

INTRODUCTION

*WELCOME TO MORGANVILLE.
YOU'LL NEVER WANT TO LEAVE...*

So, you're new to Morganville. Welcome, new resident! There are only a few important rules you need to know to feel comfortable in our quiet little town:

- obey the speed limits,
- don't litter,
- whatever you do, don't get on the bad side of the vampires.

Yeah, we said vampires. Deal with it.

As a human newcomer, you'll need to find yourself a vampire Protector – someone willing to sign a contract to keep you and yours from harm (especially from the other vampires). In return, you'll

pay taxes...just like in any other town. Of course, in most other towns, those taxes don't get collected by the Bloodmobile.

Oh, and if you decide *not* to get a Protector, you can do that, too...but you'd better learn how to run fast, stay out of the shadows, and build a network of friends who can help you. Try contacting the residents of the Glass House – Michael, Eve, Shane, and Claire. They know their way around, even if they always end up in the middle of the trouble somehow.

Welcome to Morganville. You'll never want to leave.

And even if you do...well, you can't.

Sorry about that.

CHAPTER ONE

The way the Glass House worked, on a practical level, was that there was a schedule for the stuff that had to be done – cooking, cleaning, fixing things, laundry. Technically, they were all on every housemate's list. In practice, though, what happened was this: the boys (Michael and Shane) bribed the girls (Eve and Claire) to do laundry, and the girls bribed the boys to fix things.

Claire glared at her new iPod – which was actually really nice – and put it on random shuffle as she looked at the mess she'd made of her latest laundry effort. And there was the problem: she loved the hot pink iPod, which had been a *heck* of a good bribe, and she really didn't deserve it, because the laundry was...

...also *pink* – which would have been almost fine if it had been a load full of girls' underwear or something.

But not so much with guy clothes; she could not even imagine what kind of screaming that was going to bring.

‘Yeah.’ She sighed, staring at the very definitely pink piles of shirts, socks, and underwear. ‘Not going to be a good afternoon.’ It was amazing what one, *one* stupid red sock could do. She’d already tried running it all back through the washer, hoping the problem would just go away. No such luck.

The basement of the Glass House was big, dark, and creepy, which wasn’t really such a surprise. Most basements were, and this was *Morganville*. Morganville went in for dark and creepy the way Las Vegas went in for neon. Apart from the one area Claire was in, with a battered washer and dryer, a table that had once been painted some kind of industrial green, and some shelves filled with unidentifiable junk, the rest of the basement was dim and quiet. Hence, the iPod, which pumped cheery music through the headphones and made the creepy retreat a little.

Creepy, she could fight.

Pink underwear...apparently not.

She had the music cranked up so high that she failed to hear steps coming down the stairs. In fact, she had no clue she wasn’t completely alone until she felt a hand touch her shoulder and hot breath against her neck.

She reacted like any sensible person living in a town full of vampires. She screamed. The shriek echoed off the brick and concrete, and Claire whirled, clapped hands over her mouth, and backed away from Eve, who was collapsing in laughter. The Goth look usually didn't go well with hysterical giggles, unless they were *evil* giggles, but somehow Eve managed to pull it off.

Claire ripped the headphones out of her ears and gasped, 'You – you—'

'Oh, spit it out already,' Eve managed to say. '*Bitch*. I am, I know. That was evil. But oh my God, funny.'

'Bitch,' Claire said, late and not at all meaning it. 'You scared me.'

'Kind of the point,' Eve said, and got herself under control. Her mascara was a little smeared, but Claire supposed that was all part of the Goth thing, anyway. 'So what's up, pup?'

'Trouble,' Claire replied with a sigh. Her heart was still pounding from the scare, but she was determined not to let it show. She pointed at the laundry on the table.

Eve's eyes went wide, and her black-painted lips parted in horrified fascination. 'That's not trouble; that's *fail*. Tell me that isn't all the whites. Like, Michael's and Shane's, too.'

‘All the whites,’ Claire said, and held up the guilty red sock. ‘Yours?’

‘Oh, damn.’ Eve snatched it out of Claire’s fingers and shook the sock like a floppy rattle. ‘Bad sock! Bad! You are *never* going anywhere fun ever again!’

‘I’m serious. They’re going to kill me.’

‘They’ll never get the chance. *I’m* going to kill you. Do I look to you like someone who rocks pastel?’

