

La Belle Île en Mère

By Rawly Rawls © 2022

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Also, all characters in sexual situations are 18 years or older.

Chapter 1

Take the Gloves Off

Anna's Diary August 13, 2197

We made it! I can't believe we're at La Belle Île en Mer. Everything is gorgeous. The kids share a room, and Ernest and I have the most lavish suite on the hundred twentieth floor. The views are to die for. The way the hotel spins, we can often see Earth. It looks like a bright star from here. The place is huge, with thousands of guests. We haven't even begun to explore it. Ernest and I are excited to spend time with the kids. It's obvious that Georgie and Lillian love it too. We're losing them bit by bit. Lillian expects Francis to propose at any moment. And George is sorting through which college he'll attend next year. This may be the last time we're all together as a tight-knit family.

Ernest is such a gentleman for going along with this trip. And we've already rekindled a little fire in our marriage. Last night I finally got to take the gloves off. He was so excited that he went down on me. Can you believe it, Diary? He hadn't done that in years. I just know this will be the most amazing family trip ever.

Ernest's Diary August 13, 2197

We arrived in the evening yesterday. For what this place charges, I had expected more. My sweet wife has asked the whole family to keep diaries of the trip. She wants us to remember this forever. The kids agreed, and so have I. So ... here we are. I'm looking forward to finding the Belle Île's golf courses. They're supposed to be spectacular. The

food is all replicated at the hotel, but it's not bad for what it is. Despite the drawbacks of coming way out here, the smile on Anna's face is worth it. She's as giddy as a schoolgirl. And if she's happy, I'm happy.

Lillian's Diary August 13, 2197

Fffuuuuuuuccccckkkkkkkkkkk. How did I let myself get talked into this? Sharing a room with my little shit of a brother? What the fuck? He might be eighteen, but acts like a baby. Mom fawns over him ... her precious ball of sunshine.

Maybe he's not totally a baby. He does act like a teenager in one way. He's a fucking horny baboon. I heard him jacking it last night! When I told him to stop, he said he wasn't doing it. But I know what I heard. He wouldn't look me in the eyes this morning. What a pervert. This trip is a disaster.

George's Diary August 13, 2197

I know this trip is important to Mom, so I'm doing all I can to make it go smoothly. I won't let Lillian get under my skin. I'll try and keep a smile on Dad's face. The hotel is beautiful, but I do miss home. We had a tennis tournament against Winters Valley High, and I hope the team does well without me. Mom said we could play some tennis later in the trip, the Belle Île is supposed to have amazing grass courts.

I'm not sure what sort of stuff I'm supposed to write here. I think Mom wanted us to have these just for ourselves, so ... maybe I can swear here? What if we get hit by an asteroid? That would be fuckballs!

Honestly, Diary. I've never told anyone this, but I can't wait to go swimming as a family. Swimsuits might not show any skin, but the way Mom's swimsuit hugs her body ... drives me crazy. Even thinking about it makes me wish I had a private room. Lillian caught me last night. I was thinking about Sarah Walsh from chemistry class. She has such huge tits ... sort of like Mom. And I couldn't help it. I didn't think Lillian would hear me. I don't know if I'll ever be able to look my sister in the eye again.

That took a dark turn. Sorry, Diary. I'm going to make this the best trip ever. Mom will be so happy when we get back home, she won't stop smiling for a month. Maybe then I can talk to her about my college decision.

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Sirens wailed. George let his mother drag him toward the dock. Her gloved hand gripped him tightly. Red lights pulsed rapidly. The strobe effect made Anna's tight sleeves, elegant bodice, and long skirt seem to move in alien ways. They passed the central nerve center for the spire. It wasn't marked, but George had a keen interest in AI, so he'd made a point of learning a bit about Océane, the hotel's master system. "Mom ... Dad ... we need to go in there." He pointed to the door as it opened and someone in a white coat ran out. The door didn't close behind the man.

"Skyrmion burst detected. Move to your nearest lifeboat and evacuate. Estimated burst arrival in six minutes," Océane had been repeating the same countdown message over the hotel's sound system for ten minutes. "Skyrmion burst detected. Move ..."

