

We stand in the hallway. Squaring up. Facing off. Like a couple of wild west desperados. Itchy trigger fingers and tumbleweeds. I can almost hear the first reedy strains of 'The Good, the Bad and the Ugly' drifting by me on the wind. Ennio Morricone couldn't have scored this scene better if he were here in person.

The ultrasound picture lies on the floor between us. Taunting me.

"I know you don't want a baby, Astrid," she says.

I don't know what to say, so I say nothing.

"You didn't want Eden."

"No," I reply. "I didn't wanted Eden until she was in my arms. I love my daughter, Ella."

Her eyes narrow. I can feel her thoughts. Her judgment. My skin prickles.

"Give it to me," she says.

"What?"

"I'll adopt your baby. Astrid. I will do anything." There is a desperate edge to her voice that startles me. She sounds insane, deranged. "You want to start your food truck? I'll buy you the bloody truck. Any truck you like. Any fixtures you like. I'll back you. I'll get you marketing, PR, celebs queued up for miles to buy your food. Anything you want. Just please, please, for the love of everything good in this world, give me the baby."

I look away from her. Shift my weight. "I don't... That's not-"

"Not a good idea? Don't you think I'd be a good mother?"

Her voice echoes off the tile and I find myself shrinking back from her.