Well, that was a definite point. ‘Sorry,’ Claire said. ‘Seriously. I tried washing them again, without the sock, but—’

Eve shook her head, reached down on the lowest level of the shelf, and pulled out a bottle of bleach, which she thumped down on the table next to the laundry. ‘You bleach, I’ll supervise, because I’m not taking the chance of getting a drop on this outfit, ’k? It’s new.’

The outfit in question was hot pink – matching Claire’s new iPod, actually – with (of course) black horizontally striped tights, a black pleated miniskirt, and a blazing magenta top with a skull all blinged out in crystal on it. Eve had done up her dyed black hair in a messy pile on top of her head, with stray bits sticking up in all directions.

She looked creepy/adorable.

As Claire reloaded the laundry, with a shot of bleach, Eve climbed up on the dryer and kicked her

feet idly. ‘So you heard the news, right?’

‘What news?’ Claire asked. ‘Do I do hot? Is hot good?’

‘Hot is good,’ Eve confirmed. ‘Michael got another call from that music producer guy. You know, the one from Dallas? The important one, with the daughter at school here? He wants to set Michael up with some club dates in Dallas and a couple of days at a recording studio. I think he’s serious.’

Eve was trying to sound excited about it, but Claire could follow the road signs. Sign one (shaped like an exit sign), Michael Glass was Eve’s serious, long-time crush/boyfriend. Sign two (DANGER, CURVES), Michael Glass was hot, talented, and sweet. Sign three (yellow, CAUTION), Michael Glass was a vampire, which made everything a million times more complicated. Sign four (flashing red), Michael had begun acting more like a vampire than the boy Eve loved, and they’d already had some pretty spectacular fights about it – so bad, in fact, that Claire wasn’t sure Eve wasn’t thinking about breaking up with him.

All of which led to sign five (STOP).

‘You think he’ll go?’ Claire asked, and concentrated on setting the temperature right on the laundry. The smell of the detergent and bleach was kind of pleasant, like really sharp flowers, the kind that

would cut you if you tried to pick them. ‘To Dallas, I mean?’

‘I guess.’ Eve sounded even less enthusiastic. ‘I mean, it’s good for him, right? He can’t just hang around playing at coffee shops in Jugular, Texas. He needs to—’ Her voice faded out, and she looked down at her lap with a focus Claire thought the skirt really didn’t deserve. ‘He needs to be out there.’

‘Hey,’ Claire said, and as the washer began chugging away, washing away the guilty stains, she put her hands on Eve’s knees. The kicking stopped, but Eve didn’t look up. ‘Are you guys breaking up?’

Eve still didn’t look up. ‘I cry all the time,’ she said. ‘I hate this. I don’t *want* to lose him. But it’s like he just keeps getting farther and farther away, you know? And I don’t know how he feels. What he feels. *If* he feels. It’s awful.’

Claire swallowed hard. ‘I think he still loves you.’

Now she got Eve to look at her – big, vulnerable dark eyes rimmed by all the black. ‘Really? Because – I just...’ Eve took in a deep breath and shook her head. ‘I don’t want to get dumped. It’s going to hurt so bad, and I’m so scared he’ll find somebody else. Somebody, you know, better.’

‘Well, *that’s* not going to happen,’ Claire said. ‘Not ever.’

‘Easy for you to say. You haven’t seen how the

girls throw themselves at him after a show.'

'Yeah, you'd *never* do that.'

Eve looked up sharply, smiled a little, then looked back down. 'Yeah, OK, whatever. But it's different when he's *my* Michael and *they're* the ones who are all, you know – anyway, he's just always so *nice* to them.'

Claire jumped up on the dryer next to her and kicked her feet in rhythm with Eve's. 'He has to be nice, right? That's his job, kind of. And we were talking about whether or not you guys were breaking up. Are you?'

'I – don't know. It's weird right now. It hurts, and I want the hurt to be over, one way or another, you know?' Eve's shoulders rose and fell in a shrug that somehow managed to be depressed at the same time. 'Besides, now he's running off to Dallas. They won't let me go, if he does. I'm just, you know. *Human*.'

'You've got one of the cool frat pins. Nobody would stop you.' The cool frat pins were a gift from Amelie, the town's Founder, one of the most frighteningly quiet vampires Claire had ever met, and Claire's boss, technically. They worked like the bracelets most people in town wore, the ones that identified individuals or families as being Protected by a specific vampire, only these were better...People who wore *these* pins didn't have to give blood or take orders. They weren't *owned*.

