



Last Man on Earth  
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## **Last Man on Earth**

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## **Last Man on Earth**

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### **Dedication**

Dedicated to my loving husband, Leo. This book started as an erotic bedtime story. When he said, “You’ve *got* to write that down,” I knew I had a winner.

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### Prologue

"You're here to *what*?" Jackson stared in disbelief at the slender blond girl standing in front of him. She was gorgeous, there was no denying that. With her long silky, silver-white hair and those big black eyes, she was an exotic beauty the likes of which he'd never encountered, even on business trips abroad. And her outfit, although bizarre, was indisputably erotic.

She was wearing some kind of clear plastic dress that clearly showed the upper and lower curves of her full breasts pressed against the ungiving material. Only a thin strip of scarlet hid her ripe pink nipples from view. Jackson knew they were pink because the upper curves of her areolas peeked over the scarlet strip when she breathed.

Below her waist, similar strips of scarlet banded her hips and slipped between her thighs, and a long sash of the same color was belted around her slim waist. If he looked—and he couldn't help looking—he could see the outline of her shaved pussy lips behind the clear plastic. The scarlet string that led between them and barely covered her slit only served to emphasize her plump pouting outer lips.

The entire vision was enough to give him an instant hard-on. But his cock didn't rise in reaction to the blond girl's provocative outfit. As hot as she was, he had several things working against his arousal.

To start with, he was chained to the bed. Jackson liked kinky sex, as long as he wasn't the one being chained or tied up. But today, no one had

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asked him if he wanted to be tied. Seven large, Sheera-looking Amazon women had dragged him into the white sterile room, stripped him, and laid him on the bed, locking his wrists and ankles into unbreakable restraints.

The second thing that kept him from reacting to the blond girl's luscious body was the device she held in her hand. Large, scary, and silver, it looked like an old fashioned milking device his uncle had used on his dairy farm, but with only one nozzle instead of several. Only, this was no farm and Jackson was no cow.

"You're here to what?" he asked again, aware the girl had taken another hesitant step towards him, a look of uncertain determination on her lovely face.

"Please maintain your erection," she said, repeating her earlier words. "I am here to harvest your reproductive material. With or without your cooperation."

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### **Chapter 1**

*The Year 2706*

“Ariana Seven, I’ve called you here today to tell you that your progress has been noted favorably.” The Matron sat straight and stiff in her chair, her iron gray hair pulled back in a severe bun, and her large knuckled hands folded primly on the plasti-wood desk in front of her. The wall behind her was a large glass window that looked out onto the production floor, where hundreds of coders labored under her watchful eye.

Ari took a deep breath and tried to let it out silently as relief flooded through her. She was careful to sit up straight in her chair and keep her eyes on her lap while the Matron spoke. The Matron didn’t like too much eye contact—it made her think you were challenging her authority. And that was something Ari would never dream of doing.

“Yes, Matron B,” she said, nodding meekly. A strand of her long silver-blond hair slipped in front of her eyes and she was quick to smooth it back in place behind her right ear. It wouldn’t do to look unkempt during the interview. She was glad that her plain clear plastic dress, exactly like the one every other girl in the Ministry wore, was a freshly recycled one and that the modesty bands that covered her breasts and sex were crisp and white against her tanned skin. What a mercy that today just happened to be the day she collected her weekly clothing allotment at the commissary! Even her stiff white paper-board boots were clean and

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spotless and her plain pale blue sash—the mark of the Coding Department—was neatly pressed.

Ari had been scared to death when her summons to the Matron's office had scrolled across the magno-view glasses she wore while coding genetic material at the Ministry of Reproduction. Her yearly review had been completed only a month before. What in the name of the Goddess could the Matron want to see her about?

"A position has opened in the Fertility Banks," the Matron said, answering her question. "It is the highest level of security, as I'm sure you know. So it will carry a great deal of responsibility."

"Yes, Matron B." Ari bit her lip, her cheeks warming with repressed excitement. Finally she would get to move up—and leave behind the dreary, monotonous work of genetic coding! Best of all, her new job was located in the most mysterious and hush-hush department of the Ministry of Reproduction.

Everyone knew the girls that worked in the Fertility Banks were the most desired and sought-after in the entire Ministry. They walked tall, wearing their scarlet Fertility sashes and modesty bands, looking beautiful and aloof. Ari could already imagine herself in such a sash—it would go brilliantly with her silver hair and black eyes. Every girl in the Ministry would want her. And it was nice to be wanted, even if she didn't particularly want any of them back. Maybe the new job and greater status in the Ministry was exactly what she needed—that elusive something for which she'd been searching. Maybe it would fill the void inside her nothing else seemed to fill.

"I told the supervisor of Fertility you are the girl for the job," the Matron continued, interrupting her thoughts. "You'll report to her immediately. Do you understand?"

"Oh, yes." Ari finally dared look up, and then looked hastily back at her lap. "I mean, I understand completely, Matron B. Thank you for this chance at advancement. I won't fail to make you proud."

"That's my girl." The Matron smiled, a sign that the interview was at an end. "Go to the fourteenth floor at once. Your new supervisor's name is Matron N."

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### **Chapter 2**

*Present Day 2006*

Jackson Taylor's broad shoulders slumped dejectedly as he walked to the corner of Fifth and Main. Across the busy street, he could see his light blue Toyota parked in a loading zone where he shouldn't have left it. But he had been so eager to see Cynthia that he would have parked anywhere. It was always a pain in the ass finding parking at his girlfriend's apartment. Make that his *ex-girlfriend*.

When she'd called him on his cell phone earlier that day, he'd been certain that she had finally come to her senses and realized they belonged together. They had been on what Cynthia called a 'break', and Jackson called 'slow torture', for the better part of two months while she tried to decide what to do. Their relationship had always been rocky and made up mostly of fights and stormy make-up sex sessions, but Cynthia had meant a great deal to Jackson. Now, their relationship was over.

"Damn," he muttered, pinching the bridge of his nose between his thumb and forefinger. Cynthia had always been high-maintenance, but he hadn't expected her to end it like this. Hadn't he done everything she'd asked him to do? He'd taken her car in for detailing, done her taxes, taken out the trash, and even taken her dog for its weekly visit to get its toenails trimmed, although he felt ridiculous carrying the anemic looking



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Chihuahua around in it's pink leather satchel. And she had still broken up with him.

"My own fault," Jackson muttered to himself. He pressed the button on the street light at the corner savagely and waited for the WALK sign to appear. His best friend Matt had always said, 'women don't like a doormat.' True. But he hadn't been a doormat, not at first. He was just the kind of guy who gave his heart completely. And how could you mind doing favors for someone you loved?

He had met Cynthia at one of the trendier uptown bars and, dazzled by her beauty and her sharp conversation, had bought her a drink. Their first few months together had been fun. Picnics in the park after dark, where she said he made her feel safe, barefoot walks on the beach, cuddling in front of the fireplace at his new condo. All the things cheesy love songs were written about. He showered her with roses and perfume and expensive chocolates. And diamonds—well, one diamond anyway. A diamond ring in a small velvet box that was currently still in his pocket.

Things hadn't started to go downhill until after Jackson had been passed up for a promotion at work. He'd been counting on making partner at his law firm, but the spot had gone to someone else. Jackson hadn't been too upset at first, although the bump in pay he'd expected was earmarked for a down payment on a new Jag Cynthia had been encouraging him to get. Despite being passed over, however, he was certain his time would come next year, because one of the senior partners had told him so.

But Cynthia had been very upset, much more so than Jackson and more than Jackson thought she should be. He'd tried to explain to her that it was only a minor setback, not the end of the world, even though he'd felt at the time that things should be reversed. Shouldn't Cynthia be comforting *him* instead of it being the other way around? She'd never been an uber-nurturing woman, but this was ridiculous.

Jackson hadn't wanted to admit it, but now he was certain his lack of promotion and Cynthia's defection were related. His friend Matt had once accused Cynthia of being a gold digger, something Jackson hadn't

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wanted to consider. But now he had to acknowledge it was true. No promotion meant no new Jag, which meant no more Cynthia.

"I'm sorry, Jackson," she'd said when he came panting eagerly at her door like some stupid dog running excitedly to the sound of its master's voice. "But I've found someone who can better afford to support me in the manner to which I have become accustomed."

Jackson punched the button again as traffic whizzed past, a scowl twisting his face. What an idiot he'd been! He had actually gotten down on one knee and proposed to her. And what had she said? As though he could ever forget. Her words still tolled in his head like a bell. "I wouldn't marry you if you were the last man on Earth," Cynthia had said.

"The last man on Earth," Jackson muttered, raking a hand through his dark brown hair. His hair and eyes matched exactly, a fact Cynthia had once found sexy and striking. He wondered what she thought of her new guy's hair and eye color, but he was pretty sure that no matter what she said, only one color mattered to his ex girlfriend—green. Matt had been right all along. All Cynthia had seen in him was a man she thought was about to make partner in one of the most prestigious law firms in the country. She didn't give a damn about him or his heart.

Jackson looked across the busy intersection at his light blue Toyota. If it was the cherry red Jag Cynthia wanted, he might still have her. Not that he wanted her now that he knew what kind of woman she really was.

Speaking of his sub-par car, a tow truck pulled up beside it and the driver hopped out, as if making preparations to tow it. Damn! He'd only been parked in the loading zone for fifteen minutes—twenty, tops. That was how long it had taken Cynthia to hand him his walking papers.

"Hey! Hey!" Jackson shouted across the street, trying to make himself heard over the roar of the traffic. "Hey, stop! That's my car!"

Either the tow truck driver didn't hear him, or didn't care. He continued what he was doing, oblivious to Jackson's frantic shouts.

"Damn it!" Jackson growled under his breath. If he waited for the stupid street sign to change to WALK, he'd still be standing here while the greasy driver drove away with his car in tow. He'd have to risk jaywalking.

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Timing his dangerous run across the street as well as he could, Jackson stepped out into the road. Everything was all clear, at least for the moment.

"Hey!" he shouted again, jogging across the lanes of traffic. "Hey, get your fuckin' hands off my car!"

Finally, just when he reached the median, the tow truck driver seemed to hear him. He turned from hitching the pale blue Toyota to the back of his truck and Jackson caught his eye.

"Hey!" he shouted again, stepping off the median in his eagerness to make himself understood. "Look, I'll move it right now. You don't have to—"

The tow truck driver's eyes got big under his greasy gray ball cap. Jackson had time to notice that the equally greasy gray coverall he was wearing had EARL stitched in black block letters on the front. And Earl was pointing to Jackson's right, frantically pointing and screaming.

*"Bus!"*

Jackson turned just in time to see the huge silver grille of a city bus barreling down on him. He might have had time to dive out of the way, if every muscle in his body wasn't locked in panic. The bus got bigger and bigger, looming in his vision like a vengeful god and Jackson just stared at it, feeling like the proverbial deer in the headlights. *Move!* he told his body. *Move!* But apparently his body wasn't paying attention, because nothing moved but his brain—at about a thousand miles a second.

Then everything went black.

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### **Chapter 3**

*The Year 2706*

“It’s a time portal.” Matron N, a tall, skinny woman with a face like a horse, gestured proudly at what appeared to be a solid steel doorway standing in the middle of the room. The doorway was only a frame and held no door that Ari could see, but she knew better than to dispute her new Matron’s claim.

“I see, Matron N,” she said, keeping her eyes down to show respect. She still felt half naked in her new Fertility Banks uniform. The scarlet modesty strips were much thinner than the white ones she was used to. She kept catching glimpses of her nipples whenever she took too deep a breath and with only the thin string of crimson that wanted to ride up between her pussy lips, her sex felt embarrassingly bare. It was a good thing she’d just gone for her monthly depilatory treatment the day before, so that the mound of her sex was still smooth and soft. It wouldn’t do to have any kind of pubic hair showing behind her thin scarlet string.

Already she’d felt the eyes of the other girls on her, assessing her in a frankly sexual way as she moved about the large suite assigned to the Fertility Banks Department. She was careful not to return any of their stares. Instead, she concentrated on her new work environment. Fertility was plush compared to the bare production floor of the Coding department. There was a genuine synthi-wood floor and a lounge area as

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you walked inside, just past the magno-locked doors that opened only to those with the correct retinal scan.

Several crimson couches were scattered about and there was even a holo-vid running, set to the latest soaps and talk shows. Pamela, a dark-haired girl who had gotten Ari her new uniform and guided her on a limited tour, had told her she was permitted two thirty minute breaks a day as well as an hour long lunch, much more than the scanty twenty minute lunch and five minute bathroom breaks allowed in Coding.

"We do harder work here—top secret work," Pamela had explained. "So we get more perks. Believe me, Ariana, as the new girl in Fertility, you're going to earn them."

Ari hadn't known what to make of that cryptic remark, but she had a feeling she was about to find out.

"May I ask what we use the, uh, time portal for in the Fertility department?" she asked, seeing that Matron N. was staring at her with an expectant look on her horsy face.

"That, Ariana Seven, is highly classified information." The Matron's stare was like a laser beam. "What I am about to tell you stays strictly in the Fertility Banks. If I *ever* hear that you've told anyone *anything* about this—anything at all—it is grounds for immediate termination." She leaned down and put her face close to Ari's. Her breath smelled like stale caffeine brew and soy biscuits. "And I don't just mean you'll lose your position here, Ariana," she said. "I mean you'll be taken to the Ministry of Corrections, a very unpleasant place by all accounts. Do I make myself perfectly clear?"

Ari felt a cool shiver run down her spine at the woman's barely veiled threat. "Absolutely, Matron N," she faltered, her lips numb. "You can depend on my complete discretion."

"Very good." The Matron stood back, apparently satisfied that she had scared the living Goddess out of Ari and had therefore gotten the answer she required. The other girls standing around the large, empty room had smirks on their faces, as though they'd seen this whole performance a hundred times before. Pamela, who stood behind the Matron, caught her eye and licked her lips suggestively. Ari straightened

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her spine and pretended to ignore the dark-haired girl. They had all seen it before because they had all been through it before. She wasn't about to give anyone the satisfaction of letting them see her act like a nervous twit.

"The purpose of the time portal," Matron N announced dramatically. "Is to bring men forward into our time. That's right," she continued, seeing Ari's horrified expression, "I said *men*. Or rather, a *man*, because we only use one at a time."

"Use—" Barely able to get the words out, Ari cleared her throat. "Use them for what, Matron N?"

"For genetic material, of course, Ariana Seven. Where did you think you were getting all the sperm you sorted in the Coding department?" the Matron asked.

"But I...I..." Ari had no words. It was true that she had spent her days in Coding for the last five years sorting desirable sperm, the ones with a double X chromosome, from the undesirable or throw-away sperm, the ones with both X and Y chromosomes. But she had never stopped to think where the genetic material she sorted and coded all day long came from in the first place. She doubted any of the girls working in Coding did.

"I guess I just assumed it was manufactured somewhere in the Ministry," she said at last, as an answer seemed to be required of her.

The Matron snorted, a distinctly horsy sound. "If only we *could* manufacture it! We tried, you know, in the early days after the plague wiped out every last man on the planet and all our stores of frozen sperm were depleted. Unfortunately non-organic genetic material tended to produce unsatisfactory results. The babies grown from it had a high infant mortality rate and terrible birth defects. Time was running out and for a while, it looked like the human species might die out altogether." She smiled grimly. "That was when Doctor Sheila Armstrong, one of the top scientific minds ever to grace our planet, invented the time portal." Matron N again gestured at the empty steel doorway.

"Basically, we scan back in time to a point before the plague took hold and find a man to bring forward," Matron N continued. "An acceptable candidate must have a clean genetic history, no offspring, and be at the moment of critical termination."

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"I'm sorry." Ari shook her head. "Critical termination?"

"It means he's about to go to the big crematorium in the sky." Pamela stepped forward, one hand on her hip, and winked at Ari.

"Pamela, please," the Matron reproved, but without much heat. "It's true, Ariana Seven. We look only for candidates that are about to die in their own time. We bring them forward into ours and harvest their genetic material for a few years, during their prime production years of course, and then return at the exact moment of their deaths." She shrugged. "It's easy and doesn't change history."

"So, do we go back in time and collect the, uh, *him* ourselves?" Ari asked, stumbling over the unfamiliar pronoun.

"Oh, no." The Matron shook her head. "We can only bring people forward into the future. We can't go back in time ourselves. If we did, we'd be stuck there permanently. And trust me, you don't want to be trapped in the barbaric past where men roamed the Earth performing Goddess knows what hideous atrocities, do you?"

"Certainly not," Ari said with shudder. Every girl and woman on the planet had heard horror stories passed down through countless generations of how wild and uncontrollable men were—of how in the dark days before the plague, they had ruled the world with an iron fist, raping and pillaging and starting wars and conflicts everywhere they went. Women had been their slaves, chattel to be bought and sold and used in whatever manner they pleased. Men had been necessary for reproduction, certainly, but they were little better than hormone-driven animals. Everyone knew that.

The Matron nodded approvingly. "Good. Then leave the subject collection to the portal. It draws the man we target for our harvesting into our present and puts him back into his own time very neatly." She nodded at a bank of plasma screen monitors in one corner of the room. "The controls are exceedingly easy to use. You'll be trained on them later."

"But where do you keep them?" Ari looked around the large room. "I mean, uh, *him*?"

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"Well not here, of course," the Matron said. "There are containment facilities at the back of the department. And we don't have a man at the moment."

