

Happy Ending! (Bimbo Besties/Sweet Tooth Epilogue)

By FoxFaceStories

A Commission for AI

It is Emile and Chrissy's thirtieth wedding anniversary, and the ever-growing family and their vast array of friends and loved ones are all invited to the Halloway Family Holiday Party. Magic abounds as the now-grown children bring their own families, with Chrissy joyfully seeing how much her life has flourished since her initial change. And for Beverly and her husband Alan, it is always a chance to indulge in a bit more sweetness.

Happy Ending!

Sweet Tooth was flourishing, enough so that the store was now a chain of five separate restaurants across the state, each with its own mobile ice cream 'Sweetmobile.' Beverly couldn't have been prouder of her efforts, particularly since she and her husband were also busy raising their gorgeous little family. It had been fifteen years since the gorgeous, frizzy-haired redhead had been transformed from a delinquent male burglar, and despite prizing her new life and never wishing to go back, she found herself thinking of her past often whenever a new anniversary rolled around.

After all, she thought, I want to make sure none of my own little wonders turns out like the troublemaker I used to be!

Mind, there were enough little tosses and turns inside her belly currently that 'troublemaker' may well be the descriptor on the horizon. Not even Susanna's *Soft Serve - Mummy Edition* could help much in that regard: the little girl growing inside her womb was kicking up a storm each morning and night, much to her husband Alan's joy, despite not even being at the end of the second trimester yet! Not that she minded: she and Alan had originally planned on having just three children, but after Ben and Mary and their snarky little Peter, they'd ended up getting a little bit excited during one Hawaiian holiday, and lo and behold they also had little two year old Harry. And of course, at that point, who could blame them for wanting another child closer to their newborn's age, given the gap of nearly fourteen years between him and his oldest brother? And besides, despite being a former boy herself, Beverly was feeling quite outnumbered anyway. She'd made Alan promise to give her a girl, and despite his protestations that it 'wasn't up to him, just chance!', she'd jumped his bones every chance she could get, and now she finally had another girl kicking away, keeping her awake, but never upset.

They'd been able to achieve all of this only thanks to Susanna, her adoptive mother, who had let go of the business several years ago and was travelling the world intermittently,

enjoying a sort of semi-retirement. She still got a lot of passive income from the business of course, and often called and talked with Beverly excitedly, forging new and often excitedly-deranged ideas for magical ice creams flavours and toppings, some of which even became runaway hits. But the business itself was effectively in Beverly's hands now, and she still hadn't tired of it, now had her children, who thought that belonging to a family that literally owned an ice cream and sweets franchise was the coolest thing in the world. One thing was for certain: they had all inherited their mother's sweet tooth. Susanna had to weave more than one spell to protect them from cavities, which had often led Benjamin and Mary's teachers to remark quite incorrectly that they showed "remarkable restraint in resisting eating too many sweets." Nothing could be further from the truth, though Beverly was always sure to get them to moderate when they could.

There were other blessings too, the kind that could only have only have come because she had been punished to become a woman fifteen years ago. For one, she and Alan aged slower than other couples. She had often wondered how the remarkably bubbly and beautiful Christina Halloway, the local philanthropist and good personal friend, managed to look like she was only in her mid-twenties despite being well into her fifties, not to mention so constantly fertile (she'd had triplets just the previous year, and was already pregnant again!). Now she knew the fascinating truth, one she and 'Chrissy' had bonded over many, many times: she too had been a man, and she too had been bitter and angry at the world. And while she turned out a lot more . . . *bimbo-ish* than Beverly, they both had gained a great deal of positivity and optimism since becoming women, and more than embraced the world of beauty, fashion, femininity, and motherhood. *Especially* the last one for Christina, who was borderline addicted to making babies.

Not even borderline, Beverly thought to herself more than once. *Very much addicted. But with none of an addict's vices, at least! Like, there couldn't be a better mother. I don't know how she does it!*

It was that same magic, which had not come from Susanna in Chrissy's case but rather from her self-proclaimed 'bimbo best friend' Angelica, that also had extended Christina's lifespan - and good looks - quite dramatically. Beverly had marvelled when she found out, and so had Susannah. Not to be outdone, her own adoptive mother had summoned a competitive streak, and vowed to do the same for Beverly and Alan, as well as their children once they reached adulthood.

And, despite the occasional failed magical topping or cake sweetening spell, Susannah had come through in spades. Beverly could hardly believe it, but she and Alan still looked to be in their mid-twenties, despite them both now being thirty-five years old. It was remarkable, and it had certainly made the decision to have just a couple more children a little easier.