"Hurry, Georgie!" Anna pulled her son with one hand, her daughter with the other. Her husband ran beside them, holding his hat to his head, his tie billowing over his shoulder. They were in a long elegant, mirrored hallway, with room doors passing by every few seconds. The carpet underneath their feet had a wonderfully lush, red botanical pattern that practically crawled with the strobing alarm lights.

"We're not going to make it to the dock, Mom. There's not enough time." George dug his heels in. "But the nerve center has a Faraday cage." They stopped and people passed all around them. Someone slammed into George's back, fell, rose and ran ahead without so much as an "excuse me." "Come on!" George shouted. He was much taller than his mother, and despite her curves and his lean frame, he outweighed her. He pulled her back the way they'd come, moving upstream against the rushing tide of fleeing people. He led his mother and sister, forming a chain. His father stopped, looked back, and ran to catch up with them.

"What's this?" Ernest furrowed his brow. "We're going to miss the lifeboat." He had to yell at the top of his lungs to be heard over the cacophony in the hallway.

"Yes, we are. No matter what we do." George pulled his mother into the outer room of the nerve center. There was nobody inside, and the inner door was open. He said a little prayer of thanks as the rest of his family followed. He looked back at them. "The main processing components for Océane are at three nerve centers. One here, one in the central ring, and one in a similar room in the other spire. They're all shielded to protect Océane from radiation, like a skyrmion burst. When the burst hits, if we're in there, we'll be safe. If we're not ..." He didn't want to say what would happen.

"I don't know ..." Ernest looked back through the door. A steady stream of people passed hurriedly by wearing suits and dresses.

"Please, Mom. We'll die if we go back out there." George squeezed his mother's gloved hand, his brown eyes filled with desperation.

“We should listen to Georgie, Ernest.” She moved toward the inner door that her son had indicated and looked inside. The room was filled with electrical equipment. “It doesn’t look shielded.”

“The Faraday cage is built into the walls.” George breathed a sigh of relief when his mother led his sister and father into the protected space. He looked back at the hallway.

“Aren’t you coming, sunshine?” Anna’s face creased with worry.

“Skyrmion burst detected. Move to your nearest lifeboat and evacuate. Estimated arrival in two minutes,” Océane said.

“We have two minutes to save as many people as we can.” George wanted desperately to hide with his family. But there was room for more people. And nobody outside was going to make it to the dock. “I’ll be right back.” He stepped into the hall and flagged down as many people as he could.

With thirty seconds to go, the Faraday cage gave warning that it would automatically lock the doors. George raced in. Joining his family in their shelter were six other souls. The skyrmion burst hit the hotel at 7:57 in the evening. George hugged his mother tightly, pressing his head to her bosom and praying for all those still rushing to their lifeboats. It was bitterly cold in the room. George knew that the processor needed to be kept at -196 Celsius. It was insulated, but the cold seeped out.

When Océane’s countdown ended, silence filled the strange room. The only sounds George could hear were the weeping of two women, the humming of fans, and the runaway thumping of his mother’s heart.

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“Oh ... no.” Anna followed her husband out into the hallway. Bodies littered the once-beautiful, lush carpet. “They ... *all* died?” The strobing lights were gone. The sirens no longer blared. The quiet hallway seemed all the more disturbing, lit with stately sconces along the wallpapered walls.

“We need to get to the lifeboats.” Ernest stepped over a woman in a pretty green dress. The woman’s face was a mask of horror and revulsion, her eyes staring sightlessly at the floral mural on the ceiling. Nine people followed him. No one argued, so Ernest pushed on. It was a grisly trek. The nearest dock was three floors down and on the other side of the spire. The dead had been on their way to the same place, so they were slumped in great numbers all along their route.

George had never imagined anything so terrible. Every corpse they encountered seemed to have witnessed some horror before death took them. Each expression held the same look of enmity and terror. There was no blood. No broken bones. They were gone just the same. In addition to his family, they had picked up two men and four women. The only woman not openly weeping was George's mother. He knew she was keeping herself together in a show of strength. He let her resilience move into him. Without her, he would have been bawling. With her by his side, his face remained stoic.