"Just sent the last one back at 0800 this morning," Pamela said. "He was about to die in a motor vehicle accident when we took him. We put him right back in just before it happened and watched the whole thing through the portal. *Kapow!*" She clapped her hands together loudly, making Ari jump. "Huge ball of orange flames. Terrible the way those ancient gasoline engines exploded."

"Pamela, please contain your excitement," Matron N said somewhat testily. "You'll have to excuse her, Ariana, she's just been promoted and she's a little full of herself." She waved Pamela away and, still smirking, the dark-haired girl sat down by the portal controls.

"So, what do you think of our little secret?" The Matron smiled

"It does sound like the perfect solution," Ari said cautiously. "But...who has to deal with the...with the man you bring forward? How do you keep him from rampaging through the communal living space and wreaking havoc?"

"We chain him to a sleeping platform to keep him from getting any ideas," the Matron said. "And as for who handles him—why, *you* are, my dear. That's your new job. You're our new keeper and collector for our new subject. One Jackson M. Taylor."



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### Chapter 4

Jackson closed his eyes tightly, waiting for the impact of the bus' massive silver grille, and wondered briefly what it would feel like to be flattened by several tons of public transportation. But the impact never came.

Instead, multiple pairs of hands were suddenly on him, dragging him forcibly through a bright tunnel and into another world. The hands felt like steel pincers. And when he opened his eyes, he was surprised to see they belonged to six or seven beautiful Amazon-type girls instead of large angry bouncers as he had at first supposed.

"Hey, where—?" He didn't get a chance to finish his question because one of the girls shoved her face into his and snarled.

"Be quiet, *man*." She had long dark hair and blue eyes that would have been pretty if they weren't so frigid. Actually *all* of the girls that were dragging him through the large white and silver room where he suddenly found himself were pretty. Beautiful, in fact. All were dressed in bizarre see-through dresses. Jackson would have assumed that the bus had hit him after all and he was in heaven, if every single one of them hadn't been looking at him like he was dog shit they'd scraped off the bottom of their trendy white boots.

"Take him to the containment facility." That voice belonged to a woman who *wasn't* quite as gorgeous, Jackson saw. She was a supervisor, maybe, who was older than the rest of the girls. She had a long, narrow

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face and flaring nostrils and she sounded like she was used to being obeyed. Beside her stood a slender girl with silver blond hair and an uncertain expression on her face.

"Containment facility?" he asked aloud. He didn't like the sound of those words. He twisted his head to see what was going on. Directly behind him was a tall steel archway in the middle of the stark white floor. Framed in the silver beams of the arch was the front of the bus. It was frozen in the exact position Jackson remembered it. He could even see the terrified look on the balding driver's face through its windshield. Then the Amazons were dragging him forward, away from what should have been his death and into some bewildering new world.

"Let me go!" Jackson struggled against their tight grip, not liking the way things were going. "Somebody tell me where the fuck I am and what the hell is goin' on!"

"Hold him!" the supervisor shouted above his roaring. "If he gets loose and disrupts the department, each and every one of you will be on punishment detail for a month!"

The threat of punishment seemed to have a great effect on the Amazons. Their grip on his arms and legs became unbreakable and he was hustled even faster toward wherever they were intent on taking him. The containment facility. Jackson thought he could have fought off two, maybe even three of them, but six or seven were too many for one lone guy, especially since these girls were *strong*. Though he fought them, his struggle was completely useless. They dragged him through the doorway at the far end of the large sterile white room with the strange silver archway and into a different area.

Then he was half-marched, half-dragged through a series of maze-like corridors, all painted a stark white, until they came to a room with a thick metal door and no window. As they approached the door, it slid up smoothly, like the iron portcullis of a drawbridge opening to let them pass beneath. Inside there were nothing but blank white walls and a rectangular block with some kind of foam padding on top. Four long metal poles rose at right angles from the rectangle's four corners like bizarre bedposts. White paper sheets and an oddly contoured pillow sat on the block bed, which was covered in the same material, but that wasn't

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what drew Jackson's attention. No—what held his eye were the wrist and ankle restraints, made of a kind of metal he'd never seen before, that were attached to the four metal posts. He began to struggle in earnest.

"Get your fuckin' hands off me!" he bellowed, but the Amazons were not to be deterred. They held him fast, with grim looks pasted on their beautiful faces.

"Strip him!" the supervisor shouted. She had followed them into the small room along with the slender blond girl and stood to one side, watching the action.

Jackson fought against the female hands tearing away his suit and tie and ripping off his dress shirt and pants. What might have been an adolescent fantasy—seven beautiful girls in see-through dresses stripping him down—was nothing but an absolute nightmare. The dark-haired girl managed to rip off his undershirt and for a moment, Jackson's hands were free. Acting on instinct, he threw a punch, catching her on the jaw.

It was a solid punch and Jackson immediately felt bad about it. An absurd urge to apologize to her almost consumed him. He'd been raised in the South and been taught never to hit a woman, no matter the provocation. That was probably the only thing that had kept him from wringing Cynthia's pretty neck when she'd announced she was leaving him for someone with a better bank balance. But his ex-girlfriend and everything associated with her suddenly felt very far away. Right now all he could see were the icy blue eyes of the girl he'd just clocked.

Instead of going to her knees or clutching her jaw and crying, the girl only glared at him defiantly. "That was very stupid, *man*," she hissed, with poisonous venom in her voice that made it clear 'man' was the worst curse word she knew. "I'll see that you pay for this later," she told him, pointing at the egg-sized lump already rising on her square jaw.

"Look, if you'll just let me go—" Jackson began. He broke off abruptly when he realized he was being pushed naked onto the bed and the wrist and ankle restraints were being snapped into place. "Hey! What the fuck? Let me go!" he shouted.

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The Amazons only stepped back, their cold faces displaying looks of satisfaction, as though dealing with him was a difficult task they had completed in record time.

"Ariana, come forward and observe." The supervisor woman who had been standing in the corner with the slender blond girl crossed the room with a clacking of her heels and halted by the foot of the bed. She gestured curtly to the Amazons. "The rest of you girls may leave. I will instruct Ariana myself."

The seven large women left the room, the dark-haired one giving him a baleful glance from her icy eyes as they went. Then he was alone in the room with the older woman and the blond girl.

"Let me go! Who are you people? What the fuck do you want with me?" Jackson yanked on the restraints, which felt as solid as stone. There was no way he was getting out of these babies—not even with a blow torch or a chain saw.

"Observe the way he shouts obscenities," the supervisor said, pointing at Jackson as though he were a zoo exhibit. "This is a trait most men share and you must not let it alarm or offend you. Remember—they act on instinct and adrenaline rather than rational thought. His behavior is a result of testosterone poisoning and overly aggressive socialization."

"Are the restraints hurting him?" the girl with silver-blond hair asked. She stepped forward, a look of cautious pity in her liquid black eyes. She was the first sympathetic face Jackson had seen since this nightmare started. At least she didn't look at him like he was dog shit on the bottom of her boot.

"You look like a nice girl. How 'bout tellin' me what you people want with me?" he asked, going on the principle that it didn't hurt to ask.

"Ignore any and all conversational gambits he may try," the supervisor instructed her. "Never speak to the subject directly except to issue orders. And don't worry about the subject's comfort, Ariana. Everything we do here is completely humane."

"Is he..." The girl gestured at his body. "Why is there...hair everywhere? Didn't they have depilatory treatments in the past?"

"They did, but most men chose not to use them." The supervisor sounded disgusted, as though his hairy chest was an affront against

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humanity. The blond girl, however, stared at him with avid interest, which made Jackson suddenly remember he was naked. He felt his cheeks go hot with a blush, but there was no way he could cover himself. He had never felt so exposed.

The blond girl the supervisor had called Ariana leaned over him and pointed at his limp penis. "Is that...the tube where the reproductive material comes out?" she asked the supervisor in a hushed whisper.

"It is, my dear, but rest assured you won't have to touch it. We have devices that will do the dirty work for you," the older woman said reassuringly. "In fact—"

Jackson had had more than enough of being treated like a zoo exhibit. "Hey—*hey!*" he roared, breaking into the lecture. "Do you mind telling me where I am and what the fuck it is you want with me?"

Ariana jumped back, obviously frightened by the bass roar of his voice. She put a hand over her heart and the look on her face changed from one of curiosity to one of fear.

*Great*, Jackson thought wearily. Now she wasn't looking at him like he was dog shit on the bottom of her boot. Instead, she looked at him like he was the boogey man, coming to eat her up.

"That's enough for now, Ariana." The supervisor gave him a look that was half disapproval, half scorn. It was the way you looked at a dog with a weak bladder that pissed on the carpet, or a mentally challenged child that spilled food all over itself. *Terrible manners*, that look said, *but it's not like he can help it*.

Jackson had a sudden flash of insight. *That's all I am to them*, he realized as the supervisor and the blond girl walked away and the metal door slid shut behind them. *Just an animal*.

More than an animal, he thought, looking at the unbreakable restraints. A dangerous animal. One that couldn't be trusted. An animal that had to be tied and chained to keep from harming itself and others.

Jackson closed his eyes and wondered how they felt about animal testing in this strange new world in which he found himself.

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### **Chapter 5**

“Couldn’t you just come with me and show me the first time?” Ari begged, looking down at the bizarre silver equipment Pamela had just thrust into her hands.

The dark-haired girl shook her head. “Not my job anymore. Sorry, newbie.” Pamela had been the keeper/collector for the last man that had been brought through the portal, Ari had learned, and she was more than happy to pass the unpleasant duty on to someone else.

That was the way things worked in the Fertility Banks Department. Every girl had to serve her time as a collector. Once her man had given all he could and was sent back through the portal to his own time, she was promoted to a different position within the department. A new girl was brought in to deal with the next man.

Pamela had been a collector for three years—three *long* years to hear her tell it. She was obviously enjoying her new job, which appeared to consist mainly of lounging around on plush couches, watching vid-loops of talk shows all day long and eating chocolate. The expensive real kind, not the synthesized kind she claimed tasted like brown wax.

Ari didn’t know about that, since she had never been able to afford real chocolate herself. What she did know was that as the outgoing collector, Pamela was supposed to show her the ropes.

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"Come on, Pamela," she said, gesturing with the silver equipment in her hands. "I don't have the slightest idea how to get started. I've never even seen a man before yesterday."

"If you're lucky, you won't have to see one again once your time is up," Pamela said, her eyes still glued to the vid-loop. The topic of the talk show appeared to be *women who fall in love with unattainable women*. The girl on the screen was tearfully confessing her love for a priestess who had taken a vow of celibacy and could never return her love. The talk show host, a middle aged black woman with sympathetic brown eyes, patted her on the back and handed her some recycled face cloths to use to dry her eyes.

For a moment Ari was distracted from her duties. She had seriously considered becoming a priestess, not because she was particularly devout, but because she thought it would be easy living a celibate lifestyle. Then at least her birth mother would stop calling her up and wanting to know when she was going to find a nice girl and settle down. The answer, Ari was beginning to believe, was *never*.

It wasn't that she didn't meet women she liked, women she wanted to be friends with—but there was always something missing when she tried to enter a romantic relationship. Some indefinable spark that never appeared. Whenever she saw women walking around the communal living area holding hands with their little girls in tow, Ari always experienced a sharp little pang of sadness because she realized that would never be her.

But she had more pressing things on her mind right now than her non-existent love life. She was supposed to gather a sample of sperm from the newly captured man for preliminary testing. A subject's genetic code and history were thoroughly examined before he was brought through the portal, but further testing on the sperm itself was necessary to be sure he was a prime candidate. Since The Fertility Banks Department was essentially picking a sperm donor for the entire world, they had to be sure their choice was a good one.

"If you're really lucky," Pamela said, interrupting Ari's thoughts, "He won't pass the initial testing. That happened to Deandra, that lucky

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bitch. It only took the lab a week to kick back the results and her subject was found unsuitable. Some kind of recessive gene thing or something." She picked up another chocolate bonbon from the tray in front of her and popped it into her mouth.

"Anyway," she said, around a mouthful of chocolate. "The subject got sent back almost immediately to his own time, so Deandra only had to collect for a week and then a new girl was brought in for the next subject. Which just happened to be *me*."

"Didn't Deandra show you what to do?" Ari asked hopefully. "Didn't she walk you through the procedure at least once?"

"Tears of the Goddess, Ariana, you're such a *whiner*," Pamela snapped. She sat up suddenly and snatched the silver equipment from Ari's hands. "Look—it's very simple. This," she gestured to the machine that had one long nozzle and a glass jar underneath its silver dome. "Fits on his organ or tube or whatever you want to call it and sucks the sperm right out of him. The sperm gets trapped here." She tapped the glass jar at the bottom of the machine.

"Once you're done, you unscrew it and take it to the lab for analysis. See?" She unscrewed the small glass jar and waved it in front of Ari's face, then reattached it to the harvesting machine. "The only thing is, his tube has to be hard for it to work."

"Really? How hard?" Ari remembered the limp, shriveled organ she'd seen resting on the man's unnaturally hairy belly, and she shuddered.

Pamela shrugged. "Hard enough to stand up off his stomach and wave around a little. It's called an 'erection.'"

"It...it *waves* at you?" Ari giggled nervously. Surely her coworker was pulling her leg. "Are you serious?"

The dark-haired girl nodded. Her blue eyes were sincere. "Yup. That's how you can tell he's ready to be harvested. Just slip the nozzle over his tube and let this little baby do its job." She patted the harvesting machine fondly.

Ari thought of a new problem. "But what if it doesn't get hard? What do you do then?"



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"That's what this is for." Pamela handed her the harvesting machine and picked up a long, skinny silver probe. "Looks like a long silver dildo, doesn't it?" she asked, apparently reading Ari's mind. "You like it?" She winked suggestively.

Ari refused to dignify that with an answer. "How does it work?" she asked, ignoring the come on.

Pamela frowned. "By stimulating him. He doesn't have a clit, but he *does* have a gland called the prostate."

"The *what*?" Now she was supposed to stimulate some kind of a gland? Ari frowned. This was getting more complicated by the minute. Why wouldn't Pamela just show her what she was talking about?

"The *prostate*," Pamela enunciated. "It's what makes him produce sperm—I think. Anyway, what you do is spread his legs and stick this little baby up his anus."

"Oh my!" Totally appalled, Ari put a hand to her mouth. "Really? The gland is...is up there?"

"Yup." Pamela nodded with satisfaction. "Just shove it up there and turn it on." She flipped the switch on the bottom of the silver dildo as she spoke and a crackling hum filled the room. "Go ahead, touch it." She pointed the sleek silver instrument at Ari. "Don't worry, this is a new one. Never been used before."

Hesitantly, Ari put out a finger to touch the pointed silver probe. "Ouch!" She pulled back at once as a painful surge of electricity coursed through her. "That hurts! How is that supposed to make him ready to harvest?"

Pamela shrugged. "Don't know, don't care. I just know it works." She rubbed her jaw where the subject had punched her. "I'd use it on the new man myself if it was still my job. Which it isn't."

"And they...*he* likes it?" Ari stared at the silver probe with wide eyes. Penetration play was considered pretty kinky in most circles. After all, why go inside the vagina when the Goddess had been considerate enough to put the clitoris within convenient reach? She herself had experimented with it once while she was still in school, and had found it painful. So she'd never tried it again. But that was vaginal penetration, not

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anal. Air couldn't imagine wanting anything shoved up her anus—even less could she imagine shoving something up someone else's anus. It was just unthinkable!

Pamela shrugged again. "My subject hated it, but it made him produce like crazy. He used to shout and swear—" She shook her head and laughed unpleasantly. "Swore that if he ever got loose, he'd strangle me with his bare hands."

"He said all that? Do you think he meant it?" Ari stared at her with wide eyes, remembering Matron N's lecture on testosterone poisoning, which made men scream and curse like wild animals.

"Oh, yeah. Not that I ever paid attention to a word he said. It would be like trying to make sense out of listening to a cat or a dog."

"What was his name?" Ari asked, suddenly curious.

Pamela grabbed another chocolate bon bon and popped it into her mouth. "His what?"

"His name—your subject's name. What was it?" Pamela had been the man's keeper for over three years, so Ari thought it wasn't an unreasonable question.

"Hell if I know," her coworker said. She turned from the talk show to stare at Ari. "Are you going to go do that collection or not? Your first sample is due at the lab in less than an hour."

As if to reinforce her words, the little gold chronometer Ari wore on her dress beeped in warning. The chronometer came with her new job. The lab ran all kinds of time sensitive tests, and the gel baths they used for genetic coding were extremely delicate. There was only a five minute leeway between the time when the gel bath was ready to receive a specimen and the time when it was irrevocably ruined if the test hadn't begun. So she needed to hurry.

"All right, I'm going." Ari gathered her equipment. Obviously she'd gotten as much help as she was going to get from Pamela.

"Good luck," her coworker said. "And if he won't cooperate—" She nodded at the sleek silver probe. "You know what to do."

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### Chapter 6

"I'm here to harvest your reproductive material. With or without your cooperation," Ari said in a rush, trying to sound menacing and in control. But the strange man sprawled on the bed in front of her just looked at her like she was crazy.

"You're here to *what?*" he asked, obviously not comprehending what she was about to do. He was the strangest looking sight she'd ever seen, with his hairy, flat muscular chest and arms and legs that were much too powerfully built. Not to mention the flaccid tube lying between his legs. His hair was short and thick, a nice dark brown that matched his thoughtful eyes. But the planes of his face were all wrong. Too square and spare and he was actually growing hair on his cheeks! She wondered if that was normal or if he had some kind of genetic defect. Maybe she'd be lucky like Deandra, Pamela's predecessor, and only have to collect sperm for a week.

