Natia's black hair kept falling into her eyes. She kept looking at her surroundings, her head going back and forth, back and forth. She felt certain that to the people around her, she looked like an animated cartoon with her head going back and forth like the Tazmanian Devil, but she didn't care. She wanted to know where she was and where she was going.

"Where am I?" she cried out.

"Isn't it obvious? You're on an airplane," said a voice on her left.

Natia turned her head towards the voice and found herself facing her older sister, Margaret. Natia looked around the plane again and realized that the once empty leather seats had filled with people. Natia turned back to her sister. "Where did all these people come from?" she asked. "And where are we going?"

Margaret looked around the plane at the newcomers. "They're passengers, I guess. And I don't know where we're going. We could be going to somewhere and we could be going to nowhere. I guess we are going to find out," she replied.

Typical Margaret, answering my questions with a stupid fortune cookie response, thought Natia. Hearing a scratching sound, Natia turned to her sister and found that she was writing on an airsickness bag. "Margaret, what are you doing?" asked Natia.

"Writing," said Margaret.

Well obviously. Suddenly the plane jolted. Natia was thrown into Margaret, and Margaret was thrown into the man next to her. Looking out the window, Natia saw one of the wings of the plane catch fire, and felt the plane quickly losing altitude. "What's happening?" cried Natia.

"We're crashing," said Margaret. Calmly she handed Natia the airsickness bag.
"What the hell is the matter with you?" cried Natia. "We are about to die, and you are giving me a barf bag. What am I going to do with it? Make a parachute?"

"Read it."

Read it. Looking at the bag, Natia read five simple words. 'You did this to me'. And the plane hit the ocean with a loud boom.

Natia instantly woke up. She was wrapped in her warm blankets on her bed and she was looking at her bedroom door. It was just a nightmare. She slowly lay back down on her bed and looked at her ceiling. Closing her eyes she did the exercise that her therapist had recommended. She began listing things that she knew were real. "My name is Natia. My sister Margaret is dead, she died in a plane crash on her way to college. She died a year ago." She repeated these words over and over again until her heart stopped thudding against her chest.

As she got out of bed, Natia looked around her room. She looked past the posters of her favorite bands and her CD collection. She was looking for one particular thing. "There you are," she whispered to herself. It was a picture of her and Margaret climbing rocks in their home state of Colorado. "I can't believe we were sisters," she whispered again. Natia's dark, tanned skin, blue eyes, pitch-black hair, and athletic figure were a contrast to Margaret, who had been taller and slimmer than Natia. She had strawberry blonde hair, brown eyes, and lighter skin. To any other person, Margaret's eyes would be full of laughter and joy, but to Natia her eyes were now filled with pain and regret. The regret of never living a full and happy life. With that thought, Natia felt the pain in her chest again. Her therapist call it grief; she called it cinder blocks sitting on her chest.

Natia got dressed and was just about to leave her bedroom when she looked out her window and saw a parked car that did not belong there. One more thing to add to the list of things that are real. "Dad is back in our lives."

The first thing Natia noticed when she left her bedroom was her little brother Marcus sitting on the stairs. "What are you doing?" laughed Natia. As much as she tried to stop herself, she couldn't help laughing at the ten year old boy who had half his head sticking out of a stair-railing.
"I'm trying to hear what Mom and Dad are taking about," he said, his brown eyes filled with curiosity. "I think that they're talking about you," he continued. "Mom wants him to do something that he apparently doesn't want to do."

"Probably wants him to spend time with us, to make up for the past five years he wasn't around," said Natia.

"Why do you do that?" asked Marcus, his brown hair falling into his eyes.

"Do what?"

"Turn everything around, so that it is always against Dad. It's as if you don't want me to forget that he left five years ago," he said. "Don't worry, I am never going to forget that, but don't you think that it is about time you started to forgive him?"

"Marcus, you don't understand. He ruined this family. When he left, he caused all of us harm. You lost a father figure. Margaret had to turn into an adult and help Mom take care of us, which eventually led to her going to California to college; to get away from us, which is how she died. Mom went into a depression for the first year he was gone. And I have intense trust issues that make it difficult for me to get near people. He doesn't deserve another chance. As far as I'm concerned, he caused Margaret's death." There it was again. The feeling of pain and suffocation whenever she thought about Margaret. This 'cinder block' feeling had started the minute she had found out about Margaret's death. Marcus opened his mouth as if to say something, but he never got the chance. At that moment their mother Georgia called them down for breakfast.

Georgia was the exact image of her daughter, Natia. The only difference between them was that she had brown eyes and Natia had blue. "All right guys, we have pancakes, eggs, and bacon, so help yourselves," Georgia said with a smile. "Natia Honey, I have your favorite toppings for your pancakes. Chocolate chips, peanut butter, and maple syrup."

She is up to something, thought Natia. Her mother was a pro at cooking up the kids favorite meals in order to soften them up.

"Hurry up and eat. Your mother wants to tell you something," said a voice in the background. Their father James came out of the shadows to face his old family. If Natia looked like her Mom, then Margaret had looked like her father. James had strawberry
blonde hair and light skin. Everything about his physical being had been given to Margaret and Marcus. The only thing that Natia had inherited from him was his blue eyes. And she hated that.

"Hi Dad," said Marcus as he went to hug his father.

Traitor. Natia sat down at the table and started to eat her breakfast. She waited for the rest of her family to join her. Except for her father. She didn't consider him apart of her family. As the meal before them slowly disappeared before them, Natia became restless. She wanted to know why her mother had made her favorite breakfast and why James was there. As the dishes were swept away, she knew she was soon going to get her answer.

Georgia started off, "Your father and I were talking."

"Your mother was talking," James quickly said. "I was being bossed around and told what to do."