As far as Claire knew, there were fewer than ten people in all of Morganville who had this kind of status, and it meant freedom – in theory – from a lot of the scarier elements of town.

This was all because they'd got in over their heads, had to fight their way out of it, and done some good for Amelie in the process. It was heroism by accident, in Claire's opinion, but she definitely wasn't turning down the pin or what the pin represented.

'If they decide Michael can go, I'll still have to file an application for temporary leave,' Eve said. 'So would you, or Shane, if you wanted to tag along. And they could turn us down. They probably would.'

'Why?'

'Because they're mostly asshats? Not to mention *bloodsucking vampire* asshats, which doesn't exactly make them fair from the beginning?'

Claire could see her point, actually, which was depressing. The air filled with the smells of laundry, which was homey and didn't go too well with depressing. Claire remembered her iPod, which was still blaring away at her headphones, and clicked it off. They sat in silence for a while, and then Eve said, 'I wish the dryer were running, because *man*, I could use a good...tumble dry.'

Claire burst out laughing, and after a second, Eve joined her, and it was all OK.

Even in the dark. Even in the basement.

In the end, the laundry was only a *little* pink.

Dinner was taco night, and it was Claire's turn for that, too, which somehow seemed wrong, but she'd switched with Michael when she'd been staying late at the university library, so she was stuck with Chore Day. Not that she minded making tacos; she liked it, actually.

Shane blew in the door just as she was chopping the last of the onions, which was typical Shane timing; five minutes earlier, and she'd have made him do the chopping. Instead, he arrived just as she was wiping tears away from her stinging eyes. Perfect.

He didn't care that her eyes were red, apparently, because he kicked the kitchen door shut, slammed the deadbolt with a gesture so smooth it looked automatic, set a bag on the counter, and leant over to kiss her. It was one of those hi-I'm-home kisses, not one of his really good ones, but it still made Claire's heart flutter a little bit in her chest. Shane looked... like Shane, she guessed, which was fine with her. Tall, broad, he had sun-streaked slacker hair and a heartbreaker's smile. He was wearing a Killers T-shirt that smelt like barbecue, from his job.

'Hey!' she protested – not very sincerely – and waved the knife she'd been using to chop onions. 'I'm armed!'

‘Yeah, but you’re not very dangerous,’ he said, and kissed her again, lightly. ‘You taste like tacos.’

‘You taste like barbecue.’

‘And that’s a win-win!’ He grinned at her, reached over, and rattled the paper bag he’d set on the counter. ‘How about some brisket tacos?’

‘That is so wrong, you know. Brisket does not go in tacos.’

‘Twisted, yet delicious. I say yes.’

Claire sighed and dumped the chopped onions into a bowl. ‘Hand me the brisket.’ Secretly, she liked brisket tacos; she just liked giving him a hard time more.

‘You know,’ Claire said as she got the barbecue out of the bag, ‘you really ought to talk to Michael.’

‘About what?’

‘What do you think? About what’s going on with him and Eve!’

‘Oh *hell* no. Guys don’t talk about that crap.’

‘You’re serious.’

‘Really.’

‘What do you talk about?’

Shane looked at her as if she were insane. ‘You know. Stuff. We’re not *girls*. We don’t talk about our *feelings*. I mean, not to other guys.’

Claire rolled her eyes and said, ‘Fine, be emotionally stunted losers; I don’t care.’

‘Good. Thanks. I’ll do that.’ The door opened, and Michael shuffled in, rocking the worst bed head Claire had ever seen him with. ‘Whoa. Dude, you look like crap. You getting enough iron in your diet?’

‘Screw you, and thanks. I just woke up. What’s your excuse?’

‘I work for a living, man. Unlike the nightwalking dead.’

Michael went straight past them and from the refrigerator took a sports bottle, which he stuck in the microwave for fifteen seconds. Claire was grateful the smell of the onions, brisket, and taco meat covered the smell of what was in the bottle. Well, they all knew what it was, but if she pretended *really hard*, it didn’t have to be quite as obvious.

Michael drank from his sports bottle, then wandered over to look at what they were doing. ‘Cool, tacos. How long?’

‘Depends on whether or not she lets me do the chopping,’ Shane said. ‘Five minutes, maybe?’

