

Prologue

I hung up first, or did he? It was as if someone had called me from another dimension. I was cold, crying and shaking uncontrollably. Like a robot I walked into the kitchen, poured myself a large glass of red wine, and somehow made my way to the basement. I had to get the box. Like yesterday, I remembered putting it on the highest shelf in the closet, way in back, as if never intending to need it again. Through soggy eyes, I pulled it down. My knees gave way and I sat on the floor. I opened the box, and with hands trembling, began to dig through all the medical reports, bills, pictures, notes, magazines and more bills, until I found them. My journals.

“Mom?”

Startled, I looked up to see the worried eyes of my nine-year old daughter Sarah. “Are you okay?”

“No,” I said bluntly. Maybe a better mother would have lied: *Everything is fine, honey, go back to what you were doing.* But our relationship has never been based on deception; she saw my tear-soaked face, and crouched beside me.

“What’s going on? Who was that on the phone?”

I touched her face. “You were only two when it started,” I sighed.

“When *what* started?”

“Something I should have told you about before now, but I wasn’t sure you were ready to hear.” I took a deep breath and wiped my tears. “I guess now’s the time.”