"You're here to *what?*" he asked again, obviously still not getting it.

Ari repeated herself, and then ran the words over in her mind. Oh dear, wasn't she saying it right? She'd practiced the words over and over in front of the mirror, trying to find the exact tone of authority she thought would be appropriate. Matron N had warned her that men were resistant to authority and liked to argue and fight—one reason the world had been in a perpetual state of war before the coming of the plague, which had

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killed them all. Now, of course, the entire planet was at peace and had been for centuries.

"I'm here to collect a sample of your sperm," she said, hoping that cleared things up. She approached the bed carefully, watching the play of emotions over the man's strange face. "So please maintain your erection. Or—"

She stared in dismay at the limp organ lying on his thigh. "Or do whatever it is that makes it hard. Please," she added again, and then mentally kicked herself. She wasn't supposed to be asking the man for his sperm—she was supposed to be *telling* him she was going to take some. Oh, how had she ended up in the Fertility Banks Department in the first place? She wished she were back down in Coding, sorting acceptable from unacceptable sperm, not knowing where any of it came from.

The man on the bed gave a short, barking laugh. "Sorry, sweetheart," he said in a deep voice laced with sarcasm, "But it doesn't quite work that way. I can't just get it up on command—not tied down like this, anyway."

"I'm not going to unchain you," Ari said at once. Then she realized she was talking to him, rather than at him. "I mean, uh..." She stepped forward and raised the harvesting machine. "You are going to get an erection for me so that I can use my equipment to harvest your sperm." She pointed the silver nozzle in the direction of his groin. "*Now.*"

"I don't think so." He shook his head again. "I'm kind of attached to my penis—it's a delicate organ. And I don't like the idea of you stuffing it into some weird Star Trek-looking milking machine."

"Star Trek?" Ari frowned.

He shrugged as well as he was able. "Whatever—the point is, it doesn't work that way."

The little gold chronometer attached to her dress beeped in warning. Ari knew that meant she now had less than thirty minutes to get the first sample to the lab. She couldn't fail her first day on the job—she just *couldn't*.

"Please," she said desperately. "Look, it doesn't hurt. At least, I don't think it does."

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"You *don't think?*" His dark brown eyebrows shot up. "Well, isn't *that* a ringing endorsement."

"All you have to do is fill up this little jar." She demonstrated by unscrewing the glass jar from the harvesting unit and showed it to him. "Please? Can't you make it stand up and wave at me just once?" she asked, looking down at his limp organ.

The man broke into surprised laughter, a deep rumble that seemed to come from the bottom of his chest. "Look, darlin'," he said, "It's not that you're not pretty, because you are. And that dress—" He shook his head. "That dress is like something out of a wet dream, no doubt about it. But I can't make it 'wave' at you just because you want it to. And there's no way I can fill up that whole jar."

Ari looked down at herself in confusion. "What does my dress have to do with your tube getting hard?" she demanded.

He gave her an incredulous look. "Are you serious? Don't you know anything about men?"

"No," she said, taking a step nearer the bed. "Of course not. You're the first one I've ever seen." She frowned. "And I hope you'll be the last."

"Well, be that as it may—"

Her chronometer beeped again, cutting him off. Now she only had twenty minutes. Truly desperate, Ari stared at the man.

"Look," she said, putting down the harvesting machine and holding out the slim silver probe. "I really don't want to have to use this." She thumbed the switch on the bottom of the probe and it crackled to life.

The man's eyes grew wide. "Whoa! I don't want you to have to use it either, sweetheart. Look, what was your name again? Eilina?"

"Ariana," Ari said, advancing on him with the probe. She was close enough to the sleeping platform now that had he been free, he could have easily reached out and grabbed her with his big hands. She consoled herself that he wasn't free to do anything of the kind. The magno-locks that held him in place were absolutely unbreakable, and she had the only key. Not that she would ever use it.

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"Ariana. That's a beautiful name," he said softly. His voice was deep and calm. "My name is Jackson, Jackson Taylor. Pleased to meet you."

"It's a pleasure to meet you, too," Ari said before she thought. Then she mentally kicked herself again. Damn it! What was wrong with her? Why couldn't she just do it? But then again, his body looked large and strong—much stronger than hers. Could she really just reach down and put the humming, crackling probe up his...

"Look, maybe we can work something out," Jackson said, sounding much more reasonable than he had any right to. "You want to get a sample of my sperm for whatever reason, that's fine with me. But it has to be on *my* terms."

Ari wanted to point out that *she* was the one who ought to be making the terms. After all, she was the one holding the crackling, hissing anal probe, wasn't she? Yes, she admitted to herself, but in order for the probe to be any good, she had to be willing to use it. And she just didn't think she could do it.

"Put that thing down and come here. Let's talk." Jackson smiled at her, showing even white teeth in his strange, bristly, square-jawed face. "I promise I won't bite."

Since she had been warned by both Pamela and Matron N that he almost certainly *would* try to bite her, Ari approached the sleeping platform carefully. She didn't put down the probe, but she did turn it off. She didn't want to accidentally shock herself with it, which was exactly the stupid, clumsy thing she was prone to do when she was nervous.

"Sit on the bed beside me. It'll be easier to talk that way." Jackson nodded his head at the free space beside him on the sleeping platform.

"I shouldn't," Ari murmured nervously. Things weren't going the way she'd planned at all—and time was running out. Yet she found herself sitting down anyway, careful not to touch the smooth-looking brown skin of his naked hip. At least he wasn't hairy *everywhere*.

"Now," he said reasonably, "I don't know how the hell I can be the only guy you've ever seen, but let's get something straight. You can't come in here waving around those weird torture devices and expect me to get a hard-on."

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"A...a what?" Ari frowned at him.

"A hard-on. An erection." He nodded down at the organ curled like a sleeping snake against his thigh. "You want me to get excited enough to shoot, you need to put away the mad scientist dildo and milking machine. That might get some guys off, but not me. I'm not that kinky."

Ari's chronometer beeped again, breaking her concentration. "Um, I hate to rush you, but I only have ten minutes to get this sample to the lab," she said, twisting her hands together in her lap. "Could you speed things up a little? Make it stand up and wave?"

"Okay" He looked at her in obvious exasperation. "But next time you come in, I want to know what you want with me. All right?"

"Fine, sure." Ari nodded her head eagerly. "Can we please get on with it?"

"As soon as you uncuff one of my hands,"

"You must think I'm mentally deficient." She stared at him in disbelief. "Of course I won't uncuff you."

"Fine." Jackson scowled at her, his dark brows pulled low over his brown eyes. "If you won't let me jerk myself off, *you'll* have to jerk me off."

"Jerk you...?" Ari shook her head.

"Help me masturbate, all right? God! Or don't you people do that here...wherever the hell here is?"

Ari felt her cheeks growing red. "We...we are familiar with self gratification, of course," she said stiffly. Not that she did it very often, but she wasn't about to offer that little nugget of information. "I just don't understand what you want me to do."

Jackson blew out his breath and muttered something that sounded like, 'first date with a Catholic school girl,' which made no sense at all to her. Then he looked at her directly. "Look, sweetheart, in order to get hard and give you your sample, I need stimulation—direct stimulation."

"To your prostrate gland—right?" Ari held up the silver probe. "That's what this is for."

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"Uh-uh, honey." Jackson shook his head. "We do this on my terms, remember? That thing is out. In fact, put it away. It gives me the heebie-jeebies."

Ari put the silver probe down beside the harvesting machine and the glass jar that went with it. "Now what?" she asked.

"Take me in your hand—my cock, I mean—and stroke it. *Gently*," Jackson emphasized. "Remember what I said about it being delicate."

Ari looked at the tube which he had called his cock and swallowed hard. "You mean...you want me to touch it?"

He sighed in exasperation. "You're going to have to if you want a sample. Look, it's not going to bite you, if that's what you're afraid of."

Ari looked briefly at her chronometer. Eight minutes left. She had to do something. Taking a deep breath, she reached out a hand and touched the soft organ lying curled against his hairy thigh. To her surprise, it was warm and the skin was silky, not rough or coarse as she had expected.

Jackson let out a harsh breath when she touched him and she jerked back her hand, mindful of what he'd said about being gentle.

"Did I hurt you?" she asked anxiously.

He shook his head. "No. Pretty much the opposite, darlin'. Feels good. Go ahead and do it again."

Carefully, she reached out to stroke his cock again and was surprised when it twitched in her hand. "Oh!" she exclaimed as it began to grow in her grasp. It was the most amazing thing she'd ever seen—as she stroked, it grew from the small shriveled tube into a tall, thick shaft topped with a broad plum-shaped head. It was darker than the rest of his skin, she noted, and when it reached its full potential, she could barely fit her fingers around it.

"It's...it's so big," she exclaimed, prompting a somewhat breathless laugh from Jackson.

"Thanks, sweetheart. I always have been more of a grower than a shower."

Ari didn't know what he meant, but she did know that time was running out. His cock was fully erect now, as far as she could tell. And as



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she watched, it twitched a little, 'waving' at her, as Pamela had predicted. She had the jar in one hand. But where was the sperm?

"Where is it?" she asked, still stroking the hard, smooth, warm shaft. It was like touching a piece of living iron covered with synthi-silk. There was a sack-like pouch just below it with what looked like it had two eggs inside, but she didn't have time to ask about those. She had to get her sample.

"Where's what?" Jackson wanted to know.

"The sperm—my sample. Where is it?" Ari demanded.

"Look, honey, it takes a little while, okay?" He frowned at her and took in another harsh breath.

She continued to touch him.

"How...how long does it take you to come when you touch yourself?" he asked. "It doesn't happen right away, does it?"

"Come? You mean have an orgasm?" Ari blushed. She knew she wasn't sexually liberated—it was just that she didn't do *that* all that often. And she certainly didn't want to talk about it.

Apparently Jackson saw her blush and interpreted it correctly. "What's wrong, darling? I thought you said you knew all about 'self gratification.'"

"I do. I just...I don't..." Ari shook her head, feeling the heat in her cheeks. "Look, this isn't about me," she pointed out. "It's about *you*. Now, where is my sample? Aren't I doing this right?" She indicated the continuous pumping motion she was making on his cock. Actually, her arm was getting tired.

He sighed. "You're doing a great job, sweetheart. It just takes a while. I guess if you wanted to speed things up, you could use your mouth."

"You mean put my mouth...?" Ari looked at the thick shaft in her hand with wary eyes. Would it even fit in her mouth? It seemed doubtful. And it also seemed wrong—forbidden. She was certain Pamela or Matron N would disapprove if they knew the methods she was using to collect her sample. The Matron had acted as though she shouldn't even *think* of

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touching the man more than absolutely necessary —let alone taking him in her mouth.

“All right,” Jackson said. “Then talk dirty to me.”

“Talk dirty?” Ari frowned in confusion.

He nodded. “Sure. Like, tell me how it feels when you touch yourself. How do you do it? Do you wear that little piece of red silk between your pussy lips while you finger yourself? Or do you take it off?”

“I...why would you want to know that?” Ari had never been spoken to so rudely and so openly before, and she felt her cheeks heating so much she was afraid she might melt the plastic of her dress. At the same time, she felt a sudden rush of warmth between her legs, although she didn’t know why.

Jackson shrugged. “Turns me on, darling. You’re a beautiful woman. I like to think about you giving yourself pleasure. Hell, I’d like to give you pleasure myself but there’s no way to do it as long as I’m trussed up like a Christmas turkey.”

Ari didn’t know what a ‘Christmas turkey’ was, but the idea of him giving her pleasure made the heat between her thighs increase, although she still didn’t know why. Suddenly, her chronometer beeped again. Five minutes! That was all she had left!

Without stopping to let herself think about it, Ari bent down and took as much of his thick cock down her throat as she could. This close she could smell a clean, slightly musky scent that was different from anything she had ever smelled, but it wasn’t in any way unpleasant. Her lips stretched wide around his shaft. He tasted like salt and warm skin against her tongue.

Jackson groaned aloud and his narrow, muscular hips surged upwards, pressing his thickness into her mouth, rubbing between her lips to the back of her throat. Ari coughed and he pulled back immediately.

“Whoa, darling, take it easy now. Don’t get choked,” he said. His deep voice was husky and his cock pulsed against her tongue and the roof of her mouth. Hesitantly, she pressed down again, taking more of him inside and Jackson helped her, fucking gently between her lips in a slow rhythm.

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"Wish I could touch you," he growled softly. "I want to stroke that beautiful blond hair while you go down on me. I want to cup those sweet little tits I can see underneath your dress and pinch your nipples until you moan."

Ari felt the heat growing between her thighs at his naughty words, and soon it was joined by a slippery dampness. It was amazing, but hearing these forbidden things in his deep, growling voice while she sucked his thick cock was actually making her sex wet. That never happened to her, not with any of the girls she'd been with, and several of them had tried to arouse her every possible way. *This must be what he meant by 'talking dirty'* she thought hazily, as she continued to suck his shaft.

"God, darling, that's good...that's *so* good. Your soft little mouth feels so good on me, so hot and wet. Almost like a tight little pussy," Jackson groaned. "You've got such a sweet mouth. Just wish I could touch you while you sucked me. Wish I could stoke your soft little cunt and see how wet and hot you are."

Ari felt another fresh surge of wetness as he spoke and the thin crimson modesty band between her thighs suddenly seemed to be too tight—it rubbed against her clit, which was suddenly swollen with desire. Goddess! How could he do this to her with just words? Words and the spicy, hot shaft of his cock sliding between her lips. Then Jackson's rhythm increased in tempo.

"Get ready, darling," he panted hoarsely. "I'm just about to come. Your sweet little mouth is making me come."

Just in time, Ari realized what he was talking about. Pulling back so the thick shaft slid out of her mouth, she got the empty glass jar to the head of his cock just in time.

"God!" Jackson trembled with reaction as his shaft jerked in her hands and a pearly white substance shot from the small slit at its tip. Ari caught every drop inside the jar, and then examined it carefully.

"Is that all there is?" she asked, feeling disappointed.

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He gave a shaky laugh. "All there is? Honey, that's a lot more than usual. But don't worry—there oughta be about a million or more sperm wiggling around in there."

"Thank you," Ari said, uncertain if she ought to thank him or not. What she had just done didn't feel exactly right, even if she was still throbbing with reaction between her legs.

"No, thank *you*." He laughed again. "Best blow job I ever got. The weirdest, but definitely the best."

Ari stared at him for a moment, uncertain of how to respond. Then her chronometer beeped again. The lab! She grabbed the equipment off the floor and, holding the precious jar carefully in one hand, headed for the door.

But when she got to the doorway, she couldn't help turning back. "Um, thank you," she said again, feeling terribly awkward. "I guess...I guess I'll see you next time."

He nodded at her, a little smile playing around the corners of his full mouth. "All right, darling. I'm looking forward to it."

Strangely, Ari found that she was, too.

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### Chapter 7

After Ariana left to go to the lab, Jackson had a day and a night—or what felt like a day and a night, since he had no clock—to think about her and what had happened between them.

Several times during that period, the dark-haired girl came back into his white prison cell and held him at gun point while he ate, used the facilities, and showered. He tried to talk to her the first time she unlocked him, but she wouldn't permit it.

"Shut up, *man*, or I'll burn a hole in your guts," she snarled at his attempt at conversation.

Jackson shut up. It was obvious she hated him. No point in riling her further.

The toilet and shower were a mysterious affair that came out of the wall silently on a floating platform. The food was tasteless—tubes of nutrient concentrate he ate, despite their bland flavor to keep up his strength. There was nothing to shave with, and he rubbed the thick beard stubble growing on his cheeks with dissatisfaction. He hated growing a beard. It was so damned itchy.

He thought about jumping the dark-haired girl, who looked at him with an intense hatred that made him both angry and uneasy, but he sensed her finger was just itching to pull the trigger of the weird clear pistol she held on him. His father had been a gun collector and he dared to ask her once what kind of gun it was. For an answer, she burned a small

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hole in the white floor right beside his bare foot. With some kind of laser, would be his guess. But he wisely didn't say anything else, although he had never seen anything like it.

He noticed with mingled shame and defiance that she had a pretty good bruise on her jaw where he'd punched her. Part of him, the good polite Southern part, wanted to apologize for that, and the rest of him wanted to knock her teeth loose. How dare she and the other Amazon women hold him hostage with no explanation? Who did they think they were? Only the thought that Ariana would be back to explain everything kept him from making a rash decision and taking a risk to win his freedom.

His two breaks passed with no sudden moves on his part and in turn, he was allowed to keep his guts intact. Before she left each time, the dark haired girl made him lie down with his hands and ankles in the restraints. Then she pushed some kind of mysterious little button she carried in the pocket of her clear dress and the locks snapped into place.

It was about two or three mind-numbingly boring hours after the dark haired girl's last visit that Ariana finally came back. Jackson's head came up at the *whooshing* sound of the portcullis door and he smiled in relief when he saw who it was. He'd been having serious doubts about how much more he could stand of the dark-haired girl and he found Ariana both fascinating and beautiful.