Certainly, it was something Christina noted when she came around one fine Saturday morning, cradling her large belly bump which was getting remarkably bigger each day. She was wearing a gorgeous green summer dress, her impressive chest showing a distractingly large amount of cleavage, and even with her rounded body she moved with a bouncy, borderline flirty grace. She had a number of her younger children with her, and soon they were taking over the store. Beverly had to get several workers to cover them and help them with the free tasters, as well as to select options. The Halloways always made business boom when they arrived.

“Chrissy!” she called, moving to embrace the older - yet same-age appearing - woman. “It’s so good to see you! You’re glowing again, already!”

The philanthropist former male-turned-sweetheart-bimbo grinned from ear to ear. She tousled her brunette hair back and made a pose to the side, cradling her enormous belly. It was especially impressive because Beverly had it on good authority by way of her sister-in-law Olivia that Chrissy had gotten pregnant *after* her. There *had* to be more than one in there.

“You know me,” she said. “I just can’t help myself! I really, really want to have quints one day. Can you imagine *five whole babies!*?”

“I can imagine,” Beverly laughed. “I have them! Well, I will have them, once this sucker is born. It’s, like, a bit easier spaced out, though.”

Chrissy chuckled. “Awww, but having them all at once is just so. Much. Cuteness! I swear I won’t be able to handle it when it happens.”

“So how many do you have right now?”

The ageless beauty cradled her bump lovingly. “Quads, would you believe it? I’m sooooo over the moon. I’ve only had quads like, once before, and this time they might be identical! Angelica will totes go nuts. She loved my identicals. She’s a total doter.”

“Yes, I can’t imagine *you* doting at all.”

Chrissy grinned sheepishly. One of her hired help - who by this point was practically a member of her family - was getting each of her children the ice cream they wanted using Chrissy’s card. She turned a little red.

“Well, we are at *Sweet Tooth*, right?” She giggled. “Besides, look at you! You’re glowing as well! Please, please, please, please tell me it’s twins!”

Beverly crossed her arms beneath her breasts, the ones that were still full of milk for little Harry. Alan put his arm around her waist.

“Just the one, Christina, I’m afraid. One is more than enough, after all!”

“Of course it is! Each baby is a total blessing. Take it from a former guy who never, like, *ever* imagined he’d love getting knocked up all the time.”

Alan nearly did a spit take. He knew the whole story now, about his wife and about Chrissy and the wider magical shenanigans. It didn't make it any less strange when it was thrown in his face like that though. Chrissy was many things, but subtle she was not.

Fruitful, on the other hand, Beverly mused. That she is. Very fruitful. God, don't tell me I'm thinking of trying for twins one day. These Beverly Thoughts better not become Chrissy Thoughts! We don't have a mansion, after all!

Christina noted her slight jealous gaze, and seized on the opportunity, tapping her fingers on her belly and literally rubbing it against Beverly's own near-six month stomach with amusement.

"I super see you looking, Bev! Trust me, multiples are soooo much fun. Just being filled with life. Once you start, you'll totes never stop! Oh, Hannah, get me the *Mummy Yummy Marshmallow Sundae!* It makes me feel sooooo relaxed."

The nanny gave the thumbs up and made the order, but Chrissy's eyes never left Bev.

"Well, I'm sure this will be our last one, at least for a while!" Beverly had responded. "But I'm glad you're getting the most out of it."

"Awwww, thanks! I just love, love, love having my kids. Gawd, I just love them all so much, and Emile more than makes enough to support us. I'm just so glad you guys are going so well!"

"We've got some good people to thank for that," Alan remarked.

Chrissy just grinned. It was clear that the man was referring to the way the two families had become increasingly close, and not just because Alan's little brother Eric had married Christina's daughter Olivia and since started his own family with her. No, the two families had increasingly become a fixture of local charity and giving in the community of their city, doing their level best to help out with issues of homelessness, housing, animal shelters, and aged access to common services. Alan's own family had benefited enormously: their social housing had been because of the Hallowsays, and thanks to their fundraising his own father had been given the surgery necessary to aid his chronic back pain, freeing Alan from having to support the whole family. The gallery in town with his graffiti and watercolour artworks spoke to his new success at pursuing art full time.

"You guys are just the best!" Chrissy responded, realising after a moment what he was referring to. She hugged them deeply, pressing her belly against the pair of them. It was like being drawn into the atmosphere of a planet.

Good gosh, what will she be like when she's pregnant with quintts? Seriously, it's, like, only a matter of time before that happens!

Christina pulled back. "So, like, anyways, I didn't just drop by for your totes delicious ice cream, but also to give you guys a well-deserved invite!"

She reached into her purse and thrust forward a card that had clearly been drawn and coloured over by several of her children quite lovingly. Alan took it and unfolded it for Beverly to see.