Georgia sent a venomous look across the table at her ex-husband and continued, "We thought that we could use some one-on-one time with you two. I am going to spend the day with Marcus. Natia, you are going to spend it with your father."

Georgia might as well have slammed a brick into her daughter’s head. Natia started looking at her mother, her brother, and James, and then back to her mother. Now she knew why her mother had made her favorite meal. She was sending her daughter into the lion's den. Natia looked at James and saw that he had the same horrified look on his face. This was not his idea.

"Mom, are you sure about this?" asked Natia. "Maybe I could spend the day with you, and Marcus could spend it with him."

"Georgia, I agree with Natia," James said. "I don't think that this is such a good idea."

Of course you don't think that it is a good idea, thought Natia. That would require you to want to spend time with me, or even remotely like me.

"That is enough out of you two," snarled Georgia. She was not happy. "You two are going to spend the day together, and you two are going to like it."

A half-an-hour later, Georgia and Marcus left for their 'Mommy and Me time'.

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James and Natia left the house five minutes later and climbed into his Mazda.

"I have something great planned for us," said James. "Something really fun, I think that you are going to like it."

"Great," muttered Natia. This cannot be good.

The place that James took Natia was a tea party restaurant that he had taken Margaret and Natia to when they were little girls. Before he had abandoned his family for another woman. "Little Miss Poppers," said Natia. She had never liked this place. The waitresses had always treated her like a little kid. She hated this place.

The waitress who served them had abnormally large eyes and a fake smile. "How are you guys doing?" giggled the waitress. "And who is this little girl?"

When the waitress left, Natia turned to James. "Why do you hate me?" asked Natia. She couldn't believe that he was doing this to her.

"Why would you think I hate you?" asked James. He was still trying not to laugh after what the waitress had asked his daughter.

Natiagave a slight laugh. "Because you brought me here."

"I thought you liked this place."

"The last time you brought me here was when I was eleven years old, and I hated this place back then as well. Actually, if I remember, you left us here when you ditched us for that blonde chick five years ago." Natia would have continued, but then the waitress appeared again.

"Would the little lady like a tea party hat?" asked the waitress.

"For the love of God," burst Natia. "I am sixteen. I am not a five year old girl who sits with a party hat on my head, sipping tea!" Natia stood up and left the table, headed for the car in the parking lot. James laid a five dollar bill on the table and followed her out to the car. The ride to their next stop was quiet. Natia didn't talk, and James didn't push it. The next stop they made was a little hole-the-wall, vintage clothing store called, Something Old Something New. It was Natia's favorite place to shop. "How did you know about this place?" asked Natia.

"I have my sources," James said.
"Did Mom tell you?"
"Maybe."

The minute they walked into the shop, Natia went to the back of the store to look at their scarves, and she started trying them on.

"While we're here, why don't we talk?" said James.
"About what?"
"I don't know. How about we talk about why you hate me."

Natia stopped trying on scarves and turned to face James. "I don't hate you," she said.

"You could have fooled me."

"In all honesty," she said, "I don't know how I feel about you. I was mad at you when you left us five years ago. That anger quickly turned into rage, which turned into hatred when Margaret died. It wasn't until about a month ago that I realized that I didn't know how I felt any more. I think that I just finally went numb to all the pain, anger, and hatred. There is only one person that I truly hate now." Natia started walking towards the door of the shop.

"Who is that?" asked James.

Natia stopped at the door and turned around to face James. She had tears running down her face. "Margaret. I hate Margaret, Dad." This was the first time in over three years that she had called her father Dad, and she had never voiced her true feelings about Margaret. They both got into James's car and headed back to the house and met Georgia and Marcus there.

"How did it go?" asked Georgia.

"Fine," said Natia. "It went really well. We had a great bonding time, didn't we Dad?"

"Oh yeah, it went great," smiled James.

Georgia looked between Natia and James. Finally she shrugged her shoulders as if to say that she didn't want to know what had happened. At least they hadn't killed each other.
"All right. Are you staying for dinner?" Georgia asked James.

"No, I have to get back to my hotel room."

James was about to leave the house when he turned around and gave both of his kids a hug and kissed Natia on the forehead. This was one of the first signs of affection shown towards Natia by James in a long time. That night Natia couldn't sleep so she went down to the kitchen for a midnight snack. In the kitchen she found her mother eating some ice cream. "That looks good. Is there any left for me?" she asked her mom. Georgia nodded and Natia got some ice cream and sat down next to her mother.

"So where did you two go today?" asked Georgia.

"First he took me to Little Miss Poppers where I had a 'disagreement' with the waitress," said Natia with a smile. "After that we went to Something Old Something New. We talked about my feelings towards him and Margaret's death."

"I know. Your father told me what you said."

"Does hating her make me crazy?" Natia asked.

"I don't think so."

Natia's eyes filled with tears. "After Margaret's death I hated everyone. I hated you for letting her get on that plane. I hated Dad for leaving us and then coming back out of the blue. I hated myself for not telling her goodbye when I had the chance. And most of all I hated Margaret for leaving us forever." After Natia said that, she began to cry uncontrollably, and Georgia started to cry with her. Mother and daughter held on to each other for support until they both stopped crying. After they were done, Natia wiped her eyes and started to head out of the kitchen. She stopped when she reached the kitchen door and turned around to face her mother. "Mom, I am still in a lot of pain over what happened with Dad and Margaret, but I think I am finally starting to let go of some of that. I think I can move on with my life."

Georgia's eyes filled up with tears again. "That's great, Baby. I'm glad."

Natia left the kitchen and began going up the stairs. With each step she took she felt one of the cinder blocks that had been resting on her chest fall off. Somehow she knew that she would never have a nightmare about Margaret again. The cinder blocks were gone.