The doorbell rang. ‘I’ll get it!’ Eve yelled, and there was something in her voice that really didn’t sound quite right. More...desperate than eager, as if she wanted to stop them from getting to it first. Claire glanced over at Shane, and he raised his eyebrows.

‘Uh oh,’ he said. ‘Either she’s finally dumping you, Mikey, and her new boy’s coming for dinner, or—’

It was the *or*, of course. After a short delay, Eve opened the swinging door just wide enough to stick her face inside. She tried for a smile. It almost worked. ‘Uh – so I invited someone to dinner,’

‘Nice time to tell us,’ Shane said.

‘Shut up, you’ve got enough food for the Fifth Armoured Division *and* all of us. We can fill one more plate.’ But she was having trouble keeping eye contact, and as Claire watched, Eve bit her lip and looked away completely.

‘Crap,’ Michael said. ‘I’m not going to like this, am I? Who is it?’

Eve silently opened the door the rest of the way. Behind her, standing with his hands stuffed in the pockets of his jeans jacket, head down, was her brother, Jason Rosser.

Jason looked – different, Claire thought. For one thing, he usually looked strung out and dirty and violent, and now he looked almost sober, and he was definitely on speaking terms with showers. Still skinny, and she couldn’t say much for the baggy clothes he was wearing, but he looked...better than she’d ever seen him.

And even so, something inside her flinched, hard, at the sight of him. Jason was associated with several of her worst, scariest memories, and even if he hadn’t actually *hurt* her, he hadn’t helped her, either – or

any of the girls who'd been hurt, or killed. Jason was a bad, bad kid. He'd been an accomplice to at least three murders and to an attack on Claire.

And neither Shane nor Michael had forgotten any of that.

'Get him out of here,' Shane said in a low and dangerous-sounding tone. 'Now.'

'It's Michael's house,' Eve said, without looking at any of them directly. 'Michael?'

'Wait a second, it's *our* house! I live here, too!' Shane shot back. 'You don't get to drag his low-life ass in here and act as if nothing happened with him!'

'He's my *brother*! And he's trying, Shane. *God*, you can be such a—'

'It's OK,' Claire said. Her hands were shaking, and she felt cold, but she also saw Jason lift his head, and for a second their eyes met. It was like a physical shock, and she wasn't sure what she saw, or what he saw, but neither one of them could hold it for long. 'It's just dinner. It's not a big deal.'

Shane turned towards her, eyes wide, and put his hands on her shoulders. 'Claire, he *hurt you*. Hell, he hurt *me*, too! Jason is not some stray mutt you can take in and feed, OK? He's psycho. And *she* knows it better than anybody.' He glared at Eve, who frowned but didn't glare back as she normally would

have. ‘You expect us all to just play nice with him now that he figures out the bad guys aren’t winning, so he cranks out a quick apology? Because it’s not happening. It’s just not.’

‘Yeah, I figured it would go this way. Sorry I bothered you,’ Jason said. His voice sounded faint and rusty, and he turned and walked away, towards the front door and out of their line of sight. Eve went after him, and she must have tried to stop him, because Claire heard his soft voice say, ‘No, he’s not wrong. I’ve got no right to be here. I did bad things, sis. This was a mistake.’

Of all of them, only Michael hadn’t spoken – hadn’t moved, in fact. He was staring at the swinging door as it swayed back and forth, and finally he took a deep breath, set down his sports bottle, and went out into the hallway.

Claire smacked at Shane’s arm. ‘What the hell was that, macho man? You have to come to my rescue all the time, even when nobody’s trying to hurt me?’

He seemed honestly surprised. ‘I was just—’

‘I know what you were *just* doing. You don’t speak for me!’

‘I wasn’t trying to—’

‘Yes, you were. Look, I know Jason’s no saint, but he got himself together, and he stuck with Eve when

all of us were – out of commission, when Bishop was in charge. He protected her.’

‘And he let his crazy buddy grab you and almost kill you, and he didn’t do anything!’

‘He did,’ Claire said flatly. ‘He left me to find help. I know because Richard Morrell told me later. Jason went to the cops and tried to tell them. They didn’t believe him or they’d have got help to me a lot earlier.’ Earlier would have meant a lot less terror and pain and despair. It wasn’t Jason’s fault that they’d figured him for crazy.