“The Hallway Family Holiday Party,” he read aloud. “You are invited to our mega, mega, *mega* bit family get together of loved ones at our summer holiday estate by the coast - see address below. All accommodation and activities and meals are on us, we simply want to celebrate our thirtieth wedding anniversary with those we love and cherish most in the world. Please RSVP before the 16th. Well wishes and lots and lots and lots of love, Chrissy and Emile.”

Beverly had to chuckle. “Well, I think I can guess who wrote it.”

Chrissy giggled. “Emile helped! He just doesn’t like repetition, but I love it! Because we do have lots and lots and lots of love.”

“Four lotses, actually,” Alan muses. “I missed on out.”

Bev gave him a playful punch on the arm, and he pretended to wince.

“We’ll be there,” she said. “It sounds wonderful! And I just know that Benjamin will be so excited.”

“Yes, he totes will,” Chrissy said. “Don’t think I haven’t noticed him and Gemima playing together a lot lately.”

The three chuckled almost conspiratorially. Chrissy had never cared much for social relationships in her former life as a man, at least to hear her say it. Now she was a deceptively conniving matchmaker, with a keen instinct for future couples.

And the worst - and best - part is, I think I’m pretty dang good at it too, Beverly mused.

The Hallway Coastal Residence, as Emile somewhat pretentiously referred to it as, was quite simply put, *enormous*. It had to be, really. It was the kind of massive seaside building that you might almost take for a fancy resort, were it not for the very homey design with large rooms and splendid balconies. And, of course, the endless parade of noise that was the many children Christina had brought into the world with her loving architect of a husband. He had designed the place as their perfect summer getaway, and while people sometimes gave him playful comments about still being a little bit of a snob or a bit of an elite, no one could doubt whatsoever the enormous effort he had gone to in making sure his wife and family got their dream home by the sea. It had cost a fortune, but as everyone knew, he gave much more in charity, and so who could deny him spoiling his own children?

It was Emile that welcomed Beverly and Alan and their children at the door when they arrived. The summer heat was beating down upon them - perfect beach weather - and after an hour's travel they were more than ready to stretch their legs, especially Benjamin and Mary who had been bored and asking questions for the whole trip. Meanwhile, Alan had little Harry in the child holster on his chest, while Beverly contended with her bump in her light blue summer dress. All in all, they were more than ready to be up and about, and simultaneously lie down.

The chaos is about to begin, Beverly thought.

Emile seemed to recognise that very thought, because the poor man looked quite hapless himself. His usual handsome blonde hair was a little astray, and he had several toddlers surrounding him who Beverly recognised as Graham, Jack, and little Daisy. Triplets who all looked more like their father, and were clamouring for his attention.

"Just a moment, you wonderful little kids!" he said, a little exasperated. "It's so good to see you all! Come on in, come on in, before the *animals* - I'm sorry, the *kids* - escape like animals at the zoo! I swear, we arrive at the summer home and it's all bets off! I should have planned for some prison gates, perhaps some security systems. Just a prison guard or two!"

Beverly giggled. She bounced forward despite her pregnancy and gave Emile a kiss on his flustered cheek.

"It's wonderful to see you too, Emile. Congratulations on the thirtieth anniversary."

"Congratulations indeed!" Alan added.

"Yeah, well done," Ben added half-heartedly. "Um, is Gemima here?"

Emile smirked knowingly at the other two parents. "She's in the TV room, watching one of the animated shows from Japan. I forget the name of it."

"I bet it's the new episode of *Crossheart Sword!*" Ben said excitedly. "Mom, Dad, can I?"

Alan gave him a gentle push forward. "I'm sure Emile won't mind."

"Not at all, kid. She's been busting to have you around. Don't tell her I said that though, or I'll have another child embarrassed of dear old Dad."

Ben launched ahead, excited. Mary slipped past to follow, off to find her female friends in the group.

"Ah, young love," Emile mused.

"Chrissy already wants them married."

"Yes, she's impatient like that. Of course, they *are* only fourteen."

Another shared laugh followed, before Emile gestured for them to enter, motioning for his triplets to give him a little space.

"Come on in, anyway! There's drinks and snacks, and Chrissy is in the main area making more of both. She did have one little request-"

“Don’t worry,” Beverly said, beaming. “I brought plenty of *Halloway Honey Haven*. More than enough for her.”

“Ah, that may still not be enough,” he joked, taking them inside the splendid interior and shutting the door behind them. They walked together to the living room, passing numerous children of all ages playing and readying for the beach, and various servants and nannies helping out. Many of them waved or even *shrieked* hello to ‘Aunt Bev’, a fact she took pride in.

Of course, when you’re the one bringing the ice cream, it’s not hard to be the totally popular one. Ha!