There was a mixture of innocence and sensuality in the girl with the silver hair that he found immensely appealing, and it didn't hurt that she'd given him the best blow job of his life, either. It had been obvious she was inexperienced, but just as obvious that she was eager to learn. She had really gotten into the act once they'd started. Jackson had a feeling that had something to do with the way he had spoken to her while she was sucking him. He'd always been a motor-mouth when it came to sex. He loved to talk dirty and loved to hear a beautiful woman return the favor. Cynthia used to tell him that he was breaking her concentration when he did that, but he thought maybe Ariana, or *Ari*, as she told him to call her, really enjoyed it.

Of course, she was only doing it to get a sample of his sperm, he reminded himself. If his time with Cynthia had taught him nothing else, it

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was that women always wanted something. Admittedly, what Ari wanted was slightly bizarre, but it boiled down to the same thing. It was what he could give her, not who he *was* that interested her. Too bad, because he thought he could really get to like her, despite their strange circumstances.

She came prepared to give the answers he had demanded earlier, but what she told him was so unbelievable he could scarcely take it in. Jackson listened for a solid fifteen minutes to her soft, sexy voice before his mind began to wrap around her weird story.

"So that's it?" he finally said. "There was a plague that killed off all men about five hundred years ago, so you brought me forward in time?"

"Through the time portal—yes." Ari nodded.

Jackson couldn't help himself. He started to laugh. "Are you telling me," he asked the bewildered Ari. "That I am literally the last man on Earth?"

She nodded, looking puzzled. "Well, yes. For the time being, anyway. Why is that funny?"

Jackson shook his head. "It's just...something my ex-girlfriend said to me. That she wouldn't marry me if I was the last man on Earth. Too bad she's not here to see me now."

"I'm sorry, but we couldn't possibly bring her through the portal," Ari said, apparently taking him literally. "She's a woman, and we don't need any more of those. Besides, we only take one man at a time."

"To be some kind of a...a world wide sperm donor, right?"

"I guess that's what it amounts to." Ari nodded. "Your, uh, sperm is being tested right now to make sure it's free of defects." She looked at him anxiously. "It is, isn't it?"

Jackson shrugged. "Hell, I don't know. As far as I know, it is. I don't have any kids, so I can't tell you if my genes will make pretty babies."

"Oh, I'm sure they will," Ari said, and then she blushed and looked away. "I mean...I don't know what I mean. I'm sorry."

"That's all right, darlin'." He smiled at her, wishing he could sit up. It was damned awkward holding a conversation lying flat on his back. She was sitting beside him but still keeping her distance, so he had to crane his

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neck to see her. "Don't suppose you could let me up for a while," he said, without much hope.

Ari shook her head. "I'm sorry, Jackson, but I just can't. It's strictly against regulations. In fact, I'm only supposed to be collecting another sample from you—not actually talking to you."

He gave her a worried look. "Will you get in trouble for breaking the rules?"

"I don't think so." Ari sighed. "Everyone else is busy doing their own jobs, so I don't think they'll notice if it takes me longer to do mine. Speaking of which—" She held up the glass jar, which she'd already unscrewed from the weird silver milking machine, and blushed slightly.

"Oh, yeah." Jackson smiled at her. "The sample. How many tests does that lab of yours have to run, anyway?"

Ari sighed. "I don't know—I've heard it can take weeks to be completely sure you're an appropriate candidate. They have to make sure you won't pass along any defects." She stopped and looked down at the jar in her hands and he sensed she wanted to ask him a question.

"What is it, darlin'?" he asked gently.

"Well—" She looked up at him, her black eyes fathomless pools of uncertainty. "It's just that, if they find out anything's wrong, they'll send you back to the exact time they got you from."

"Shit!" Jackson yanked on his restraints. "I was about to be hit by a bus."

"Exactly." She bit her full bottom lip. "So I have to ask. Is that hair on your face normal? I mean, is it...it's not a birth defect, is it?"

Jackson was startled into laughter. "Hell, no, sweetheart," he said, trying to control himself when he saw the worried look in her black eyes. "It's perfectly natural—for a man, anyway."

"Oh." She looked immensely relieved, and he was touched. She didn't want him to get sent back and killed. "It's just...looks so—" She bit her lip again.

"You can touch it if you want," Jackson said, smiling. "I don't normally let it get this long, but there's nothing to shave with here."

"Shave?" She frowned. "Oh—you mean like a depilatory treatment."



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"Uh, sort of, I guess."

She reached out to him, her small hand hovering over his cheek, a look of uncertainty on her face. "Will you promise not to bite me if I touch it?" she asked.

Jackson started to laugh again, and then he saw that she was serious. "I give you my word as a gentleman, darlin'," he said solemnly. "I won't bite you."

Her hand descended at last, cupping his bristly cheek and sending fire through his veins. There was something about her, he thought again, as she explored the texture of his beard. Some mixture of boldness and timidity that drew him, although he couldn't understand why. He had always been attracted to beautiful women. What man wasn't? But he liked Ari because she didn't know she was beautiful, and so far she hadn't tried to use her beauty to manipulate him.

"It feels...soft and scratchy at the same time," she murmured, brushing her palm lightly over his face. "So different." She looked up at him. "You're different—not what I expected."

"What did you expect?" Jackson asked in a voice that was slightly hoarse. He wished he had some clothes on. It was damned embarrassing how obvious it was that her light touch aroused him. He had given up trying not to stare at the luscious curves revealed by her see-through dress. She was sitting on the bed facing him and he had a clear view. Beneath the thin scarlet bands that covered her, he could see the hard little points of her nipples and when she shifted her position, he could see the thin thread of scarlet that ran between her pussy lips shift as well.

Ari shrugged. "I don't know what I expected. A wild animal. Someone who couldn't be reasoned with—who shouted and swore and screamed and...and bit." She smiled at him, a small tentative curve of her lips that squeezed his heart.

"Well, I did enough shouting and swearing when you first brought me here," Jackson acknowledged. "But you have to understand it's not everyday you get dragged through a time portal. It's kinda disconcerting, if you know what I mean."

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"No, I don't know." Ari shook her head. "I can never go through the portal myself or I'd get stuck in the past." She shivered as though it were an unthinkable fate.

"Would that be so bad?" Jackson asked. "Is it really so great here in the future? Don't you ladies miss having men around? I mean." He tried to laugh. "I know we're big, hairy, obnoxious animals, but we can be all right if you give us a chance." He looked at her closely. "Ari, do you think you can do that? Give me a chance?"

"I...I don't know." She looked down at the jar in her hands, a blush rising on her high cheekbones and he thought he had never seen anything more lovely. Then that damned gold watch thing she had pinned to her dress beeped, interrupting the mood.

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"Oh!" Ari jumped slightly and looked down at her gold chronometer. "I'm sorry, but I need a sample soon. If the lab doesn't have it at just the right time, their gel baths are ruined and they have to start all over again."

"Mm-hmm." Jackson smiled at her, that warm, open smile that made her nervous. "Well, I guess you can see I'm ready," he said, indicating his groin.

Ari looked down and was surprised to see his cock already 'waving' at her with apparent eagerness. Its thick base was rooted in a thatch of curly, dense hair that she knew she ought to find repellant. In fact, she ought to find everything about Jackson Taylor repulsive and disgusting, from his hairy face and body to his deep voice and broad muscular shoulders. But somehow, she didn't. His body was strange and different, but not unattractive, much like the man himself.

"Why—" She cleared her throat, still looking down at his thick cock. "Why is it doing that when I haven't even touched you yet?"

"You touched me." His voice was warm and deep. "You touched my face, stroked my cheek."

She looked at him in surprise. "So it's possible to arouse you, just by touching your face?"

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"Depends on who's doin' the touching," he said softly. He caught her eyes with his and held her gaze until Ari looked down, blushing. Why did he make her feel this way? The warm, fluttery feeling in the pit of her stomach was completely new to her, although she'd heard other girls talk about it when they had a crush on another girl. Yet she had never experienced it herself. She had thought she was dead inside—incapable of desire. Why should Jackson, a *man*, be the one to make her feel it for the first time?

"We should...we should get on with it," she mumbled. Gently but firmly, she took his thick shaft in her hand, marveling again at the silk over steel feel of it. Jackson exhaled sharply as she began to stroke him and she felt him get even harder. How did he do that? Or was she doing it, just by touching him? She remembered the hot, spicy taste of him and the way he had felt moving between her lips and a little shudder of warmth ran through her. She pressed her thighs tightly together and tried to concentrate on her task and ignore the shiver of desire creeping over her skin.

"Wish I could touch you while you do that," he said in a low voice.

Ari looked up, surprised. He had said something similar the day before. "Why?" she asked, honestly curious. "Isn't it enough that I'm touching you?"

He shook his head. "Don't get me wrong. This is nice, but it isn't what I'd choose." He motioned with his head. "You're so far away, darlin'. And I want to be able to touch you the way you're touching me. I want to caress that beautiful body with my hands and my mouth. I want to touch you and taste you and feel you tremble against me when I make you come."

"I—" Ari bit her lip, uncertain of what to say. His words sent fire sizzling through her body, making her hot and cold at the same time. She looked at the magno-locks holding his big hands in place and knew releasing him would be too dangerous. As much as she wanted to feel his hands on her body, she couldn't let him free.

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"I'm sorry, Jackson," she said regretfully. "But I just can't let you loose. Not even your hands. As much...as much as I wish I could." She looked quickly away.

"At least let me look at you," he said, hoarsely. "That little see-through dress you've got on is killin' me. Take it off for a minute, and let me look at your beautiful body without those little red strings."

"I shouldn't," Ari said doubtfully, although part of her wanted to. She wanted to strip for the man lying chained to the bed, the man who was making her feel hot and cold and passionate for the first time in her life.

"I might be able to make a bigger sample for you," Jackson said, giving her a charming little smile. "I can't fill up the jar, but I swear that if I could see your sweet body naked while you touched me I'll give it a try."

Ari thought about it. A bigger sample would be better and besides, she liked the idea of him looking at her. All her life since puberty she'd had eyes on her—envious and desiring. Her silver blond hair made her unique in a society that was made up mostly of brunettes. But never before had she wanted to be looked at and desired as she did now. And besides, it was safe. Jackson could no more break the magno-locks encasing his wrists than she could fly to the moon without a shuttle.

Her chronometer beeped again, letting her know it was time for a decision. Rising on knees that wanted to tremble, Ari reached up and began demagnetizing the magnetic snaps that held her standard issue clear plasti-dress together. She pulled it apart and laid it over the foot of the sleeping platform and turned to face Jackson, wearing only the thin crimson modesty straps that barely covered her nipples and the slit of her pussy.

His deep brown eyes seemed to drink her in. "Beautiful," he whispered at last. "But take off those damned red ribbons. I want to see all of you, darlin'."

Her breath came in short little pants and she could feel her heart pounding against her ribs as she did as he asked. Ari slid off her thin crimson modesty straps, freeing her breasts and her sex completely. The cool air circulating through the room caressed her bare nipples like a soft, ticklish hand and she was very aware that her pussy lips were swollen

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and wet with need. Now that her modesty straps were gone if she spread her legs even a little bit, she knew her pussy lips would part, revealing her throbbing clit.

"God." Jackson's eyes were half-lidded with need, and his cock was standing at full attention, obviously hard at the sight of her body. Ari had never been with anyone who could show such unmistakable desire for her, and she found that she liked it. A lot.

"C'mere." His deep voice was hoarse with emotion. Though he was the one chained down, Ari felt as though she were the prisoner. She was helpless to disobey his order.

She climbed back onto the sleeping platform with him and began to caress his cock again with long, slow strokes. Jackson groaned and thrust into her hand. But it was clear he wanted something more.

"Come closer, darlin'," he murmured in that low, seductive voice. "Lean down and let me suck your nipples. I've wanted to do that from the first minute I saw you."

It seemed dangerous, especially if he bit the way all men were supposed to. But Jackson had already proven he had no interest in biting her, Ari argued with herself. Knowing that she was taking a risk but helpless to stop herself, she straddled him, putting a knee on either side of his muscular torso. And she did as he commanded.

Leaning forward, she let her full breasts brush against his face. Jackson moved his head to capture one of her ripe, naked nipples in his hot mouth, drawing a deep sigh from Ari's lips. She'd had her nipples sucked before of course, but there was something different about the way he did it. Maybe it was his slightly rougher style, the way he sucked hard, trying to get as much of her breast as he could into his mouth at one time. Or maybe it was the bristly brush of his beard against the tender skin of her breasts. Or perhaps it was just that he was a man and what she was doing was utterly, totally forbidden.

Ari didn't know why it felt so good but for whatever reason, as Jackson moved back and forth, sucking and licking her tender pink buds, she felt shimmers and ripples of sensation running directly from the

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sensitive tips of her breasts to her heated cunt. The sensation grew and grew until it was almost too much.

Panting hard, Ari leaned back, pulling her breasts out of Jackson's reach for a moment, and tried to catch her breath. As she moved, she felt the broad head of his erect cock brush against her naked, wet pussy. The thick shaft opened her, spreading her heated cunt lips apart and stroking over her swollen clit. Ari gasped out loud at the hot shock of pleasure the accidental touch sent racing through her body.

Jackson groaned.

"Careful, sweetheart," he said, his voice thick with need, "Or you're gonna be getting that sample you're lookin' for someplace other than in the jar."

Ari looked at him, feeling dazed and unbelieving. Could he really mean...? She looked down to where the broad, plum shaped head of his cock was parting her pussy lips and resting at the entrance of her body. She had always known, in a vague sort of way, that back before the plague men were used for procreation. But she hadn't known exactly how. After all, not even animals reproduced in the way they had centuries before. They were mostly cloned.

"Do you mean your...would go in my...?" Unable to finish the sentence, she left it hanging.

Jackson nodded, his brown eyes drowning deep with desire. "If you're not careful, my cock is gonna slide right up inside your sweet little pussy, darlin'. Not that I mind, but it might not be the most ideal conditions for getting that sample you were after." Then, apparently seeing the shocked expression on her face, he asked. "What's the matter, honey? Haven't you ever made love before?"

"If...if you mean have I ever been, uh, penetrated, then yes. Once, in school. The girl I was dating had this—" She shook her head, remembering the sharp stab of pain she had felt as the flesh colored dildo her girlfriend had been using had pierced her to the core. Ari hadn't been ready and had screamed at the sudden agony. Her date had stopped quickly and removed the offending instrument. They had broken up soon after than. "It...it hurt," she finished in a low voice.

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"Was it your first time?" Jackson asked softly. "The first time you ever tried anything like that?"

Ari nodded, biting her lip. "I never tried it again. It's not something we do much anyway. People think of it as deviant—wrong."

"What's so wrong about making love?" He sounded honestly surprised.

"Penetration is...it's not the way we do things," Ari said. "Not now, in this time. Most people think of it as kinky. A little bit deviant. I know you must have had to resort to it in your time. Maybe there weren't enough fertility clinics or something but—"

"We don't *resort* to it," Jackson interrupted her gently. "We make love in my time to enjoy each other's bodies. To feel connected, to pleasure each other and show love and caring. And Ari—" He looked directly into her eyes. "I know you had a bad experience, in the past but I would never hurt you. Can you trust that? Trust *me*?"

"I...I don't know." Ari looked away, feeling lost and confused. She had barely known him twenty four hours, and he was asking her to trust him in ways she had never been able to trust anyone. Then her chronometer beeped, reminding her it was a moot point anyway. She and Jackson were never going to make love. He was never going to penetrate her pussy with his thick cock because that wasn't what she was here to do. She had to do her job and take a sample of his sperm to the lab before their gel baths went bad.

"I...I'm sorry," she said, moving so that the head of his cock was no longer pressed against the wet entrance to her pussy. "But we don't have much time. The sample—"

"Yeah. Sorry." He sighed. "I forgot that's what you wanted."

"Do you—" Ari reached over and grabbed the glass jar, and then looked at him from under her lashes. "Do you want me to put it in my mouth again? To...to suck your cock?"

"God, darlin'!" Jackson's eyes blazed with renewed desire. "I love to hear you talk like that."

"Oh." Ari put a hand to her mouth to hide a sudden smile. Apparently she'd done what he wanted her to do the day before and had

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'talked dirty' to him with her innocent statement. The few times she'd tried making love with a girlfriend had been mostly silent, unsatisfactory affairs, and this was a new experience for her. But then, everything to do with Jackson was a new experience.

"So, do you want me to put your cock in my mouth and suck it until you come?" she asked, feeling bolder.

"I want you to suck my cock, but I want to eat your sweet pussy at the same time," Jackson told her, his eyes still blazing. "Do me a favor, darlin'. Turn around and press back against my face while you suck me. That way I can put my tongue deep into that hot little cunt of yours and make you come."

Ari felt a pulse of need and desire race through her entire body, but there was a problem with what he asked of her. "Jackson," she said hesitantly. "I...it's not that I don't want you to do that. It's just that, well...I probably won't come. I've never had much luck having an orgasm that way before." It was true. For some reason, oral sex just didn't help her have an orgasm, even if it lasted for hours. And she and Jackson had a lot less time than that if she wanted to get the sample to the lab on time. Ari felt ashamed confessing it to him, but she didn't want to give him a false impression of her.

But he only smiled at her, a lazy, half-lidded look in his deep brown eyes that made her stomach flutter nervously. "That's okay, darlin'," he said softly. "Whether you come or not, I want to taste that sweet pussy of yours. Will you do it for me? Will you let me eat your hot little cunt while you suck my cock?"

His hot dirty words excited her almost more than Ari could believe. She didn't make any more protests. Instead, she turned so that she was straddling his hips the other way, facing his bound ankles instead of his face. Then, carefully she pressed back against him, spreading her thighs wide to give him room to work on her wet, open pussy.