Shane was thrown, a little, but he came back swinging. ‘Yeah, well, what about those other girls? He didn’t help *them*, did he? I’m not friending up somebody like that.’

‘Nobody said you had to,’ Claire shot back. ‘Jason’s done his time in jail. Sitting at the same table isn’t like swearing eternal brotherhood.’

He opened his mouth, closed it, and then said, very tightly, ‘I just wanted to make sure he didn’t have a chance to hurt you again.’

‘Unless he uses a taco as a deadly weapon, he hasn’t got much of a shot. Having you, Michael, and Eve here is about the best protection I could want. Anyway, would you rather have him where you can see him, or where you *can’t*?’

Some of the fire faded out of his eyes. ‘Oh. Yeah,

OK.’ He still looked uncomfortable, though. ‘You do crazy crap, you know. And it’s contagious.’

‘I know.’ She put her hand on his cheek, and got a very small smile in return. ‘Thanks for wanting to keep me safe. But don’t overdo it, OK?’

Shane made a sound of frustration deep in his throat, but he didn’t argue.

The kitchen door swung open again. It was Michael, looking fully awake and very calm, as if bracing for a fight. ‘I talked to him,’ he said. ‘He’s sincere enough. But if you don’t want him here, Shane—’

‘I damn sure don’t,’ Shane said, then glanced at Claire and continued. ‘But if she’s willing to give it a shot, I will.’

Michael blinked, then raised his eyebrows. ‘Huh,’ he said. ‘The universe explodes, hell freezes, and Shane does something reasonable.’

Shane silently offered him the finger. Michael grinned and backed out of the kitchen again.

Claire handed Shane the biggest knife they had. ‘Chop brisket,’ she said. ‘Take out your frustrations.’

The brisket didn’t stand a chance.

Jason didn’t say much at dinner. In fact, he was almost completely silent, though he ate four tacos as if he’d been starving for a month, and when Eve

brought out ice cream for dessert, he ate a double helping of that, too.

Shane was right. The brisket *was* delicious in the tacos.

Eve, compensating for her brother, chattered like a magpie on crack the whole time – about dumb-asses at the coffee shop where she worked, Common Grounds; about Oliver, her boss – vampire and full-time jerk, as far as Claire was concerned, although apparently he was a surprisingly fair supervisor; gossip about people in town. Michael contributed some juicy stuff about the vampire side of town (Claire, for one, had never considered that vampires could fall in and out of love just like regular people – well, vampires other than Michael, and maybe Amelie.) Shane finally loosened up on his glares and brought up some embarrassing stories from Michael's and Eve's past. If there were embarrassing stories he knew about Jason, he didn't get into telling them.

It started out deeply uncomfortable, but by the time the ice cream bowls were empty, it felt kind of – normal. Not great – there was still a cautious tension around the table – but there was guarded acceptance.

Jason finally said, 'Thanks for the food.' They all stopped talking and looked at him, and he kept his own gaze down on the empty dessert bowl. 'Shane's

right. I got no right to think I can just show up here and expect you not to hate my guts. You should.'

'Damn straight,' Shane muttered. Claire and Eve both glared at him. 'What? Just sayin?'

Jason didn't seem to mind. 'I needed to come and tell you that I'm sorry. It's been – things got weird, man. Real weird. And I got real screwed up, in all kinds of ways. Until that thing happened with Claire – look, I never meant – she wasn't part of it. That was all on him.' *Him* meant the other guy, the one none of them mentioned, ever. Claire felt her palms sweating and wiped them against her jeans. Her mouth felt dry. 'But I'm guilty of other stuff, and I confessed to all of it to the cops, and I did time for it. I never killed anybody, though. I just – wanted to be somebody who got respect.'

Michael said, 'That's how you think you get respect around here? As a killer?'

Jason looked up, and it was eerie, seeing eyes exactly like Eve's in such a different face, simmering with anger. 'Yeah,' he said. 'I did. I still do. And I don't need a frigging *vampire* to set me straight about that, either. In Morganville, when you're not one of the sheep, and you're not one of the wolves, you'd better be one mean-ass junkyard dog.'

Claire glanced over at Shane and was surprised to see that he wasn't hopping on the angry train.

In fact, he was looking at Jason as if he understood what he was saying. Maybe he did. Maybe it was a guy thing.