Of course, there were other families present too: Christina and Emile’s grown children, who had young children of their own. They cooed and fussed over little Harry and Beverly’s bump as they passed, and Emile at least had time to be dragged left and right by his triplets as they tried to get him to play trains with him. He looked a bit sheepish at having his dignity ruffled, but it was cute to see. He truly was a good father.

“Could Susanna make it, by the way?” he asked, after Alan and Beverly had swapped baby cuddles with Amelia and Derek’s little one and talked about recent goings-on.

“Ah, she’ll be here tonight,” Beverly clarified. “She’ll be flying in.”

“On broomstick?”

“Ha! By business class, then via cab.”

Emile snapped his fingers. “Disappointing. I know *two* witches, not including my own daughters learning the craft, and I still have yet to meet one on a broomstick. I feel positively robbed.”

“Yes,” Alan said. “Ageless, handsome, successful, with numerous children and a gorgeous magical wife. What terrors you suffer!”

“Ha! Well, consider me humbled by all the experience: if you can’t tell, my children like to drag me into five different places at once. Or more. It will be good to see Susanna though. Angelica is here, and she’ll want to compare notes.”

“Ah, I brought her the lemon-lime flavour she loves!” Beverly said, excited.

Angelica would be over the moon, no doubt. After changing Chrissy into, well, *Chrissy* all those years ago, she had remained the woman’s ‘bimbo bestie.’ She herself was not the ‘marrying and making babies’ kinda gal, something Beverly respected, but she doted on her nieces and nephews to a ludicrous extent, and given that several had inherited strains of magic, she was happy to tutor them in her ways, in her own ditzy kind of way. She had moved in with Christina and Emile some years ago, and was basically a sort of third parent by that point, though one who still liked heading out to travel when she wanted, as well as finding cute men to go out with. She may not have been interested in long-term relationships, but even thirty years on, she loved her hookups.

But she'll love my lemon-lime ice cream even more, I bet!

They entered the main living space, and chaos erupted. It was as if the hallway leading in, with its numerous family rooms on either side and children running to and fro, was just a prelude to the insanity that was the ever expanding families of the Halloway clan. Alan was separated from the group almost immediately, pulled aside to chat with the various dads who had formed a 'defensive line', a bulwark against the screaming children running back and forth and getting into their bathers. Soon he was talking about his work, the weather, and sports.

I might leave him to it, Bev mused. At least sports outside of football. Yucky!

Instead, she managed to make a beeline for Chrissy, who was helping apply sunscreen to her babies, as well as her own giant belly. Olivia and Eric were with her, chatting excitedly, a number of their own children getting changed or being changed.

"Beverly, my favourite and only sister-in-law!" he called out, embracing her. Olivia did so as well. "Where's my big brother?"

"With the men's help group!" she said with a giggle. "I suspect they'll have him on the barbecue soon enough. My God, there's, like, an army of children here!"

"I know, right?" Chrissy said, finishing massaging the sunscreen into her belly. "Isn't it totes amazing? We'll need to expand the summer home. Again!"

Somewhere, Emile groaned, and they laughed.

"So I take it we're all hitting the beach?" Bev asked.

"Like a whole dang terrifying army," Eric said. "I'm sure it'll look like Normandy when we're done. Of course, we still have fresh reserves to come - you're both pregnant together again! All three of you! I'm surrounded by an army of bumps as well!"

Olivia lowered her hand to rub her stomach. She, unlike Chrissy and Bev, was just about to pop any day now.

"Well, I'm not missing this thirtieth anniversary for anything," she remarked. She hugged her mother from the side - the only way the two could hug now.

"God, you both look the same age!" Bev said.

Olivia blushed. "I know, it's super embarrassing! We get mistaken for sisters, like, all the time!"

Chrissy just grinned, clearly none too upset about this.

"Well, you've still a bit of catching up to do in the baby department, Olivia! Mind you, you're working, like, really hard on that score!"

Olivia blushed again, and Beverly couldn't stop herself: she giggled in her peppy way. Olivia was quite obviously pregnant with twin, and this was not her first rodeo with multiples either.

"Stop it, Mom! Seriously, it's super embarrassing that Bev here is five years older than me but she only has five babies to my nine!"

Bev snorted, caressing her belly, which was the smallest of the trio by far. "Only five? I'll have you know that's a large number!"

"Tell me when you get to forty nine," Chrissy said casually, her chest thrust out with pride.

"Good lord, Mom," Olivia said. "I'll have to hex you one of these days. Auntie Angir taught me how."

"You would never! You love your Mom too much, and all your siblings!"

Eric chuckled, cuddling his exasperated wife.

"Well," he said. "Now that the women are done comparing sizes, let's get down to the beach. Right, kids."