"I keep thinking I'll wake up from this nightmare." The tall woman walking next to George glanced at him. She wore her red hair pinned under a small hat. With one gloved hand, she laced her fingers with a man on the side farther from George. With the other hand, she hiked up her skirts to step over the corpse of an older woman lying on her side. "That would have been me if you hadn't pulled us into that room. I thank you. My husband, Roy, and I both thank you." She held up Roy's hand to demonstrate his acquiescence.

"You're ... welcome." George was tall, but she had maybe three inches on him. Despite the tears running down her cheeks, her face was strong and stern, her features chiseled and lean. She moved with grace. "You look ... familiar ..." He couldn't place her.

"Are you a tennis fan?" This was the part of the conversation where Constance usually smiled. Not today. No joy parted her lips.

"Oh ... yeah ... Constance Haversham. I've seen you play. You're good. I ... um ..." George moved toward the wall to avoid several corpses hugging each other in a pile. "Nice to meet you." This was no time for frivolity. All conversation outside their quest for the lifeboats seemed frivolous.

"Nice to meet you ..." She raised an eyebrow.

"George Zaal." George glanced at her husband. He was maybe half a foot shorter than his wife. George realized the man was crying, too. His black hair was impeccably cut but disheveled. His bow tie was undone and his jacket unbuttoned. George didn't know what to say. "I'm ... uh ... sorry ... Mr. Haversham."

Roy Haversham gave the teenager a grim look and said nothing.

On the pretense of avoiding a prone body, George fell back a little, letting the Havershams go up ahead. He found himself next to his sister. She was silently sobbing. "Are you okay, Lillian?" He made a move to put his hand on her shoulder, but she brushed it away.

"Fuck you, Georgie," Lillian hissed.

George fell back further. He found himself walking next to a diminutive woman wearing a hotel uniform. The woman's brown hair had fallen out of its pin, her hat had

disappeared. She was sniffing, but no tears ran down her brown cheeks. She wasn't much taller than a child, but George guessed she was in her thirties by the laugh lines around her eyes. "Is there anything I can do for you, Miss?"

"Ms. Edith Pemberton." Her voice was hollow and flat. She glanced at him with liquid brown eyes. "You're the one that pulled me into that room. How did you know it would save us?"

"I knew the room had a Faraday cage, Ms. Pemberton. It was designed to protect the computer from destructive radiation." George tried to sound upbeat. He wanted to raise her spirits. "I ... um ... yeah. My name is George Zaal." Lifting anyone's spirits would be an impossible feat. The group turned down a wide, carpeted stairway. One side was encased in glass and provided spectacular views of the stars. None of them twinkled. George hadn't noticed that before. How odd.

"That was very clever of you, Mr. Zaal." She looked him up and down. "You're a little young to know so much."

"I'm eighteen." George's back stiffened. "I know a lot."

"I'm sure you do, Mr. Zaal." Edith looked away, gazing out the windows. She did her best to shut out human contact from those living and dead.

George fell further back in their group of ten. He walked beside a rotund man wearing a tuxedo, and a young woman uncontrollably weeping. Neither made any indication that they wanted to engage George in conversation, so he stayed quiet.

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"They're ... gone." Ernest stood at the air lock.

"We should have asked Océane before coming all this way." Edith put her hand to the glass. The outer air lock door was open, and she could see they were passing a field of debris as the spire spun. She gasped when they passed several corpses floating among the wreckage. The trip to the dock hadn't habituated her to the sudden discovery of the dead.

"Océane?" Anna said loudly. "Where is the closest dock with boardable lifeboats?"

"Error ... error. System Océane reverting to version 3.2. Please stand by. The process may take some time." Océane's voice sounded thinner than normal.

“That’s not good.” George slumped against the wall. He watched Edith fidget with her gloves. Normally, he might be fantasizing about what the pretty woman’s bare hands looked like. But all he could think about was how utterly screwed they were.

“It’s okay. She said she’ll be back online. We just have to wait.” Constance looked around the dock. “Maybe we should wait somewhere less crowded.” From the looks on her companions’ faces, she was relieved to see that they agreed.