Nobody spoke, and finally Jason said, 'So anyway, I just wanted to say thanks for helping get me out of jail. I'd be dead by now if you hadn't. I won't forget.' He scraped his chair back and stood up. 'Thanks for the tacos. Dinner was real good. I haven't – I haven't sat at a table with people for a really long time.'

Then, without making eye contact with any of them, he walked away, down the hall. Eve jumped up and ran after him, but before she got to him, he was out the front door and slamming it behind him. She opened it and looked out, but didn't follow. 'Jason!' she called, but without any real hope he'd come back. Then, finally, hopelessly, she called again, 'Be careful!'

She slowly closed the door again, locked it, and came back to flop in her chair at the dinner table, staring at the remains of their taco feast.

'Hey,' Shane said. 'Eve.'

She looked up.

'It took guts for him to come here and try to apologise. I respect that.'

She looked surprised, and for a second she smiled. 'Thanks. I know Jason's never going to be – well, a good guy in any kind of way, but he's – I can't just

turn my back on him. He needs somebody to keep him from going off the rails.'

Michael took a drink from his sports bottle. 'He's the train,' he said. 'You're on the tracks. Think about what's going to happen, Eve.'

Her smile faded. 'What are you saying?'

'I'm saying that your brother is a junkie and one sick dude even if he's feeling sentimental right now. That's probably not really his fault, but he's trouble, and now we sat down with him and he apologised and it's all done, OK? He's not coming back. He's not family. Not in this house.'

'But—'

When Claire had first met Michael Glass, he'd been cold and kind of harsh to her, and now that Michael came out again.

At Eve.

'Eve, we're not going to argue about it,' Michael said flatly, and he looked like an angry, angry angel, the smiting kind. 'House rules. You don't bring that kind of trouble in the door.'

'Oh, *please*, Michael, don't even think about pulling that crap. If that's the rule, are you throwing Claire out now? Because I'm betting she is the most trouble that ever walked in here on two feet. You and Shane drag your own hassles in all the time. But I don't get to have my own brother over for dinner?'

Eve's voice was shaking, she was so angry now, and she was trying not to cry, but Claire could see the tears welling up in her dark eyes. 'Come on! You're not my dad!'

'No, I'm your landlord,' he said. 'Bringing Jason in here puts everybody at risk. He's going to go back to the dark side on us, if he ever left in the first place. I'm just trying to keep things sane around here.'

'Then try talking to me instead of just ordering me around!' Eve shoved dishes off onto the floor, spilling the remains of tacos everywhere, and dashed for the stairs.

Michael got there first, easily; he moved in a blur, vampire speed, and blocked her access. Eve came to a skidding halt, pale even underneath her rice-powder make-up. 'So you're proving your point by going all vamp on me?' she said. 'Even if Jason was still here, you'd be the most dangerous thing in the room and you know it!'

'I *know*,' Michael said. 'Eve. What do you *want*? I'm trying, OK? I sat down with Jason. I'm just saying once was enough. Why am I the bad guy?'

Shane muttered, loud enough for only Claire to hear, 'Good question, bro.' She hissed at him to be quiet. This was private, and she was feeling bad for both Eve and Michael, having witnesses to all this. It was bad enough to be fighting and worse to have

Shane make snarky comments from the sidelines.

‘I don’t know, Michael. Why *are* you the bad guy?’ Eve shot back. ‘Maybe because you’re acting as if you own the world!’

‘You’re being a brat.’

‘A *what*?’

‘You’re going to dump crap all over the floor and walk away? What else do you call it?’

Eve looked so shocked, it was as if he’d hit her. Claire winced in sympathy. ‘It’s OK; we’ll do it,’ Claire said, and started picking up plates and piling them up. ‘It’s not a big deal.’ Shane was still staring at their friends as if they were some kind of sideshow exhibit; she kicked him in the shin and shoved plates at him. ‘Kitchen,’ she said. ‘Go.’

He raised his eyebrows, but he went. She began cleaning up the mess on the floor. In Shane’s absence, it felt as if things changed, as if the balance shifted again. Claire kept herself small, quiet, and invisible as she worked at scraping up the spilt food into a pile with napkins.

‘Eve,’ Michael said. He wasn’t angry anymore, Claire realised. His voice had gone soft and quiet. She glanced up and saw that Eve was silently crying now, tears dragging dirty trails of mascara down her cheeks, but she didn’t look away from him. ‘Eve, what is it? This isn’t about Jason. What?’