"Good girl. That's right. Come a little closer now," she heard Jackson say coaxingly. His breath was hot against her inner thighs and she moaned aloud when she felt his mouth press a gentle kiss against the wet outer lips of her pussy. He rubbed his scratchy cheeks against her tender flesh, making her shudder and moan. Then he pressed forward eagerly,



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parting the lips of her cunt with his tongue and licking delicately along the side of her inflamed clit.

It felt wonderful, but it was awkward. Ari didn't want to press too hard against him, and with his hands bound there was no way he could guide her. Jackson was trying to direct her, letting her know which way she should move so he could reach her but it was difficult and she heard frustration mounting in his voice.

"God," he said at last. "I just wish I could touch you, darlin'. Wish I could guide you so you could feel confident enough to get closer. I need to be able to spread your sweet pussy open so I can put my tongue all the way inside you."

Ari felt the heat building between her thighs, the need she had never felt before when she preformed this act with another woman. She didn't understand why Jackson made her feel so hot, so sensual, but she knew she wanted everything she could get from him. Leaning forward, she grabbed her discarded dress from the foot of the bed and dug in the pocket for the auto-lock mechanism that controlled his magno-locks.

"Jackson," she said, looking over her shoulder at him. "I'll free you—your hands at least. But when I do, you'd have to promise not to hurt me. And to let me lock you up again after we're done. Will you promise me that?"

"I promise," he said.

The soft solemnity in his deep voice that convinced her. Taking a deep breath, she punched the top button and the magno-locks that held his wrists in place popped open.

"Thank you," he said softly. "Thanks for trusting me, darlin'. You won't regret it. Now come here and let me taste that sweet pussy."

Ari felt his strong hands on her hips, caressing her, stroking her, spreading her wide. Jackson's hands were big and strong and slightly callused, unlike any hands she'd ever felt before. They guided her back against his face and this time she relaxed completely and let him take her where she needed to go.

"Good girl," Jackson murmured as she pressed back against him. "That's so good. So good to finally be able to touch you."

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Ari felt those strong, warm hands spreading her thighs and then the outer lips of her pussy. He was opening her, touching her in a way that seemed completely new. One callused fingertip traced the swollen bud of her clit gently, and Ari almost screamed with the sensation. Why did it feel so much better when he touched her than any lover she'd ever had before? Why did his hot breath on her open pussy make her throb with need?

She stopped trying to answer the questions and just let herself feel. Leaning forward, she took the thick club of his cock into her mouth and concentrated on sucking him while he licked and kissed her pussy until she thought she'd scream with the sensation.

Jackson pressed his face against her and his tongue dove into her cunt, penetrating deeply. She moaned around her mouthful of cock as he drew back and licked her, light rapid flicks of his talented tongue against the swollen bud of her clit. Goddess but it felt incredible! Why did it feel so different than any other time she'd tried oral sex? Was it the new position? Or was it the rough brush of his bristly cheeks against her wet open pussy? For whatever reason, she felt herself climbing higher than she ever had before. Felt her body begin to pulse with need as he pressed against her, taking her exactly where she needed to go.

Then she felt something new. Something strange but not unpleasant. Jackson was fingering her again as he licked her clit, but this time two of his thick fingers were entering her pussy. Just a little, at first, but she felt him pressing deeper and deeper into her, almost tentatively, as though asking for permission.

Ari pulled back, letting the thick shaft of his cock slide from between her lips for a moment and looked over her shoulder. "Jackson?" she asked, pulling away so that his mouth was no longer in contact with her sex.

"Is this okay, darlin'?" He sounded a little anxious but the two fingers inside her never left their place. In fact, if anything they pressed deeper, penetrating her pussy in a way that made her shudder with repressed need.

"I...I guess," Ari said uncertainly. "I don't—"

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"Relax a minute," he said in that deep, soothing voice. "Just let me try this. If you don't like it or it hurts, just say so and I'll stop."

"All right," Ari whispered. She tried to relax as he had instructed, but the memory of the piercing pain she'd experienced the only other time she'd tried penetration play was at the forefront of her brain. Still, she trusted Jackson and he had promised not to hurt her. She tried not to clench her muscles too tightly, tried to be open enough for his invading fingers to enter her wet pussy.

"So tight and wet," she heard him murmur as his fingers pressed deeper and deeper. "Wish it was my cock inside you instead of my fingers, sweetheart."

His words brought a vivid mental image to mind and suddenly Ari could almost see herself kneeling over him with her legs spread wide, just as she had been earlier. She could imagine the thick shaft of his cock, so much bigger and harder than his fingers, pressing up and into her. Spreading her pussy lips apart as he penetrated deep into her cunt, opening her and coming in her in a way that was completely forbidden.

She shuddered at the illicit fantasy. And just at that moment, Jackson's fingers reached the end of her channel and pressed. Ari gasped as a bolt of sensation shot through her. Not pain, but pleasure like she had never felt before. Goddess—how did he do that? How did he know exactly how to touch her to make her crave what she had feared?

"Feels good?" he asked, correctly interpreting her gasp. "You like it when I finger fuck your soft little pussy, darlin'?"

Ari nodded, and then realized she was facing away from him and he couldn't see her expression. "Yes," she whispered. "Feels...incredible. Don't stop, Jackson. Do...do that. Penetrate me some more. Fuck...finger fuck my pussy."

She heard his approving growl at her dirty words and then he was pressing against her, licking her cunt as he fucked her deeply with two long, strong fingers. Ari gasped in pleasure, and then remembered the throbbing cock that sat neglected in her hand. She needed to get back to work—and get her sample. Only, the sample was the last thing on her

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mind at the moment. Right now she just wanted to give Jackson as much pleasure as he was giving her.

Bending her neck, she took the throbbing staff of his cock into her mouth once more, savoring its hot, spicy flavor and the unique male musk that filled her nose. His cock felt so right in her mouth. So good. She moaned with the pleasure he was giving her and took him as far down her throat as she could.

Behind her, she could feel Jackson's tongue flicking over her clit as his fingers continued to fuck into her. He was pressing into her deeply but gently, as though trying to build her pleasure to a peak, to a point of no return. And though she had thought it impossible, Ari felt herself beginning to reach that peak.

She pressed back against his face, no longer afraid now that his hands were there to guide her, and ground against him shamelessly. She reveled in the feeling of his bristly cheeks rubbing the tender skin of her inner thighs and the hot lapping of his tongue against her clit. It felt so good, so absolutely amazing to open herself to him this way, to let him do whatever she needed, to send her over the edge of pleasure with his mouth and tongue and fingers. She felt her body tremble helplessly as he continued his assault, pressing forward fiercely to taste her pussy, until she couldn't stand it any more.

She wanted to shout and scream his name, but the thick shaft of his cock prevented her from doing it. Instead, Ari moaned and felt his body jerk in response to the vibrations of her throat. She sensed that it wouldn't be long before he released his cum but she was too far gone to think about that.

Suddenly one large hand curled around her hip and pulled her back hard against him. Ari felt him suck the aching bud of her clit into his hot mouth and at the same time the gentle fingers in her cunt began to piston in and out of her, bringing a rough pleasure she hadn't known she was capable of receiving.

The new sensation of his fingers fucking her so roughly and the insistent lapping of his tongue across her sensitive, swollen clit pushed her over the edge. Gasping and moaning, she pressed herself back hard against him, feeling her body shudder helplessly with an intense orgasm.

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Jackson rode out her spasms of pleasure, and then she felt him pull away from her pussy. "Stop now, Ari," he said in a hoarse voice. "I'm about to come. Can't hold back." The throbbing of his thick shaft against her tongue underlined the urgency of his words.

Reluctantly, Ari allowed his cock to slide from between her lips and reached for the glass jar. She was just in time and, as promised, this sample did seem to be noticeably bigger than the last one she had collected.

"God, darlin'" Jackson groaned as he came, and she felt a rush of emotion at the sound of his deep voice. In a world full of women who would be happy to try and please her, she had found something with a man, of all people, that she would never have suspected—desire, need, or just pure, unadulterated lust. Call it what you wanted, but Jackson stirred something in her no woman ever had or could. When she was with him, Ari felt alive for the first time in her life.

But she quickly squashed those powerful emotions. She was just doing her job and Jackson was just a subject from which she was to collect sperm. Even if he was different from what she had been led to believe, nothing could change those facts.

Her chronometer beeped, breaking into her troubled thoughts. Ari gasped and disentangled herself from the man behind her. The sample was due at the lab in five minutes! She had spent too much time talking and not enough time doing her job.

She hopped off the sleeping platform and dressed quickly, refastening the modesty bands and shrugging into her plastic dress. Then she grabbed the glass jar with the precious sample and was about to run out the door when a shout from Jackson stopped her.

"Hey, Ari. Don't you think you're forgettin' something?"

She turned to see that he was lying back on the bed with his hands in the magno-locks, waiting for her to lock him back in.

"Oh, my Goddess!" Ari fumbled in her pocket and hastily produced the auto-lock mechanism. She hit the button, and then raced back to the platform where Jackson was securely fastened once more. "Thank you," she said, really meaning it. If he had been found even

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partially unlocked, it probably would have meant dismissal from her job and a one way trip to the Ministry of Corrections.

"Just don't want you to get in trouble." Jackson flashed that charming grin at her again. "You have time to give me a kiss?"

"I guess so." Despite what they'd just done, a kiss seemed like an intimate act to engage in with him. But she had time. The lab was just down the hall. And besides, Ari found she *wanted* to kiss him.

She leaned over Jackson and pressed her lips to his, intending to give him just a quick peck. But his mouth opened under hers and she couldn't help moaning as his tongue stroked between her lips, giving her back a taste of herself. His kisses were unlike any she had ever had before. Rough and luscious, his beard prickling against her cheeks. Ari loved every minute of it, reveling in kissing someone so completely different from herself.

Everyone in her society knew that men had been barbaric warmongers, but who knew they could also be so much fun? Ari bet herself that if more people found out, they might not be so quick to discard the sperm with Y chromosomes.

Then Jackson was pulling away from her. "You'd better get to the lab, darlin'," he said a little breathlessly. "I'll see you next time. Would that be tomorrow?"

"Yes." Ari smiled at him. The unfamiliar fluttery feeling in her stomach was back. "Tomorrow," she echoed. It couldn't come soon enough for her.

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### Chapter 8

*Stupid, stupid, stupid*, Jackson mentally kicked himself as soon as the metal door slid closed. Why had he volunteered to be locked up again when it was clear Ari was about to forget and leave him half free? He doubted he could have freed his ankles even if his hands were unchained, but it might have been worth a shot. Instead, he had laid back on the bed and actually *reminded* the girl to lock him up again. Talk about thinking with his dick instead of his head!

*But I like her*, he thought, remembering Ari's shy, beautiful smile. He had only known her a day, but already she had a place in his heart. And it wasn't just the hot mutual oral sex they'd shared, either. It was because she had trusted him, and Jackson Taylor wasn't a man to break anyone's trust. Of course, he had never been put in a situation where keeping his word might mean losing his life.

*Stop thinking like that*, he told himself sternly. *Never gonna get out of this situation with that kind of attitude*. He needed to bide his time and wait—and get Ari to see that he wasn't just an animal to be milked for his sperm. He had an idea that she was already halfway to understanding that now, but he had to reinforce it. After all, to hear her tell it she'd grown up with the idea that men were abusive scum-sucking warmongering pigs. It might take a little time to change that notion. But Jackson was willing to wait. For the right girl, he could be a very patient man.

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*Go easy, buddy—who ever said she was the right girl? Yesterday you thought Cynthia was the right girl.* Jackson frowned at the cynical little voice in his head. No, he hadn't really thought that, had he? Deep down he'd known that Cynthia was only using him for his money and the pretty toys and social status it could buy her. He just hadn't wanted to admit it—even to himself. *Well, Ariana is using you for your sperm,* the cynical voice pointed out. *So don't start picking out china patterns just yet.*

Jackson sighed and stared at the blank white ceiling, wishing he had something to take his mind off all of this. With nothing to do but argue with himself, it was going to be a long wait before Ari came back.



## **Evangeline Anderson**

### **Chapter 9**

It had been over a week, almost ten days to be exact, because tomorrow was her ten-day, her day off. And still she couldn't stop thinking about Jackson. About the way it felt when he touched her. The way her body responded to those big hands caressing her skin. Ari bet herself that she enjoyed her job more than any other girl in the Ministry of Reproduction, although she would be an outcast if anyone knew why she enjoyed it so much. Not even Pamela, who had been bothering her lately by asking her out and not wanting to take no for an answer, could phase her. She wished she could just tell her coworker she wasn't interested in her, or any other girl. The wonderful feelings she got when she was with Jackson carried her through the work day, despite Pamela's harassment.

Ari sighed happily as she stepped out of the pneumatic tube that had floated her home on a current of warm air and unlocked her tiny domicile cube. It was on the bottom of a fifty story stack, and there were no elevators or escalators or stairs of any kind between domiciles. They weren't needed, since every doorway opened out to the large tube that led to the central connection where other tubes could be taken to any destination in the enclosed city.

Atmospheric domes had been a necessity since the late twenty-first century, when the air became too polluted to breathe, but since Ari had never lived anywhere else, the lack of blue sky and wide open spaces didn't bother her. She could have lived in a larger domicile with the other

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six siblings in her egg-grouping, but she preferred to have a place of her own, even if it was tiny.

The rusty mechanical purring of Bitsy, her sim-cat, greeted her as she opened her front door. Ari stooped to pet her and the artificial animal arched her back agreeably.

"How are you, Bitsy?" she asked, scratching the scruffy sim-fur. "Did you miss me today?"

"Mmmrrr-ow," the sim-cat agreed. She started to extend one paw and purr again, but suddenly she stiffened, her mouth open to expose her metal teeth and tongue. "Rowrowrowrow!" she wailed, her volume rising with each 'row.'

Ari sighed and stood up. Bitsy was old and sometimes her programming got stuck in a loop. There was only one thing to do when that happened. She aimed a good hard kick at the sim-cat's back quarters, lifting the artificial animal into the air with the force of her blow. The 'rowing' stopped and the cat came down on her feet and began licking her paws as though nothing had happened.

Ari would have preferred a real cat, of course, but that was an extravagance she couldn't afford—not on a Ministry of Reproduction salary. Bitsy had been purchased with a month's pay from a third hand sim dealer called 'Lots Left to Love' and despite her programming flaws, Ari had grown very fond of her. She had bought the sim-cat about a year ago, when her last relationship had gone sour. Her girlfriend, a woman named Ina she'd been set up with by her birth mother, had left her for another woman who was, as Ina put it, 'not such a cold fish.'

Ari had been devastated. Not because she missed Ina, but because she didn't. In fact, for most of her life she'd believed there was something wrong with her. Why else would she be so cold and passionless? Why didn't she enjoy sex?

She enjoyed talking with a partner, going out and having someone to commiserate with after a hard day. But she didn't like the physical side of the relationship. It wasn't that she was revolted by holding another woman's hand or kissing or making love to her. It was just that it did nothing for her. Nothing at all.

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*Kissing Jackson certainly seems to do something for you*, whispered a little voice inside her brain. Yes, it certainly did. Ari blushed as she remembered exactly how much it did for her. It had been over a week since she'd first laid eyes on Jackson and she still hadn't gotten over the strange feelings she got whenever she was around him. Whenever he touched her it was like someone had set a fire under her skin, making her tremble. Her breath came in short pants, and her heart pounded against her ribs. Why exactly was that? Why should the touch of a man excite her when she'd been with beautiful, exciting women and they did nothing for her? Why did Jackson fill the hole in her life no one ever had?

Ari wished she could take him out of the containment facility and take him around town with her. She'd like to go out to a show with him, or maybe have dinner at a restaurant. Then she pictured the reactions they would get once the women of the city learned a man was loose in their midst. It would be the same as if a woman-eating liger escaped from the zoo, she was sure. There would be screaming and mass hysteria. The peace force would be called out in full armor with all their weapons set to kill. And all because every woman on Earth had been told for centuries how evil and terrible men were. But had they really been so bad? Ari only Jackson to go by, but she couldn't help wondering if all the stories and legends she'd heard had been exaggerated.

Her gaze left Bitsy, who was still licking her scruffy fur with her metal tongue, and fell on the holo projector. Suddenly Ari felt excitement course through her. That was it! She would find out for herself if all the stories were true. She would go straight to the source and ask someone who had first hand information.

Her five hundred square-foot domicile cube was divided into a tiny cooking space and a small living room that doubled as a sleeping space when her air-foam mattress was inflated. Ari stepped around the counter that divided the cooking space from the living area and sat in the single chair in front of the holo-projector.

"Holo on," she said softly, and a flickering blue cube popped into life over the metal tray that served as the display disk for the projector.

"Orders?" queried a soft, sexless voice.

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"Go to archives," Ari told it. "Pull up ancient great-grandmother Daisy's file. I want to speak with her." She waited impatiently for the antique file to load, grateful that her birth mother had entrusted the precious family heirloom to her. It had been recorded over five hundred years ago by Ari's ancestor when the technology for interactive holo files was just being invented. And, coincidentally, only a year or so after the plague that wiped out every human male in the planet, making Earth a permanent women-only zone.

There were a few hisses and pops of static as the file loaded. Then the blue cube flickered and a floating woman's head about twice as big as Ari's was projected above the display disk. The recording was scratchy and jerky, but perfectly understandable.