A chorus of excited squeals drowned them all out. Forty nine indeed. That didn't include grandkids.

The day was perfect beyond imagining, but just as Eric had said, it was quite the invasion! Numerous Halloway families found their own spots on the beach, each with their own babies. Beverly had to laugh at one odd pair: Stacy and Gabby were with their boyfriend, enjoying time in the sun, their pregnant bodies competing in respective twinhood. Gabby had once been a man but made the switch thanks to Angelica once she'd realised her true gender. Of course, it meant she ended up utterly identical in appearance to her twin sister Stacy, much to the latter's chagrin. The two were a pair of brunette beauties, and just like before, they competed over, and ultimately shared, *everything*.

Including their boyfriend and fellow babydaddy Kade.

"Enjoying yourself there, Kade?" Bev asked as she strode forth in her green bikini.

"You know it!" he called back.

"Only because he has me!" Stacy declared.

"Please, he totally prefers me."

"Ladies, there's enough Kade to go around. You know I love you both!"

He caressed the pair of them, and Bev continued on, simply amused by their strange situation.

At least they seem to be happy with their little rivalry. Lucky man, that Kade.

Indeed, all of them were. For once, Valerie *wasn't* pregnant. After she'd beaten her mother to the punch in having quadruplets, she'd actually managed to relax a bit with her own impressive brood. Bev was a little jealous of her figure: her own bust had remained

quite supple and nice thanks to her own personal body care as well as the magical enhancements from Susanna, but Valerie was somewhat famous among the Halloway clan for having the most impressively bounteous bust. God knew she had needed it for her broods!

Emile's mother was the star of attention on the beach too: she was surrounded by her many grandchildren, equal parts fussing over them and overwhelmed by them. They loved their grandmother, and she doted as much as she could on them, but Beverly had to laugh as Bev waddled to help her out and get some of the older kids in the sea already, so that Sarah could have some relaxing time on her towel in the sun. Lydia and Sabrina led the charge, along with Jared and Forest. As some of the older children of Chrissy with families of their own, they were well-accustomed to wrangling large groups, as well as younger siblings, sometimes with a great deal of enthusiasm and stubbornness. Forest literally lifted up four of the young ones at once, making them cackle as he spun them about in his massive arms, moving slowly to the shoreline.

"Well, this is utter madness," Alan said, looking around at the numerous individuals.

Bev held herself against him. "I know right, isn't it great?"

"It certainly is something, that's for sure. I could be inspired to make an art piece just from the sight alone. Perhaps I'd call it something like, *Bustling Beach*. I don't know. A commentary on reproduction, perhaps."

"Well, you're not wrong there. Oh, where is Benjie?"

Alan grinned, and pointed. Sure enough, their eldest was off playing with his favourite Halloway, the two moving to swim in the beach. They were only fourteen, but the first signs of obvious crushes were emerging between them. Mary was nearby, pouting at the pair along with several younger Halloways.

"Gross!" she called.

"Oh, never change Mary," Alan remarked.

The day passed wonderfully, even as more Halloway friends and children and families turned up. Angelica made her usual dramatic entrance with gifts and magical charms galore for each of the children, most of them light-based for the night festivities. She swaggered in with her cow-print bikini and outrageously large hat and sunglasses, looking as fashionably as she was silly, and utterly daring. Bev didn't know Angelica as well, but always enjoyed her company - even if she could be a bit much.

As for me, feeling like a sexy beach whale, I think I'll rest up on the towel for a bit and soak in the sun.

Alan rubbed in a *lot* of sunscreen. Her Irish skin and freckled features burned easily after all. And besides, it was a *wonderful* feeling. And Alan wasn't about to be outdone by his younger brother performing the same service for Olivia nearby.

“We are, like, so truly blessed,” she said, rubbing her belly as her little girl kicked within.

“Yes we are,” Alan affirmed. “Though I’m pretty thankful not to be as ‘blessed’ as Christina, I’ll say.”

“Ha! And you’ll never make me *that* blessed. I love our babies, but this one will be the last. Provided she’s sweet.”

“From the owner of Sweet Tooth? How could she not be!”

“Oh, that reminds me,” she said. “Is your father coming? And Mary?”

“Tonight. They had plans already, but you know Chrissy.”

The two rolled their eyes.

“Oh yes, she may be a bit of a ditz,” Bev said. “But she’s a genius at wrangling people together.”

She looked over at Christina, hurriedly talking with others on the beach in a state of excitement, gushing over babies and news.

And no doubt, somehow, that women is already planning her next event, her next charity, her next shelter fundraiser. And I thought Sweet Tooth was a lot to manage. Imagine being her!

