

Five

A single stocking would not have been enough. She needed a whole basket. They mingled together in a lovely mottled heap, silken tendrils winding out across the bathroom tiles. She keeps them in wait. She knows how things will wrap up, and she's not the type to throw her back to the wall.

She has never been much good at choices. She has had her share of brothers and uncles, though they all signed happily on. How long could she play the little girl to such a big family?

She prepares her souvenirs in advance of their happening. A careless scrapbook, a belted nightdress, the smudged glass of Muscat. It is all over much too quickly. She could not help that her voice caught in her throat, and she couldn't greet such a singular lover.