"Who wants me?" Grandmother Daisy demanded. "What questions do you have about the past?" The woman in the holo appeared to be in her mid-forties, about twenty years Ari's senior, although in reality she had been dead for centuries. She had the same silvery blond hair as Ari, but her eyes were a pale blue instead of black. "Nobody ever calls me up just to chat," she continued bleakly. "It's always some kind of school project and the questions involve boring things like how did a gasoline engine work. *I* don't know how the damned things worked! I just stuck in the key and turned the ignition. What do you think mechanics were for? I mean, really—"

"Grandmother Daisy," Ari began hastily, trying to stop her from going off on a tangent. She had forgotten how talkative her ancestor could be. "If you could just give me a moment of your time?"

"All right," she grumbled, frowning. "But make it quick. And don't ask me any stupid questions."

"I *do* have some questions about the past," Ari said cautiously. "But not about ancient engines or anything mechanical," she added hastily, seeing the frown growing on her ancestor's face. "Grandmother Daisy, I want to ask you about...well...about men."

"Men?" Her ancestor's face suddenly cleared. "Now you're talking, honey. What do you want to know?"

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"What they were like," Ari said earnestly. "Were they really the horrible, war-mongering beasts we've been led to believe? Or were some of them more...I don't know...reasonable?"

Grandmother Daisy lifted one silver blond eyebrow. "Reasonable? Hell no, honey, they were never reasonable. Crazy, aggravating, fascinating sons of bitches, but *never* reasonable."

"Oh." Ari's heart sank. Maybe Jackson was just an anomaly and every other man that had ever lived really was what she had been taught to believe. "So...so they really were terrible, then?" she asked the floating head.

"Terrible, and wonderful." Grandmother Daisy sighed, a look of longing filling her pale blue eyes.

"How?" Ari leaned forward. "How were they terrible? Did they really start wars all over the place? And rape and kill and plunder and steal?"

Grandmother Daisy laughed. "I think somebody's been watching too many pirate vids. Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum." She sighed. "Yes, some of them were terrible. History is full of dictators and serial killers but *most* men weren't that way. Mostly they were just terrible in little ways."

"How?" Ari asked, beginning to feel frustrated.

"Like whenever you were on a trip with one of them and you got lost, they would *never* ask for directions. It was so frustrating!" Grandmother Daisy said. "Like stopping to ask where the hell they were would make their precious penis shrink two inches."

"Really?" Ari looked at her doubtfully. "What else?"

"Well, almost all of them were addicted to sports. Baseball, football, basketball—you name it. If it had a ball in it, men would watch it."

"A ball?" Ari frowned at her, confused. "Will you please explain about that?" Competitive sports had no place in her society, since cooperation and communication were emphasized over rivalry and competition.

Grandmother Daisy nodded. "Sure, honey. What it basically amounted to was two groups of men dressing up in silly multi-colored

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uniforms and going out on a field and tossing a ball around. Sometimes, depending on the outcome, they would shout and fight and knock each other down."

"They did?" Ari frowned again. Could there be a malfunction in this file's coding? Or was what her ancestor was telling her really be correct? "Why would they do that?" she asked Grandmother Daisy. "It doesn't make any sense."

If a disembodied head could be said to shrug, Grandmother Daisy shrugged. "Don't ask me, honey. A lot of things they did didn't make sense. That was part of the irritation associated with them." She smiled. "Of course, it was also part of their charm."

Ari sighed with relief. "So they weren't all bad?"

"Well, no," Grandmother Daisy admitted. "Mostly they were a mixture of good and bad. Take Michael, my husband, for instance. He would be your great, great, great...well, hell. I don't know, kid. But a lotta greats. Anyway, the man used to drive me crazy. No matter what we were watching on television, he *always* had to have the remote."

"Television? Remote?" Ari felt she was getting lost in a forest of antique terminology. Luckily, her ancestor seemed to sense her difficulty.

"He always had to pick what vids we watched," she explained. "He didn't like to let me choose."

"That sounds selfish," Ari said indignantly. "Did he have bad socialization when he was younger? Or was it testosterone poisoning that made him act that way?"

"None of that—that's just pretty much the way they all were," Grandmother Daisy said with a sigh. "Always had to be in charge. But they could be wonderful too. I remember how he used to take care of me. Always took my car to the shop for tune-ups and made sure my spare tire had air in case I had a flat."

"I...I don't really understand that either." Ari shook her head.

Grandmother Daisy looked frustrated. "Why did you people do away with cars, anyway? Where can teenagers go to get to first base in your time?"

"What?" Ari was certain there were code problems now. Grandmother Daisy was making no sense at all.

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Her ancestor blew out a breath and frowned. "What I'm trying to say is that he could be a bastard and a jerk—anybody could, male or female. But he could also make me feel like the most beautiful woman in the world. Sometimes he brought me little gifts when he knew I was feeling down. And he would hold me when I cried and stroke my back and tell me everything was going to be all right. It felt so good to have those big, strong arms around me. And when he kissed me...God!" She squeezed her eyes shut in ecstasy. "One thing I'll give him—that man was good in bed. He had me twisted into a pretzel almost every night."

"He...he twisted you up?" Ari asked. "And you liked it?"

"Liked it? I *loved* it." Grandmother Daisy was practically glowing now, even more than normal for a holo. "I mean, don't get me wrong—I know you girls have no choice. You have to be with other girls since the plague. Not that there's anything wrong with that. But there's just something about having a real man on top of you—"

"You let him get on top of you?" Ari looked at her grandmother in shock. When she had fantasized about doing...*that* with Jackson, she had always assumed it would be with her on top, sitting astride him. Just the idea of reversing their positions was...well, it brought a blush to her face.

Grandmother Daisy was looking at her like she was crazy. "Of *course* I let him get on top of me. It kinda goes with the territory, honey."

"How...how exactly did that work?" Ari asked, and then shook her head. "Never mind. I'm not sure I ought to know."

Her ancestor looked at her with pity. "Sure you should. *Every* girl ought to know. But...but..." Her light blue eyes filled with holographic tears. "Nobody is ever going to know again, are they? Thanks to that goddamned plague."

"Oh dear." Belatedly Ari remembered that Grandmother Daisy had made this recording only a year or so after the plague had devastated the world. No doubt her questions were causing her ancestor a lot of pain. She wished she could pat the holo on the shoulder or hug her, but of course it was impossible. Besides, the image she was seeing was only a piece of code. But that didn't stop Ari from feeling sorry for her.

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"It's just that I miss him so damned much," Grandmother Daisy sobbed. "Mike, I mean. He was...was my best friend. I could tell him absolutely anything. And...and the bed seems so empty at night now without him beside me." She half laughed through her tears. "He used to snore so loudly the walls shook. Honestly, the first time we slept together I woke up thinking we were having an earthquake."

"He...he sounds like a wonderful man," Ari said softly.

Grandmother Daisy nodded. "He was, honey. He really was. I wish you could've known him." Her eyes softened. "Even more, I wish you could know a man of your own. They're the most irritating creatures on God's green Earth, but they're worth every bit of irritation they cause."

"Really?" Ari looked around, knowing she shouldn't be talking about her situation aloud. But where else could she find a sympathetic ear? She leaned in close to the holo-vid. "I need to know more. Because I...well, I sort of *do* have one. At work—we brought him forward through the time portal. It's my job to...to take care of him, I guess," she said, blushing when she thought of just how far beyond her job description she had gone with Jackson.

Grandmother Daisy grinned at her. "Let me guess...is he handsome?"

"I really don't know." Ari frowned. "He's the first man I've ever seen. But yes...yes, I think he is. He has really broad shoulders and big muscles and he's all hairy and...and I know I shouldn't find that attractive. But somehow, well, I can't help it."

"Of course you can't help it," Grandmother Daisy said with a wink. "Honey, you have just described my type of man to a T. There's nothing like a big muscular hunk to make you feel feminine and sexy."

"Yes!" Ari nodded. "Yes, that's it exactly. And when touches me and tells me what he wants to do to me...when he, well, when he talks dirty to me—" She shivered. "I can't explain it. I only know that I've never felt like this with anyone else before. I mean, I didn't even know I *could* feel this way."

Her ancestor gave her a conspiratorial wink. "Sounds like true love to me, honey. Is he a nice guy? I mean, could you see yourself spending the rest of your life with him?"



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"The rest of my life?" Ari wrinkled her brow. The idea had never occurred to her. She knew that eventually Jackson was scheduled to go back to his original time and be hit by that bus, but she'd been pushing the thought to the back of her mind. She couldn't bear to think about it, let alone tell him his eventual fate. "I don't know," she said at last. "He told me that the girl he was with in his own time said she wouldn't be with him if he was the last man on Earth."

"Doesn't matter what she said. What do *you* say?" Grandmother Daisy persisted. "Do you love him?"

"I..." Ari bit her lip. "Why, yes. I think I do." The minute the words were out of her mouth, she knew they were the truth. "Oh my Goddess," she moaned, half to herself. "I'm in love with a *man*. What am I going to do?"

"What are you going to do?" Grandmother Daisy grinned at her. "You're going to tell him, of course. Tell him, honey, and then just take it from there."

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### Chapter 10

"What are *you* doing here on ten-day? I thought you'd be out having fun like everyone else." Pamela crossed her arms over her chest and made a face at Ari.

"I had a few things to pick up." Ari tried to appear unconcerned. "But I could ask you the same thing. What are *you* doing here on ten-day?"

The dark-haired girl shrugged and settled back on the couch. "Somebody has to keep an eye on the man, and I pulled the shit detail. Matron N has it in for me." Then she smiled and sat up straighter on the crimson couch. "When I get off, I'm going to go check out the new club off the Tain Street tube. It's supposed to have the best fermented soy supplement drinks in town. Interested?"

"Sounds like a good time." Ari shook her head. "Thanks, but no. I really can't."

Pamela stood suddenly and stepped close to her. "I'll make it worth your while," she purred, brushing a strand of silver blond hair away from Ari's cheek.

Ari stepped back pointedly.. For the entire time that she had been working at the Fertility Banks Department, Pamela had been flirting with her and asking her out. And no matter how often Ari said no, her coworker just didn't seem to get the point.

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"I really can't," she repeated. "But if you want, I'll take your place here and you can leave early. I don't have any plans for the rest of the day."

"Thanks, I'll take you up on that." Pamela leaned closer. "But if you don't have any plans, why not come with me? The lab workers are off, so there's no sample due today and nobody will be the wiser if we leave."

Ari nodded in the direction of the control room and the containment facilities beyond. She could hear the hum of the time portal, still locked in to Jackson's time with the huge silver bus grille framed in its archway. "What about Jack—I mean, the subject? He can't be left alone. He has to have his meal break."

"Let him starve. It won't kill him. That's what the bus is for, as soon as he gets back to his own time." The dark-haired girl laughed, an ugly sound that grated on Ari's nerves. Being reminded again of the bus waiting for Jackson made her blood run cold.

"I'm sorry," she said firmly, stepping away from Pamela's hand. "But I'm seeing someone and I really can't go out with you. Not now and not ever."

Pamela's seductive smile turned into a hard sneer and her cold blue eyes became slits. "You think you're special, don't you? Because of your pretty blond hair. You think you're above all of us."

"I do not," Ari said indignantly. "I'm *with* someone right now."

"Who?" Pamela demanded, pushing her face into Ari's. "I never see you with anyone, so who's good enough for the golden girl?"

"He's...she's...You wouldn't know her. She doesn't work at the Ministry of Reproduction," Ari stammered. She had been thinking of Jackson, but of course there was no way she could say his name.

"Right," Pamela sneered. She stalked towards the door and looked down, letting the guardian device scan her retina. The door *whooshed* open and she turned. "Let me know when you get tired of your invisible lover, Ariana," she said. "Have fun spending the rest of your ten-day alone."

She left and the doors *whooshed* shut behind her, leaving Ari angry but relieved. Her secret was still safe. She just had to tell it to Jackson.

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### Chapter 11

He could tell the minute she walked in the door that something was wrong. She was biting her full bottom lip and her beautiful velvety black eyes were troubled.

"Hey, darlin'" he greeted her softly. "What're you doin' here? Thought it was your day off." Truthfully, he'd been dreading having a whole day without her. He missed her like hell between visits.

"It was—is, I mean," Ari came and sat beside him, fumbling in her pocket for the locking mechanisms to the thick manacles around his wrists and ankles. She pressed the top button and the manacles released his wrists, allowing Jackson to sit up.

Ari always unlocked his arms now so they could talk more freely. She still didn't quite trust him enough to unlock his legs but Jackson wasn't pushing that. He could be patient for the right woman. And he was almost certain that Ariana *was* that woman. If only her ultimate goal wasn't always to collect a sample from him, he would know for sure. Maybe her coming in on her day off was a good sign.

Jackson sat up and rubbed his wrists. Then he patted the bed beside him. "Come sit down, sweetheart. You look upset."

Ari sighed and sat down beside him, her plastic dress crackling slightly with the movement. He'd gotten used to seeing her beautiful body both in and out of the see-through dress, but it still gave Jackson an erotic jolt every time she was close to him. How could she be so damned sexy

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and not even know it? He'd never seen a girl with fewer feminine wiles. Not that Ari needed them. Her innocent beauty was more than enough for him.

"It's my coworker," Ari said, scooting closer so he could put an arm around her. "She...she keeps asking me out, and she doesn't want to take no for an answer."

"What?" Jackson felt a surge of somewhere in his midsection. No doubt about it—he had fallen for Ari. Just the thought of someone bothering her made him mad. "That kind of thing has no place in the work environment," he said, falling into lawyer mode without thinking about it. "That's sexual harassment. You could take her to court."

"Take her where?" A little crease appeared between Ari's eyes as it always did when she was confused.

"To court. You know—to sue her? Don't you have courts in the future to help you settle legal disputes?" he asked.

Ari shrugged. "Not really. We have a panel of moderators, mostly made up of older Matrons who decide punishment for serious offenses. But since we don't have any men in our society, our violent crime rate is very low." She clapped a hand over her mouth and looked at him. "I'm sorry, Jackson. I shouldn't have said that."

"What about your crime rate being lower without men?" He smiled. "You can say it, because I'm sure it's true. We men *can* be violent sons of bitches from time to time."

Ari looked at him with uncertainty and he pressed a quick kiss to her temple. "That's not to say we can't be gentle too, though."

"I'm glad to hear that." She smiled, looking relieved. "You...you've never been anything but gentle with me, Jackson."

"Course not." He squeezed her gently and gave her a smile. She bit her lip again, and he asked. "What's wrong, darlin'?"

"Jackson, is it true that men in your time put on colored uniforms and went out on a field and knocked each other down over a ball?" she asked.

"What?" He raised an eyebrow at her, trying to understand what she was talking about. "Are you talking about football?"

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Ari shrugged. "I don't know. I guess, if that's what you called it. Is it true you're addicted to that kind of thing?"

Jackson laughed. "Well, I haven't *played* much football myself since college. But, yeah, I guess you could say I still like to watch it."

Ari looked at him seriously. "And is it true that men from your time believe stopping to ask for directions will shrink your, um..." She gestured between his legs. "Your penis?"

"What?" Jackson broke into startled laughter. "No. Who told you that?"

Ari shook her head and pushed on without answering his question. "If you and I were watching vids together, would you let me pick what we watched sometimes or would you always insist on choosing the show?"

"Of course I'd let you pick sometimes. Hell, I'd hope we'd agree on what to watch together." He tilted her chin up so that he was looking into her eyes. "What are all these crazy questions about, anyway? What are you trying to find out?"

"I...I'm trying to find out about *you*, Jackson. About the person you really are. But...but everything I was told seems to be wrong." Her big eyes filled with tears and Jackson felt like someone had reached inside his chest and squeezed his heart.

"Hey now, honey," he said softly, stroking the soft silver blond hair he had come to love so much. "Don't cry. I don't know where you got such crazy ideas, but you don't have to look outside this room to know who I am. I'm the man who loves you."

He hadn't meant for the words to come out that way—hadn't even meant to tell her he loved her at all. But the moment he said it, Jackson knew it was true. He *did* love Ari, even if it was crazy and impractical and stupid of him, considering that whenever she came to see him she was just doing her job. But he couldn't help himself—he'd fallen for her. And, as always, when he gave his heart, he gave it completely.

He waited for the girl in his arms to look upset or start talking about how things were moving too fast. But instead Ari threw her arms around him and started to cry.

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"Ari? Darlin'?" Jackson rubbed her back in long, soothing strokes, wondering what was wrong. "What is it?" he asked softly. "Did I scare you? Am I moving too fast?"

"Oh, no. No, Jackson." She pulled away, her cheeks flushed and wet with tears. "It's just that...I just realized I love you too. When I'm with you—" She bit her lip again. "You make me feel things I never thought I could feel. I thought I was dead inside, that I couldn't enjoy sexual pleasure. But you...well, you showed me I can."

Jackson felt his heart swell. He cupped her cheek and brought her close for a gentle but intense kiss. "I'm glad, sweetheart," he whispered. "Because I love to touch you. I love to give you pleasure."

"Jackson?" She was looking up at him hopefully.

"Yes, honey?"

"I was...well, I was just wondering if everything I thought I'd found out about men was wrong."

"What else did you find out?" Jackson raised an eyebrow at her. He wondered where the hell she'd come across such a fountain of misinformation and he was prepared for another crazy question. But Ari surprised him.

"Well, remember the first time you...we...the first time you kissed me and licked my pussy while I was sucking your cock?" she asked.

