

**Extract from *The Sunrise Sisterhood* by Cathy Bramley- publishing on 11<sup>th</sup> May from Orion Fiction**

Liz was having major regrets, she'd made a terrible mistake; having Clare and Skye here together had disaster written all over it.

As time ticked on, she was getting more and more hot and sweaty about Clare's imminent arrival. She would have had a glass of wine to take the edge off, but it was still early, and if she had one, she'd want another. She drank some cold water instead and shuddered as it hit her stomach.

The oven timer buzzed and she rushed to take the scones out. They looked perfect : evenly risen and golden brown on top. At least she'd got something right. She was kicking herself for not telling Clare personally about Skye. It was Liz's house, after all; she was the one who'd invited Clare to spend the summer here. Come to Salcombe as soon as you can, she'd said. It'll be just you, me and Ivy, she'd said.

But now it wouldn't be just the three of them and Liz hadn't let Clare know. Because Mike had said he would do it and she'd been happy to leave that particular nettle for him to grasp. Why had she given him such an important task? He had all the tact of Donald Trump. She was a coward, that was why. A total coward.

Liz transferred the scones to a cooling rack, burning her fingers but too distracted to find a spatula.

And then there was Skye, whom she'd been lying to ever since she'd arrived at Clemency House this morning with a travel-worn rucksack and a big happy smile.

'Clare will be thrilled to have you here,' Liz had declared.

'She's been looking after a baby on her own for almost a year – believe me, she'll be glad of an extra pair of hands.'

What had possessed her to say all that ? She had no one to blame for this deception but herself. And Mike, of course. Causing havoc in her life again.

'They smell amazing,' Skye's voice startled her; she wasn't used to having another person in the house. 'You're making my stomach rumble.'

Skye had spent the last hour at the dining table on her laptop learning about the business. She was trawling through The Seaside Gourmet Girls' website, clicking on every picture, reading past menus and jotting notes on a pad. With her blonde hair tied up in a coloured scarf, her deep suntan and bare feet tucked underneath her, she looked like she'd walked straight off a beach in Bali. She could be nineteen, thought Liz fondly, not twenty-nine.

'It's our little tradition,' Liz replied. 'Jen and I always had a cream tea ready for Clare when she arrived. I didn't know whether to do it or not, now that her mum's not here. But in the end I thought it would be worse if I didn't.'

'I'm sure she'll appreciate it. It's nice that you've got your special things,' Skye said with a touch of wistfulness.

Liz could have bitten her tongue off for being so insensitive. She and Skye had no special things. Skye hadn't even visited her here very often. More cowardly behaviour on her part, Liz acknowledged.

Even though Jen had been happy for Liz to be Skye's godmother, it felt a bit like rubbing Mike's infidelity in Jen's face by inviting Skye to stay with her in Salcombe.

Even more so once Jen had moved down here from Bath and they had started up in business together. Clare had spent all her holidays here and had helped them out in the summer when she was a student. It had always been Clare's place rather than Skye's.

And although Liz had stayed friends with Mike when he'd married for a second and then a third time, she'd never been friendly with the new wives. All of which added up to Liz having a far stronger bond with her first god-daughter.

Still, Liz had the next few weeks to make it up to her; she'd show Skye that she was every bit as welcome at Clemency House as Clare was.