That night, the celebrations *truly* began. Alan’s family arrived, including a buoyant Mary, who brought her own boyfriend to the proceedings. The poor guy looked a bit overwhelmed to Beverly, but then any boyfriend of Mary would: she had never stopped being a whirlwind of excitement, nor a total sweet tooth: she instantly ran to Beverly to find out the location of her favourite flavours of ice cream even before dinner had been set. It was a backyard bash, of course, there was simply no way to fit everyone in the same room given the amount of guests, visitors, and families, but Emile and Chrissy had set out a wonderful gala-like area in the rear expanse. It was set, appropriately enough, much like a wedding, with the patriarch and matriarch located up the front with their closest friends and older family members, including Chrissy’s mother Sarah and her partner, as well as a deeply chatty Angelica. Beverly and Alan were off to the side, near the ‘table of honour’, and she herself was very much hungering for the great barbecue to come: many of the women were, judging from the way their pregnant bellies grumbled.

Alan caressed her stomach, smirking slightly. “Any moment soon, love, I’m sure.”

“I know, I know! I’m just hankering for some dessert as well. I swear, my addiction to sugar only gets *worse* when I’m pregnant.”

Susanna had arrived, her adoptive mother seated beside her, and she chuckled warmly at this statement. "Well, dove, it's a good think my magic makes any sugar complications a non-issue for your pregnancy, or your body in general."

"And my little girl," Bev remarked, feeling said little one kick inside her. "I don't want to come down with gestational diabetes!"

"Or the regular kind," Alan jested. "Because if not for the magic, my God!"

Benjamin sat next to them, idly shifting his fork around on his empty plate.

"Can I go and-"

"Yes, you can go sit with her," both parents said at once. The young man blushed but ran off, and at that they caught Chrissy's eye: the brunette beauty scrunched her fists together and pumped them into the air with excitement.

'It's happening!' she mouthed.

'I know!' Beverly mouthed back.

The two women could barely contain themselves from squealing. In fact, Chrissy couldn't, startling Emile, though when she explained what was going on he clearly looked amused.

God, we're all going to be, like, one big happy family if things keep turning out like this. Not that I mind. Not that any of us mind!

In fact, even quite pregnant, just the thought of it filled Beverly with the kind of exuberant energy and peppyness that had defined the last fifteen years of her female life. It was invigorating, and it reminded her that she had appetites for things other than food. She placed her hand on Alan's thigh and bit her lip.

"Oh, really?"

"Later," she said. "Trust me, the walls are pretty thick here."

"They'd have to be, given . . . well . . ."

He indicated to the sheer amount of pregnant women around, and happy husbands minding large families.

It was at that point that the food arrived, much to the celebration of many, particularly Olivia and Chrissy, who looked ravenous. Numerous meats, pies, salads, sides, fries, dips, cheeses, seafood, and so on and so forth were piled out by caterers and hired servants, a mouth-wateringly delicious amount of food. Naturally, the head table was served first, beneath the great big banner that stated, *'Happy Thirtieth Anniversary to Chrissy and Emile!'*

The occupants there wasted no time getting started, nor did Beverly and Alan and their family when food arrived. To their surprise, there were even adorable kiddie platters and baby platters - selections of soft packets and little fries and vegetables and the like for all ages. Little Harry was almost entirely weaned off the breast, but he still loved the occasional milk bottle, so it was divine to have one offered. He babbled happily, counting his ABC's and

1-2-3's between playing with his food in his high chair. Mary was just happy to have a selection of fries to eat - a treat for her that they often didn't allow too much off, given the salt content.

Well, not like it can affect her negatively, thanks to Mom's magic. But good practice is good practice!

But tonight was a special night, and it seemed just about everyone was happy to go the whole hog, she and her fellow 'sisters' most of all. They ate and talked, moving about to converse with others, and Chrissy - despite her immense pregnancy - was somehow the most mobile of all, easily flitting from one person to the next as if she had all the energy of an unencumbered teenager. It was easy to see how she had raised, at this point, literally *millions and millions* of dollars for good causes all across the city. Fittingly, Bev had overheard that every expense on tonight's affair had been matched dollar-for-dollar by her for the new Galford Animal Shelter in town.

You can really tell she came from humble beginnings, that's totally for sure. She still feels guilty about spending money on herself, and has to make everyone happy. Of course, you can't tell she used to be a bitter guy. But you could say the same of me! Who would know!

Eventually, Eric and Olivia made their way to the table and sat down for a bit, bringing their plates and leaving their oldest in charge of some of their younger ones for a spell. Olivia looked a bit flustered, which led Bev to inquire if everything was okay.

"Oh, it's more than okay! Seriously more than okay. And for once I actually think I'm dressed up better than Valerie, ha!"