Jackson felt his shaft go from soft to rock hard in two seconds flat. God, to hear her talk like that in her soft, innocent voice just drove him *crazy*. "Yeah, honey," he said encouragingly, trying not to think about his throbbing erection.

"Well, before that, when I was straddling you and letting you suck my nipples, your cock almost slid into me. Into my pussy, remember?" Ari looked at him with questions in her eyes.

"I'm not likely to forget that, darlin'," Jackson said tightly. He tried not to think of how badly he wanted to slide into her sweet, hot pussy and fill her up with his cum. He knew Ari was still afraid of penetration, although she seemed to love it when he fingered her. And besides, she had always needed to catch his cum in that damn glass jar she always

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carried around so they had never actually made love. But, God, how he wanted to!

"Well," Ari went on, pulling him out of his hot fantasies. "Back when that happened, when I was on top of you and your cock almost slid into me, I assumed that was the only way to—"

"To fuck," Jackson finished thickly for her.

She nodded. "Yes. But the same person who told me everything else you said was wrong told me there is another way. She said *you* can be on top of *me*. And I thought...well...it sounds really—" She blushed and looked down, obviously unable to finish the sentence.

Jackson lifted her chin and looked deeply into her velvety black eyes. "Do you want me on top of you, Ari? Do you want me to slide my thick cock into your sweet little pussy and fuck you? To fill you with my cum?"

A little shudder ran through her and her breath came in little pants. "Yes, Jackson," she breathed, pressing closer to him. "Yes, that's exactly what I want."

He nodded at his ankles, still encased in the manacles. "Then you're gonna have to let me loose, honey. There's no other way. Do you trust me enough to do that?"



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### Chapter 12

Ari glanced down at his ankles and the thick magno-locks around them. As much as she liked him, she had never dared to set Jackson completely free. It had always seemed too dangerous, somehow. He was so *big* and so strong. She knew he could easily overpower her if he were free. He could even hurt her if he wanted to.

But looking into his warm brown eyes, she knew that Jackson would never hurt her or betray the trust she had shown in him. He wasn't anything like what she had been told men were. He wasn't an animal or a violent criminal. He was just a person, like her. Just the man who loved her.

"Ari?" he said again, interrupting her thoughts. "Do you trust me, darling'?"

"Yes." Ari reached for the locking mechanism and pressed the bottom button, releasing the second set of magno-locks. "Yes, Jackson, I do," she said.

The minute the locks popped open, he kicked free of them and jumped off the sleeping platform. Ari thought for a minute he was going to run and betray her trust. But she should have known better.

Jackson pulled her up from the platform and took her in his arms, kissing her so fiercely it nearly took her breath away. His big hands roamed over her body, exploring the curves hidden beneath her plastic dress. He was naked, as he had been since they'd first brought him in and

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strapped him to the bed platform, and Ari could feel the hard planes of his big body pressing against her own. His warm, masculine musk invaded her senses, making her knees feel weak. He was so big, so forceful, and so completely different from her. Yet he was so gentle. Knowing he could hurt her but that he wouldn't was incredibly erotic.

"Off," Jackson growled, tugging at the see-through material of her dress. "I want to touch you, darlin'. I don't want anything between us."

"All right," Ari agreed, pulling off her dress. She started to take off the thin scarlet modesty bands that covered her nipples and the slit of her pussy too, but Jackson stopped her.

"Wait," he said, his voice thick with emotion. "There's something I want to do." He leaned down and kissed one of her nipples, sucking it through the thin scarlet material, tonguing it gently until Ari felt it rise to a hard point. She gasped as he moved to the other nipple as well, licking and sucking until the tiny half inch ribbon of material clung to her tight nipples, outlining them without actually revealing them.

"Goddess," she moaned as he left her breasts and trailed a line of hot, open-mouthed kisses down her trembling abdomen. When he reached the slender red lines of material that encircled her hips and the tiny strip that curved between her pussy lips, Ari thought he would pull them off. Instead, he dropped to his knees before her, bracketing her hips with his large, warm hands.

"So beautiful," Jackson murmured, pressing a soft kiss to the inner crease of her thigh. His warm breath tickled her nearly bare cunt and she stifled a moan of anticipation as he kissed her on the other thigh, still avoiding her slit.

"Jackson, please," she whispered, resting her hand on his broad shoulder for support. "I don't know...what are you doing?"

"Worshiping your pussy, darling'." His voice was a deep growl. "I've wanted to do this from the first minute I saw you. Wanted to get on my knees in front of you and open that pretty little cunt with my tongue and eat you until you begged to have my cock inside you."

"But...my modesty straps are in the way," Ari pointed out.

He shook his head. "No, they're perfect. I just wanna admire that smooth little pussy before I taste it. It's so hot the way that little strip of

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ribbon goes right up between your pussy lips—the way it just barely covers your sweet little slit.” He traced the line of crimson between her legs with one finger, illustrating his point.

Ari gasped at the hot sensation his light, barely-there caress caused in her. It was as though he was painting her skin with fire when he touched her like that. “Jackson, *please*,” she moaned. “Please, I need you!”

“Patience, sweetheart. This is everybody’s day off, isn’t it?”

Ari nodded, and then forced herself to speak. “Yes, I...I sent Pamela, the girl who is supposed to be watching you, away. I told her I’d keep an eye on you. Everyone else in the Ministry is gone.”

“Good, then we can take our time.” He looked up at her, grinning wolfishly in a way that made Ari’s heart pound faster against her ribs. “I gonna make you crazy before I take you, Ari. Gonna make you so hot and ready and wet you can’t stand it before I slide my cock inside that sweet cunt of yours and fuck you. Would you like that, darling’?”

“Oh...Goddess,” Ari moaned softly. She loved it when he asked her what she wanted in that deep voice of his, when he told her exactly what he was going to do to her.

“Yes,” she murmured at last, looking down into his eyes, which were filled with such heat and love for her. “Yes, Jackson, that’s just what I want.”

“Then spread your legs for me, darlin’, and let me in,” he ordered in that deep, commanding voice.

Moaning softly, Ari did as he ordered. Still standing, she braced herself on his broad shoulders and widened her stance so her legs were open for him. The lips of her pussy, already swollen and wet with desire, spread wide with the movement. When she looked down, she saw that the thin scarlet band that went between her legs now barely covered her throbbing clit.

“Beautiful,” Jackson murmured again. He traced the thin red ribbon between her legs, trailing his fingertip gently over the sensitive bundle of nerves.

Ari stifled a cry. His touch felt so good on her, so right. Why was he teasing her like this? Why didn’t he just take her?

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"Are you wet for me, Ari?" she heard him rumble. "Is your soft little pussy wet under this tiny little ribbon?"

Ari was almost beyond speech. "I...I don't know," she whispered, breathing hard.

"Let's find out," Jackson said. And then his finger was back, tracing over the thin red ribbon that covered her clit. He rubbed between her legs, pressing the slippery red strip up into her open pussy. The friction of the silky material against her swollen folds made Ari shudder.

"Goddess, Jackson," she moaned, clutching at his back.

"Oh, yeah, you're wet," he murmured. Gathering some of her moisture, he slid his finger up, rubbing it over the tender bump of her clit, soaking the ribbon with her juices. "Look how wet you are, Ari," he said, looking up at her. "God, that's so hot—so goddamned erotic, the way that little red ribbon outlines your clit." He gave her a slow, lazy smile. "Should I kiss you there, darlin'? Should I kiss you where that ribbon is?"

Trembling, Ari nodded. She couldn't speak. Could only watch as he dipped his head towards her. Jackson spread her wet pussy lips even farther apart, holding her open with his thumbs as he leaned in to kiss her. Then the heat of his breath slid over her and he placed a hot, open-mouthed kiss directly to her clit. His tongue darted out, licking along the length of the red ribbon, rubbing the wet material directly against her swollen bundle of nerves. This time Ari couldn't help herself. She cried out and pressed against him, clutching at his shoulders to keep from falling.

"Good girl," Jackson murmured, pulling away from her. "You're such a good girl, Ari, to let me spread open your pussy lips and eat your sweet cunt this way. Are you ready to lie back on the bed and let me fuck you now?"

"Please," Ari managed to say. "Please, Jackson. I need you now, inside me."

"That's exactly where I need to be, sweetheart," he said tenderly, helping her onto the bed. "But are you sure you want me to be on top? I mean, this is pretty much your first time. Maybe you should straddle me so you can guide the action a little."

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"No." Ari shook her head. She opened her legs, motioning for him, eager to have him on her—in her. How could she explain her need to feel his big body covering hers, opening her, owning her? How could she tell him it was something she had never experienced before and yet longed for even before she had a name for it? "Please," she whispered.

"Okay. But first, let's get rid of these." Jackson stripped away the modesty straps, leaving her completely naked at last. Naked, and completely ready for him.

Ari arched her back like a cat, thrusting her breasts with their hard, sensitive nipples up and out and spreading her legs wider. Never had she felt so wanton, so hot and ready and wet. Jackson made her that way. He gave her feelings no woman ever had and she now knew, never could. Maybe it was deviant and wrong to want to make love with a man, to want to let him fill her pussy with his cock and fuck her until he came deep inside her body. Maybe—but Ari no longer cared. She only knew that she needed him, needed him between her legs and deep inside her.

"Please, Jackson," she moaned again. "Please, please *fuck* me!"

"God, darlin', love when you talk like that!" he growled. He covered her eagerly, positioning himself between her thighs and pressing his big, hard body against her smaller, softer one. Once he was in position, Ari noticed that he slowed down. Instead of ramming himself inside her, he began to rub the broad head of his cock against her drenched sex, parting her pussy lips almost tenderly to slide his shaft directly over her enflamed clit. Sensation rocketed through her, leaving her gasping and breathless.

"Jackson, please," she begged, panting. "Please... don't tease me!"

"Just wanna make sure you're ready, sweetheart," he said, leaning down to kiss her tenderly on the mouth. "Wanna make sure your soft little cunt can take me. I promised you I'd never hurt you, Ari, and I meant it."

His concern for her well-being made Ari's heart swell with love. She had never felt so helpless, never been so vulnerable as she was right now with her legs spread wide and Jackson on top of her, ready to enter her naked, open pussy with his thick cock—and yet she had never felt safer or more loved.

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"I'm ready," she whispered. "I'm not afraid, Jackson. I...I love you. I *trust* you."

"Love you too, darlin'," he murmured softly. And then she felt the broad head of his cock spreading her pussy lips and pressing against the entrance to her body. He was long and thick and much bigger than the dildo her old girlfriend had used on her so many years before. And yet, though she experienced a stretching sensation, there was no sharp pain with his slow, gentle entry into her body.

At last he reached the end of her channel, bottoming out inside her so that the broad head of his cock pressed the mouth of her womb. Ari had never felt so full, so completely owned by another person in her life.

"You ready, darlin'?" Jackson looked at her, his brown eyes blazing with love and suppressed urgency and she suddenly realized how difficult it must have been for him to hold himself back.

"Yes," she whispered. "Yes, I'm ready now, Jackson. Ready for you to fuck me."

With a low groan he pulled almost all the way out of her pussy and thrust back into her, filling her all over again with his thick cock. Ari gasped at the sweet sensation that pulsed through her, at the deep, almost painful pleasure of being spread and filled and fucked. On the next thrust she arched up to meet him, grinding against his cock as it penetrated her, letting him know how much she wanted him, how much she needed him inside her.

"That's right, sweetheart," Jackson growled in her ear. "Open up for me, open your sweet pussy and let me fuck you until you come." He pulled out and rammed into her, fucking as deeply into her wet, open cunt as he could and making Ari cry out with pleasure.

"Jackson...oh, Goddess!" she moaned, pressing up against him. "Feels so....oh! Feels so *good*."

"You like that?" he asked, pressing harder and deeper. "Like to feel my thick cock inside your pussy? Spreading you open, filling you up?"

"Yes!" Ari gasped. "Goddess, yes!"

"Good, darlin'. Wanna make you feel so good you explode." Jackson shifted suddenly and unlocked her legs from around his waist.

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Ari looked at him with uncertainty, but he only said, "Trust me, sweetheart. I need to get deeper into you."

She relaxed against him and he lifted her legs over his muscular shoulders and pressed forward, fucking into her again, but deeper this time. *Harder*. Ari gasped as heated sensations shot through her. It was as though he had found a whole new angle within her, a whole new way to open her up and claim her. It was as though he was reaching for her heart with each deep thrust of his cock into her pussy.

The new angle also gave Jackson more freedom to touch her. She felt his large warm hand between her thighs and suddenly his thumb was pressing her tender, exposed clit. Ari moaned and nearly jumped off the sleeping platform. The intense sensation of his cock driving into her pussy and the pressure against her throbbing clit was too much.

"Oh, Goddess, Jackson," she sobbed. "I think I'm going to...oh!"

Jackson's brown eyes blazed. "That's right, Ari," he growled, still thrusting into her. "I want you to come for me. Come all over my cock while I fuck you. Come *now*."

Ari felt herself losing control, slipping over the edge of orgasm as he spoke. With one last, gasping sob of his name, she felt herself falling and flying at the same time, giving in to the pleasure as it washed over her in wave after wave.

Jackson pressed hard into her, watching her face as she came, drinking in her pleasure as she spasmed around his hard shaft driving into her cunt. "God, Ari," he murmured. "So beautiful. So goddamned gorgeous when you come. *God!*"

He gave one final deep thrust and she felt him pouring into her, filling her with his cum as he had promised. It felt so good, so right, that Ari pulled him closer. She couldn't get over the idea that by opening her, by penetrating her pussy completely with his thick cock, Jackson had claimed her as his own. She belonged to him now, the same way he belonged to her. She wrapped her legs tightly around his narrow hips and put her arms around his neck, covering his face with kisses.

"Mmm, sweetheart." Jackson kissed her back, and then relaxed against her, warm and heavy and slightly sweaty from his exertions. He

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was breathing hard and his large hands kept touching her, caressing her shoulders and hair and hips, as though he couldn't get enough of her no matter how hard he tried.

Feeling warm and happy, Ari cradled his head on her shoulder. She was a little sore, but it was a good kind of sore. She felt complete for the first time ever and it wasn't just because she and Jackson had made love. No. She had finally found someone who made her come alive, who made her pulse pound and her body react. The empty spot inside her that she had carried with her all her life was empty no longer. Jackson and her love for him were there. She had no idea what the future held for them. but for now that was enough.

"I must be crushing you," Jackson murmured at last, rolling off her.

"I like being crushed by you," Ari protested. She rolled onto her side and propped herself on one elbow to look at him. "That was amazing. *You* were amazing."

He grinned at her. "Bet you say that to all the boys, sweetheart." Then he pulled her down for another soft kiss. When he let her go, his eyes were serious. "We have to get out of here," he told her. "Everybody's gone. There's never going to be a better time."

Ari frowned. "Where are we going to go? There's no way I can pass you off as a woman. You're much too...too *you*. I guess I could hide you at my domicile, but if you went missing, there would probably be a search. Or we could—"

"It's not where we can hide. It's *when*," Jackson corrected.

"When?" Ari raised an eyebrow, not understanding.

"Sure," he said, rolling up on his side to face her. "When—specifically, *my* when. It's pretty clear I'll never fit in around here." He gestured with one hand at the white, sterile room where he had been held prisoner for the last ten days. "But you'd fit in fine in *my* when, Ari. My time, I mean."

"Are you serious?" Ari sat up and wrapped her arms around her knees. She'd never actually thought about what would happen after she admitted she loved Jackson. Never considered what kind of a future they could have together. She hadn't even told him the fate in store for him



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once the Fertility Banks Department had as much sperm as they wanted from him, she reminded herself guiltily.

"Of course I'm serious." Jackson sat up beside her and put an arm around her shoulders. "I know it's scary, but I'll take care of you. I'll always be there for you. I promise, sweetheart."

"I just don't know." Ari sighed and shook her head. Her long silver blond hair tumbled around her shoulders and back like a protective curtain. Just ten days ago when Jackson had first been brought in, she had shivered at the idea of being exiled in the barbaric past. Could she do it? Could she leave everyone and everything she had ever known and go live with a man she'd only known a little over a week?

"We can't stay here," Jackson reminded her. "Or at least, *I* can't. I have to go back."

"Well you can't just go jumping through the time portal right now," Ari pointed out. "It's still set to the exact moment we took you out of that time, and that bus is a split second from running you down."

"You've got a point, darlin'." Jackson looked grim. "But can you change it? Do you know how to work that machine?"

Ari thought of the very slight tutorial she'd had in the use of the time portal's controls. Pamela, who had been assigned to teach her, had spent most of her time badgering Ari get to go out instead of explaining how to operate the portal. But the controls *were* fairly simple.

"I...I *think* I could change the time," she said. "But, Jackson, I don't want you to go back without me."

"And I don't *want* to go back without you," he said gently. "So come with me, Ari. You said you trust me not to hurt you."

"That was different." Ari pressed her chin against her knees. "You're asking me to leave everything I've ever known. To leave my whole life with no possibility of ever coming back. I...I need time to think about that, Jackson."

"We don't have time to think," he said. "Damn it, Ari, I know it's a hell of a decision, but I love you. I need you with me." He pulled her closer and planted a kiss on her forehead. "Please, darlin'. You know it's the only way we can ever be together."

