold wind made her feel alive when it tingled down her bare legs as she tiptoed over to the stout wooden deck railing.

She looked out over the vast ocean and it soon changed her mood as she gazed out at the calmness of the moonlit sky and the thrashing waves. To Trevi, the night felt like her inner voice. Even when she seemed to show a steady and calm demeanor on the outside, she often felt a storm raging within her.

She reached her arms out into the air to feel the gush of wind encircle her and she imagined herself flying over the ocean whitecaps. As she tipped her head back, she suddenly saw a light flash about five hundred yards off the starboard bow. But it quickly flickered out.

Trevi knew that the S.S. Barnaby was the only ship around at this time. After squinting her eyes to see through the black turbulence of the ocean, she did not see the light again. She almost squealed in fright when she felt something brush against her legs, but the sound was muffled when she realized it was their beloved cat Nefertiti encircling her legs.

“Gosh, Nefertiti, you scared me to death. Come on, my girl, let’s get you some tuna,” she said deliberately.

Nefertiti was a Persian Himalayan cat with clear blue eyes. Trevi picked her up, with her almond cat eyes shining in the twilight,

and proceeded down the stairs into the galley.

The galley had the usual kitchen clutter, with assorted items dangling from the rafters. Trevi walked through the room, sidestepping the swaying dried meats and the bags of onion and garlic. Some of the cabinet doors were open and items were strewn across the tabletops.

Trevi said in surprise, “Well, somebody was in a hurry.”

Bits of this evening’s dinner were still sitting in various pots on the stove. Trevi placed Nefertiti on the clearest table as she turned to search through the cabinets for tuna. She found a can of white albacore and began to

work on it with an old fashioned can opener.

The dull grinding noise had her almost dozing off when a glimmer of light suddenly caught her eye. Not six inches in front of her was a golden medallion dangling from the olive oil bottle in the middle of the table.

She reached for the golden medallion as if in a trance. Her fingers wrapped themselves around the medallion, caressing the curves of the cold golden metal.

“How beautiful,” she said aloud. “This must belong to the cook, but where is he? What a place to leave such a gorgeous piece of jewelry — amongst all this kitchen clutter. Well,

I will have to give the medallion to him.”

She lovingly placed the necklace around her neck for safekeeping. She focused back on the tuna can and Nefertiti’s spirits improved with the smell of fish. Trevi was thanked by a rumbling purr as Nefertiti dove into the succulent tuna.

Trevi chuckled, and patted the cat’s head, saying playfully, “That will be twenty dollars a plate, please.” She smiled affectionately as Nefertiti chomped away, and continued to roam about the messy kitchen.

Suddenly Trevi had her own food craving — and specifically for a peanut butter and

jelly sandwich. She knew the grownups were having a very different kind of meal in the dining hall, but she was somehow more in the mood for a sandwich. She quickly found the jams and jellies on a shelf near the main work counter. But there was no peanut butter near it. She began hunting for the peanut butter but couldn’t seem to find it.

“Where is that blasted peanut butter?” she said to Nefertiti. “I’m sure I saw the cook with it earlier today. He must be hoarding it somewhere. Now if I wanted to hide something from someone, where would I put it?”

Trevi straightened up and snapped her

fingers.

“Aha!” she exclaimed. She noticed an extra cabinet almost hidden in a back corner by the sink and proceeded to it. It was a rather large cabinet and was almost empty. To reach the back, Trevi had to climb inside it, becoming engulfed by the cabinet as she searched for the missing peanut butter. Sure enough, way in the back of the cabinet, she found a large jar of chunky peanut butter — the natural, unsalted kind she liked best.

“You simply cannot have a jelly sandwich without peanut butter,” she said triumphantly.

A strange thought popped into her head

while making the sandwich, “I wonder if anyone cares if I’m missing yet?”

Then she heard a door open and thought to herself, “Great, I’m busted for sure — it’s probably the cook wanting to know why I prefer peanut butter when he made a gourmet meal upstairs.”

She peered out into the galley lit only by a candle. Expecting to see the cook, she saw a bizarre and frightening figure instead — a strange-looking man looming in the candlelight.

She backed into the dark corner of the kitchen as the man walked about, just steps away from her. She knew it might be a matter

of only moments before he saw her.