Bev chuckled. Valerie remained the standout beauty of the Holloway household, hence why she'd become a very successful model, and also maternity model as well. Olivia was a very pleasant girl and a great friend, but she occasionally fell into a sibling rivalryhood that was purely one-sided: Valerie was far too bubbly and social to have a mean bone in her body.

"Well, you do look gorgeous in your blue dress," Bev said. "It really suits your figure too."

"And what a figure it is!" Eric laughed. "Dad made a joke about a blimp earlier Alan, you should have seen it. I think Olivia almost developed laser vision on the spot: he certainly withered!"

"As well he should!" Bev said. "When Alan made a whale joke he was on the couch for a week."

"No I wasn't!" Alan said, kissing her on the cheek. "I drove to Sweet Tooth and picked you up a craving and you forgave me instantly."

“Yes, well, it was a damn good sweet. I made it myself. And you were a sexy delivery man.”

“Ha! I’ve been doing similar runs, bro. Olivia has all sorts of strange cravings. She always does.”

“Well, if you’d stop getting me pregnant . . . “

She went red again, looked over to her heavily pregnant mother, and then back at herself.

“Are you sure everything is alright?” Beverly asked. *She does seem weirdly preoccupied with something.*

But Olivia smiled warmly. “Oh, it’s just embarrassing at times. And ridiculous! I have such good friends outside of this group, but it’s so strange for them to know I’m a Halloway, and that my own mother has so many kids! Even the magic can only do so much. And we’ve been married far less time than you guys and we’ve got so many more kids. I swear, I’m turning out just like my mother!”

“There’s a lot worse people to turn out like,” Bev said sweetly, taking her sister-in-law’s hand. “And besides, you love your family.”

“I do,” she said. “When Eric isn’t spoiling them!”

“Guilty as charged!”

“It’s just crazy to think that Mom and Dad have been together thirty whole years, but they look the same age as us. Hell, they practically *are* the same age as us.”

“All part of the magic, dear one,” Susanna said. She’d been content to largely be silent and amuse Mary with her magic tricks, but she pitched in now. “Besides, your children might think the same of you someday. You’re not getting any older either. At least not quickly.”

Olivia sighed. “You’re not wrong. And it is wonderful. It’s just almost unbelievable sometimes, is all.”

It was Beverly, as usual, who could smoothe everything out. She took Olivia’s hands across the table, and trained her emerald eyes upon the other woman.

“Well, *believe it*, okay? You deserve this. We all deserve this. Second chances and new beginnings and all that.”

“Yeah, you’re right.”

“Besides, here comes dessert!”

“Oh, thank God! I’ve got such a craving.”

“Me too!” came a chorus of amused voices. Gabby and Stacy in particular were vocal about this, clinging to their man at their table, and both reaching for the same tray of cookies and brownies as they passed.

“Hey, that’s mine! You know I wanted the double choc-chip!”

“My baby is in a bigger percentile! I need it!”

“It’s the same percentile! We’re twins! Identical twins!”

“That’s not how it works!”

“Ladies, ladies. I’ll get you both one, I promise . . .”

It was an amusing sight, but when the Sweet Tooth ice cream and sweets came out, it was a mad rush for the flavours. Naturally, the Halloway brands went straight to the head table, but as the suppliers, Beverly and Susanna had a well-stocked table also. It was a veritable feast of sweets, and it all but ensured that many of the children would go late into the night before sleep as a one-off treat, but the celebration demanded it, and at least the supply of alcohol wasn’t too dear: it was mainly the province of the men at this point.

As people finished off the cakes and trays and extras, continuing their conversations, it was time for the speeches. Chrissy stood with her husband’s help and took the microphone. She looked resplendent in her hot pink maternity dress, overlooking the enormous crowd that was her family and friends, not that she ever drew a distinction between the two.

Here come the waterworks, I bet, thought Beverly.

“Awwww, this is so amazing everyone! I’m seriously getting totes emotional over this. I can hardly believe it’s been, like, thirty whole years since this Emile and I got together and became married. Sometimes, it feels just like yesterday - but that’s the magic right?”

A number of people laughed. Just about everyone was in the know, especially those daughters of hers who had inherited some magical talent, and had even set up nice glowing ruins or supercharged the fireworks for later in the night’s celebrations.

“In the last three decades, I’ve been so, so, soooo blessed to see my family grow and grow. I have forty-nine beautiful babies, and more to come, and so many more granddaughters and grandsons already! I couldn’t be any happier. Emile, you have supported me all this time. You have been, like, such a gentleman, and a kind man, and your mind just drives me crazy - like your body!”

There were hoots and hollers from the crowd, including from Beverly. Angelica cackled.

“You made our home our home, designed this wonderful summer house, and each day you bring so much passion and love to our family, even as it always gets soooo much bigger.”

