

The notification sat there on her phone, practically calling out her name.

Mackie had spent the rest of the day away from Stella Mare. She took herself out for a fried seafood basket at Ossie's Lunch, late in the afternoon, and wandered the roads up to Black's Harbor, watching the ferries coming in and heading out toward Grand Manan, yet another place she'd not yet visited. As a distraction, she looked up hiking trails on the island on her phone, but the voice mail notification mocked her.

She and Murphy finally headed back to Stella Mare under cover of dusk. Mackie would have preferred full dark, but the sunset was so late this time of year that wasn't possible, at least not with her need for sleep. But she crept in through back streets, avoiding the main street, glad that her dusty Corolla was unlikely to garner any attention. She knew it was crazy, but she felt like everyone was looking at her. *Look! There's that crazy girl from Massachusetts who thinks she's Eric's daughter. What a wacko!*

Mackie shook her head. This was crazy, letting her own mind dictate what other people might be thinking. And about her of all things. Other people had their own stuff to think about, didn't they? Still, she felt better when she'd cleared her stuff from the car and she and Murphy headed indoors for the night. Murphy took his time to water the garden, but Mackie called him in sooner than he liked. When she clicked the front door locked after he wagged in, Mackie felt a sense of relief.

But then she had to face that voice mail notification. Mackie made a cup of chamomile tea and sat down on the comfy couch. The phone sat on the coffee table. When she touched it, the notification leaped out at her again.

How much damage could a voice mail do? Surely it would be okay to listen to what Kathy said. The worst thing might be to tell Mackie off and Mackie noted that she'd already been told off by a master that morning. How much worse could it be?