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Ari knew he was right, but it was still a hard choice to make. She thought about all she would be leaving behind. Her birth mother, whom she hardly ever saw. The other six girls in her egg group, she supposed she should call them sisters, whom she also rarely saw. She would be leaving her co-workers behind as well, but she certainly wouldn't miss the likes of Pamela. Really, she realized, the only thing she would miss if she left and never came back to her own time was Bitsy, her sim-cat. Even Bitsy could do without her. It wasn't like she had to be fed or watered or would pine away from loneliness. Sim animals were programmed to demonstrate emotions, but they didn't actually feel them. It was all just code and programming.

"Well—" She looked at Jackson, still undecided. "I just need some time to think. I'm not sure."

"Then let me convince you, darlin'," he murmured. Tilting her chin up gently, he pressed a soft, hot kiss to her lips. A kiss full of passion and need and promise and longing. A kiss full of trust.

Ari sighed and opened her mouth under his, welcoming his seeking tongue into her mouth and moaning slightly as he deepened the kiss.

"Well, well. So *this* is the reason you didn't want to go out with me."

The icy cold voice jerked Ari out of the magic of the kiss and she and Jackson both looked up sharply. Pamela stood in the doorway with a light-gun pointed at them and a sneer of disgust on her face.

They were caught.

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### Chapter 13

"I can scarcely believe what I'm hearing." The Matron stood in her office, her arms crossed over her pointed bosom, a look of disbelief on her sharp features. Beside her stood Pamela, still pointing her gun in Ari's direction. Jackson had been subdued and dragged away from her and now Ari didn't even know where he was. She only knew she was in deep trouble. Matron N hadn't been at all pleased to be called in on her only day off, and when she learned *why* Pamela had called her, she was even less happy.

"It's true." Pamela grinned at her maliciously. "I walked in and caught them. Not only had she set him free of the magno-locks. She was actually *kissing* him."

"Surely you must be mistaken about the last part, Pamela," Matron N protested. "I can see how he might have tricked her into unlocking him. But surely Ariana Seven wasn't really—"

"Kissing him? Yes, I was," Ari spoke up for the first time. Never in her sheltered life had she ever dared defy authority. The Matron was giving her an easy out. She could have agreed and pretended nothing had happened or that Jackson had forced himself on her. But she loved him. He stirred feelings in her that she had believed were dead, and she wasn't willing to lie about that.

"So you admit it?" A look of disgust passed over the Matron's face. It was as though Ari had been caught in an act of bestiality or necrophilia.

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Ari felt a lump rise in her throat but she swallowed it bravely and held her chin high. "Yes, I do. I...I love him, Matron."

The Matron shook her head. "All right, Ariana, it's clear that you've undergone some kind of traumatic emotional incident. A psychotic break, maybe. In light of that I won't be recommending that you spend any time at the Ministry of Corrections. But I think some time at the Ministry of Health would benefit you immensely. You'll need to be re-conditioned to forget all of this and—"

The rest of her words faded into a dull drone. Re-conditioned to forget? To forget *everything*? To forget Jackson? Ari felt another lump rise in her throat and this time, she couldn't swallow it.

"I can't," she blurted, interrupting the Matron's speech. "You can't send me away. What will happen to Jackson?"

"The *man* is being sent back to his own time," Pamela answered her question. "The lab report just came back. His genes are imperfect."

"What? But why? How?" Ari felt like her head was spinning. Everything was happening so fast! Was it only the day before she'd admitted to herself that she loved Jackson? And only an hour before she had been making love with him. Now she was about to lose him forever. "Why?" she asked Matron N desperately. "Why are they sending him back?"

"Aside from this, eh-hem, incident," Matron N said almost primly, "A defect has been found on one of the subject's chromosomes. Children produced from his sperm could potentially develop an eye condition called myopia. In the past they used to call it nearsightedness. It means the eyes are unable to focus on distant objects."

"But didn't they have a treatment for that?" Ari asked. "Some kind of a surgery?"

"It doesn't matter if it's treatable or not," the Matron said sternly. "Myopia was wiped out centuries ago. We're not prepared to take a step backwards just because you seemed to have formed some irrational attachment to the subject."

"Stop calling him that!" Ari shouted. "He has a name. It's *Jackson* and he's the sweetest, kindest, most civilized person I've ever met."

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"Right," Pamela sneered. "A *civilized* man. What other fables do you have to feed us?"

"It's true," Ari said desperately. "He's kind and sweet and nonviolent. Everything we've been taught to believe about men is a lie—Jackson proves it."

"All right, that's enough." Matron N knocked her knuckles sharply on her plasti-wood desk for emphasis. "Ariana Seven, it's clear that you can't begin your re-conditioning too soon. Pamela will escort you to the Ministry of Health."

"Right after we send the *man* back to his own time," Pamela added with a nasty sneer. She came around the desk and grabbed Ari by the arm in a bruising grip. "I think it'll do you good to see him catch that bus, Ariana."

"Now, Pamela," the Matron said disapprovingly. "There's no need to be unnecessarily cruel."

"No." Ari wiped at her eyes which were suddenly full of tears. "No. I want to see him one more time. Please, Matron N."

Matron N pursed her lips into a thin white line but at last she nodded. "Very well, Ariana. Maybe seeing the subject's termination will do you some good. At the very least, it should make clear once and for all how foolish your recent decisions have been."

"A person doesn't decide to fall in love," Ari said, lifting her chin despite her tears. "And they don't always get to decide who they fall in love with."

"Pretty words, golden girl," Pamela said. "Come on." Tightening her grip on Ari's upper arm, she herded her out of the Matron's office and into the control room where the time portal with its shimmering portrait of the past waited.

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### Chapter 14

Jackson was already there, dressed in the same strange, opaque clothing he had been wearing when he'd been brought through the portal ten days before. Had it really been only ten days? Ari's eyes filled with tears again. It seemed like a lifetime since she had learned to love the sensation of his large, warm hands on her body, his scratchy cheeks against her skin, his mouth covering hers. A lifetime since she had realized she loved him. Now, it was over.

"Ari!" Jackson shouted when he saw her. He struggled against his captors, but they were taking no chances with him. Eight large, strong women held him down and a ninth pointed a light-gun directly at his head.

"Jackson, I'm sorry. So sorry." The words seemed to stick in Ari's throat and she struggled to keep from sobbing openly. If only she had agreed at once to go back to Jackson's time with him! They might be safely in the twenty-first century by now, if only she hadn't been so indecisive. What had she been holding onto here in her present time, anyway? Why had she fought so hard against letting go? There was nothing here for her, she realized. Nothing she wanted as much as she wanted to be with him.

"That's enough, *man*," one of the women growled. "It's time to go back to your own time now." She nodded at the silver arch of the portal

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where the huge bus was framed, the driver's face caught in an almost comical 'O' of surprise.

"Wait! Wait, *please*." Ari stepped forward, shaking off Pamela's pinching grip to walk up to where they held Jackson. "Let me say goodbye first. The Matron said I could."

The women holding Jackson looked at her with varying expressions of surprise and disgust. "So, it's true then?" the one holding the light gun said. "You really had sex with this man?"

"It's true, all right," Pamela answered, stepping forward. "I caught them at it. *It was revolting*."

Ari ignored all of them. She walked up to Jackson and took his bristly, unshaven cheeks in her hands. She had grown to love his rough face, which was so different from her own smooth one. She'd grown to love everything about him.

"Jackson," she whispered. "I'm so sorry. I should have gone with you when you first asked me. We'd be safe right now."

"It's okay, darlin'," he said softly. "I don't blame you for anything. Even if this was the last ten days of my life, I don't care—because it's been the best ten days, too."

He leaned forward despite the many hands holding him back and Ari met him halfway in a kiss that was both sweet and salty from the tears she couldn't hold back.

"Enough of this sickening display!" Pamela shouted. "Tears of the Goddess, are we just going to stand here and watch this? Get rid of him!"

Jackson was torn away from her and Ari had one last moment to see him mouth, "I love you," before he was thrust back through the time portal.

"Jackson!" she shouted. "No!" The silver grille of the bus loomed in the portal and suddenly there he was, standing right in front of it. Ari couldn't bear it—he had only seconds before the bus hit him, and those were seconds they could spend together. She didn't want to stay in her own time and be re-conditioned and lose her precious memories of him, she realized. She didn't want to forget that she was capable of love and passion and spend the rest of her life in a loveless existence. Better to live

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a last few seconds with Jackson than to live fifty or sixty more years without him.

Without giving herself any more time to think, Ari took a running jump into the time portal herself.

“Hey, what is she doing?” she heard from her own time. Then there was a sucking sensation. And suddenly she was standing next to Jackson with that huge, ancient transportation device looming in front of her.

“Ari!” Jackson shouted. “Get out of the—”

He shoved her sideways and she fell onto a strange, rough surface that must be the twenty-first century version of a walkway or road. Her head connected with the rough surface and she heard a dull *thump* behind her, like a large vehicle striking flesh.

Everything went black.



## Evangeline Anderson

### Chapter 15

*Present Day 2006*

"I think he's coming around. Remember, don't get him too excited." An unfamiliar voice woke Jackson, bringing him out of a deep sleep. He became aware that his right leg throbbed fiercely, and his eyelids felt like they had weights on them—he was too tired to look and see why. Where was he, anyway? The last thing he remembered was some crazy dream about being sucked through a portal into the future where they harvested his sperm. And there had been a girl there—Ari! What had happened to Ari? His eyes popped open and he searched frantically for her familiar silver blond hair and velvety black eyes.

"Jackson?" Suddenly she was leaning over him with a look of concern on her beautiful face. "Are you all right?" she asked.

"Ari!" A bandage covered her right temple and she wore unfamiliar clothes that someone had obviously given to her, but it was indeed the woman of his dreams. Or maybe it hadn't been a dream after all. "Ari," he said again, reaching out to her.

"It's me." She smiled at him and took his hand, placing it on her cheek. They were in a hospital, he saw, and he was in bed with tubes going into his arm and his leg...his leg was in an almighty big cast, and it hung from a traction bar in the ceiling. To one side, a doctor in pale blue scrubs and a white coat was writing something in a chart.

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"What happened to your head?" he croaked, indicating the bandage on Ari's temple. "And what's wrong with my leg?" he asked as an afterthought.

"I bumped it when you pushed me out of the way of the bus," she said, touching her wounded temple. "Then the bus hit your leg and broke it."

"It's fractured in five places," the doctor put in, looking up from his chart. "But don't worry, Mister Taylor. The operation was a success. With hard work and lots of physical therapy, you should regain full use of it." She patted the cast fondly. "This is some of my best work. You were damned lucky the bus driver was able to swerve out of the way and only hit your leg."

"But of course, if you hadn't already been in motion from pushing me, it would have hit all of you," Ari put in, smiling shyly at him. "So you saved both our lives, Jackson."

"No." He shook his head, reveling in the feel of her silky smooth cheek beneath his palm. "No, *you* saved my life, darlin'," he told her softly. "I was frozen to the spot until you came along."

"And I was frozen inside until I met you," Ari said softly. "Oh, Jackson, I hope you don't mind that I jumped through the portal after you."

"Mind? Of course I don't mind. Hell, if I had a ring I'd...wait a minute." Jackson looked around the hospital room. "Are my clothes here?" he asked the doctor. "The ones I was wearing when they brought me it?"

"We had to cut off your pants, but I think they put them in a plastic bag under your bed." The doctor bent and pulled out a clear plastic bag filled with Jackson's clothes and handed it to him. "Here you go."

"Thanks." Jackson opened the bag with trembling hands. He didn't know if what he was looking for would still be there. But when he reached into the pocket of his shredded pants, his hand closed over a small velvet box and he breathed a sigh of relief.

"What is it?" Ari asked, looking at the tiny blue velvet box in his hand.

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"A ring." Jackson opened the box, displaying the same diamond ring he'd had in his pocket to offer Cynthia before she'd told him in no uncertain terms to take a hike. Now he understood that the ring had never been for her—that everything had happened for a purpose. Cynthia had turned him down, the bus had almost hit him, and he had been sucked through a portal in time so he could meet and fall in love with the special woman sitting beside his bed.

"What's a ring?" Ari stared with incomprehension at the box in his hand, and Jackson remembered he had never seen her or any of the other women in the future wearing any jewelry.

"It's well...it's for this." He lifted the diamond ring out of its box and took her small hand in his. "It fits on your finger." He demonstrated by sliding the slim gold band onto her slender ring finger.

"It's beautiful." Ari held out her hand, admiring the way the diamond sparkled in the dim overhead fluorescent lighting. "What does it mean?" She looked from the ring to him.

Jackson smiled. "It means—will you marry me, darlin'?"

Ari frowned. "What does 'marry' mean?"

Jackson was torn between frustration and laughter. Laughter won out. Apparently there was no marriage in the future. At least, not marriage as he knew it. No wonder Ari looked at him with confusion in her velvety eyes.

He took her hand. "It means I love you with all my heart, darlin,' and I'm askin' you to spend the rest of your life with me."

"Oh!" Ari's big eyes filled with tears, which overflowed onto her pale cheeks. "Oh, in that case—yes. Yes, Jackson. *Yes.*" She threw her arms around him and buried her face in his shoulder.

Jackson breathed in the sweet scent of her skin and began to feel a little tearful himself. "Never thought I'd get to ask you that," he whispered into her soft blond hair. "I love, you, darlin'."

Ari pulled back and despite her tears, a mischievous little smile tugged at the corners of her full mouth. "I love you too, Jackson," she said. "Even if you *aren't* the last man on Earth."

## **Last Man on Earth**

### **Author Bio**

Evangeline Anderson is a registered MRI tech who would rather be writing. She is thirty-something and lives in Florida with her husband, three cats, and a college-aged sister—but no children, because enough is enough already. She had been writing stories for her own gratification for a number of years before it occurred to her to try and get paid for it. To her delight, she found it was actually possible to get money for her crazy ideas and she has been writing science fiction and paranormal romance ever since.

## **Evangeline Anderson**

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### **Chapter One**

It came from deep in the woods, a low, lonely howl that tugged at Laney's soul. She heard it and her ears pricked, her body suddenly going tense. She looked up from the book she was reading in the den of her small cabin and waited, wondering if the sound would come again.

Seconds passed. A minute. The teasing notes rose higher and crested on the balmy night air, causing a slow, tingling heat to creep over her body. Laney shivered and her nipples turned into hard peaks. Hearing that sad, tormented cry made her breathing ragged and her heart quicken. What was it about that voice?

When the haunted notes finally faded, she shook herself from her sensual fog and snarled. This had to stop. For four nights now, she'd been hearing that same relentless baying. The new neighboring pack was going to start a war with her brother if they didn't back off the border and stop calling out within hearing range of the wolves under Seth's protection.

Nerves jangling, she turned her book over and got up from the couch. Anger and frustration mounted within her as she moved quickly through the house to the back porch. She'd promised to watch over things

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and take care of any emergency pack business while Seth was away for the week, but she had a sinking suspicion that confronting the alpha of a rival pack wasn't what he had in mind when he'd left his instructions. Be that as it may, she had to do something. Seth and the other males weren't going to return for another two days, and that persistent calling was really starting to get under her skin.

Laney stepped off the porch into the moonlight and crossed the shadow-mottled yard with determined purpose. The wind rose up and swirled around her, strengthening the odors of pine and moist earth--and something else she couldn't quite identify. The combined scents filled her lungs and made her feel strangely restless as she headed toward the tree line that began a short distance from the house.

She walked straight into the woods, choosing to remain in her human form even though her jeans and bootlaces kept snagging on the briars as she moved over the rough ground. It would be faster traveling in the form of the wolf, but she preferred the slight sense of protection wearing clothes offered her.

Dressed or not, she knew going into the woods unescorted was potentially dangerous. Seth would likely strangle her if he ever found out about her going near the border alone, but it would be so much worse for everyone if he came home and discovered members of a rival pack stirring close to the border, marking their territory. She had to reach this rogue male and talk sense into him before anyone else from her pack could answer him and stir up trouble.

She walked maybe ten feet farther into the woods before the male's call rose up again. The notes struck her with the force of a silver bullet, shooting hot sensation from her head straight to her toes. Her breathing hitched. Her senses swam. A tiny tremor wracked her small body. Now that she was closer to the source of the call, the lure was more pure, more potent. Alluring.

Laney stopped in her tracks and clamped her eyes shut tight as heat pooled thick and wet between her thighs, soaking her panties. A tender ache started inside her and she gritted her teeth to hold it at bay. Still, the notes played over her skin like the brush of velvet fingers. The sound *beckoned* her, called to her inner beast until she shook with pent-up

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desire.

A desperate, cloying need to return the male's call had her pussy clenching in anticipation. Unaware of what she was doing, she ran trembling hands over her small, firm breasts and squeezed, shuddering as a bolt of erotic energy zipped through her veins. Her bones creaked and shifted. She closed her eyes and fought the urge to embrace the change...

The wind shifted, and the fragrant scent of male lust wafted to her from somewhere deep within the woods. Laney's eyes snapped open in an instant as realization crept in on her. This wasn't just some lonely cry she was hearing. It was a mating call.

A burst of black fury surged through her. *Damn males!* No wonder she felt so strung out and needy. Some horny male had been calling out to her for nights on end!

Her lips compressed in a thin line, Laney tilted her chin and gazed up at the moon. It hung at three-quarters. It would be another day or two before the full moon held sway. Even so, the night was clear. The moon loomed large and bright overhead. No wonder she felt like a bitch in heat.

A heated blush stole into her face at that unspoken admission. Her lip lifted into a silent snarl. One thing for certain, she had to get this howling situation under control before her brother came back and discovered what was going on.