She rubbed her massive belly for emphasis, showing a great deal of pride in it.

“You’re always there for me. You saved me. You helped make me a super better person, and I like to think I rubbed off on you a little too.”

“You did,” he replied. “You absolutely did.”

“And we’re sooo blessed to have all these wonderful people. Our daughters, our sons, our grandchildren, our friends! All of you! Thank you for celebrating our thirtieth with us, and all the delicious food! Special shout out to Sweet Tooth’s Beverly and Susanna for their amazing work! Isn’t it just totes delish?”

This received a roar of approval, which made Bev puff up with pride.

You know what? I’ll take the approval! We’ve earned it, Mom.

Judging from Susanna’s own look of joy, she felt the same. Alan caressed her thigh a little under the table, clearly enjoying the attention lavished on his wife. Olivia, eating more of the ice cream she was craving, could only give a muffled ‘hear hear!’

“I love you Emile,” Chrissy said. “I love you more than anything I could possibly imagine. I could never go back to the person I was, and I’d never want to. I can’t wait to spend the rest of my life with you, and I know that even after all these years, we’ve still never left the honeymoon phase!”

A number of the women went ‘awwww’ at this, and even some of the men. Emile took the microphone and kissed his wife.

“Chrissy, I can’t imagine my life without you either. I don’t have a long speech folks - I know we’ve all got the fireworks to get to and a horde of kids to be terrified of, given how much sugar we just injected into them! But suffice to say I never imagined my life would go in this direction. I was proud, haughty, and self-interested once. Christina, you are the woman I was meant to marry: you changed me for the better, made me a kinder, more aware man. You have infused me with so much passion for not only our family, but our community as a whole. Each day with you is an adventure, and thirty years is not enough for me to even explain my love for you. Perhaps, in thirty years more, I’ll find the perfect words. God knows I already have the perfect woman.”

“Nicely done, Dad!” someone called, and the ‘awwws’ turned to laughter.

“Well, that’s the bubble popped!” Emile said. “Which means it’s back to celebrations! Happy thirtieth to us, everybody, and celebrations for the whole family! Let’s get these fireworks going!”

“Those were good speeches,” Bev said.

“Yeah, real good,” Alan said. He kissed her. “I’ll make a better one for our thirtieth anniversary, though.”

“Oh, you’re on. I aim to totally beat you.”

“Ha! I’m the artist.”

“And so am I, remember? Food is an art.”

He popped another sweet in his mouth. “And what art is is. Shall we get to the fireworks?”

Already the crowd was shifting, and Bev was excited to see it all. "Absolutely," she said, giggling with excitement. "And then later we can make our own private fireworks, hot stuff." She had a feeling, looking at the energy between Chrissy and Emile, that she wouldn't be the only one that night.

Beverly and Alan weren't the only ones who had enjoyed the night: it was clear from the relaxed and celebratory nature of others around them the next day that more than a few of the couples present had gone at it, including the twins with their shared boyfriend. Eric and Olivia seemed in such high spirits that, despite her heavy pregnancy, she'd clearly had enough stamina to get the most out of her husband. But then that was the way of this crazy family and its extended relations, and they all shared knowing glances at one another, recognising how lucky they were.

In the years that followed, such getaways, retreats, and fundraising events continued, the family members and their friends becoming ever closer. Benjamin and Gemma became the inevitable future couple, and their union was one that made Chrissy and Beverly practically clutch each other in tearful joy when it finally occurred. Beverly had stayed true to her word and stopped at her last girl . . . for a bit over a decade. Yet given their extended lifespans, she decided it wasn't the worst idea to have a couple of kids every so often, though certainly not to the Halloway clan's extent!, Chrissy was predictably pregnant again, and so was Olivia, and between the two Bev felt like she was quite sandwiched until Alan pulled her out to safety! The fact that Chrissy finally had her quintts, and was absolutely buoyant with them, while an embarrassed Olivia was hot on her mother's tail with quads of her own. Eric couldn't be prouder, and Olivia was finally recognising that perhaps she was destined to be near as fruitful as her mother well into her long life.

No doubt Gemma would be the next expectant mother, though she was planning to hold off until after she had finished her education, at least. That still left her early twenties though, much like her own mother. Olivia was very much looking forward to being a grandmother. Chrissy too was counting the days, and even Bev was excited at the prospect of one day becoming a grandmother. It was just too sweet a possibility! The Katz family, at least, were a little more conservative on the childbearing side than their Halloway relatives. But both would be very productive well into the future, and continue to explore the magical side of things - Alan and Eric got a taste of womanly medicine when they too got to experience life as Alanna and Eric a week a year, just like Emile as Emily. They were the happiest - and no doubt largest - family there ever was.

The End