“It’s not okay.” George shook his head and exhaled. “Océane wasn’t even the Belle Île’s AI until version 11. She’s at version 48.6 right now. Or ... she was.” The group looked at him, ashen faces full of sorrow or worry.

“We need to call for help.” Ernest cocked his head questioningly at his son. “How?”

“Without Océane?” George thought. “I’m not sure.”

“I work at the concierge desk for floors 100 to 110.” Edith raised her gloved hand, stretching out her body. It was a gesture to gain attention. At her height, she was used to going above and beyond to get people to notice her. “The terminal there should work without Océane. Although, I’ve never tried. She’s never been down before. It’s back up on floor 105. Follow me.”

The group moved back toward the stairs, wending through the same sea of corpses they had already passed.

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“I can’t get it to work.” Edith looked at George.

All nine of his comrades looked at George.

George scanned their faces, meeting his mother’s blue-eyed gaze. “Why is everyone looking at me?”

“Does anyone know anything about computers?” Anna asked the survivors assembled at the concierge desk.

Everyone shook their heads.

“That’s why they’re looking at you, sunshine.” Anna patted her son on the cheek with her gloved hand and watched him closely. “Go on, work some magic.”

“Right.” George brought up the holographic interface. It took him a while to stumble around the system until he found his answer. “I see why Océane is rebooting to an earlier version. The Faraday cages at the hotel worked, but the energy surge fried

systems all over the hotel. The links between the nerve centers are compromised. This Océane is isolated from the processors in the ring and the other spire, so she's simplifying to lighten the burden on the system."

"Can you call for help?" Ernest put a firm hand on his son's shoulder.

"Yeah, I was getting to that. The communication infrastructure is fried." George dropped the interface. "We can't call out. But systems have been turning back on since the skyrmion burst hit us. We lost the life support system for a few minutes, but it's come back. Hopefully communications will come back, too." He nodded thoughtfully.

"Food and water?" Roy, still holding Constance firmly by the hand, uttered his first words.

"Water yes, food no." George took a deep breath. He was going to die a virgin it seemed, but he was taking it well. He didn't even *feel* like crying anymore. He looked to his mother for support. The pride conveyed by her shining eyes showed her admiration for his work with the computer.

"For fuck's sake." The older, rotund man in the tuxedo slumped against the intricate green and gold woven wallpaper.

"Watch your language around the children, Mister." Constance frowned at him.

"Mr. Albert Dmytruk, madame." Albert frowned at Constance. "The lad said he was eighteen, so there are no children here. Unless ..." He glanced at Edith.

"I am thirty-three, Mr. Dmytruk." Edith rolled her eyes. "Just because I am not as large as some ..." She made a point of staring at his belly.

"Well, I -" Albert started.

"Enough." Anna held out a gloved finger to silence them. "We'll find some empty rooms near here, rest, and check back on the communications every hour or so. Sound good?"

Nobody complained. George sighed. He had found himself in hell. But at least he wouldn't have to share a room with his sister anymore.

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George lay on his back. His new room had a large, made bed where he rested. Near the bathroom, there were two unopened suitcases that he hadn't touched. He shuddered. The owners would never come back for their luggage.

The window overlooked a cloud of debris. The wreckage looked like it was moving, but he reminded himself that he was the one moving. Without his mother's presence, his internal fortitude crumbled. He openly wept as he gazed past the muralled ceiling.

His door opened and swung inward. The locks were one of the systems that had yet to reboot. Startled, George turned his head. Edith stood in the doorway. She looked just as she had before, but for one remarkable detail. The glove on her left hand was missing. George's cock was instantly and painfully erect. His eyes bulged as he took in the fine details: elegant fingers, manicured nails, and sinuous movement. She beckoned him with her bare index finger. George sprang from bed. He looked down at his trousers. He should have been humiliated by the large tent that was pitching there, but if she was showing him her naked hand, what difference did his erection make? "Ms. Pemberton?"

"I'm lonely and frightened. Come." Edith turned and disappeared down the hall, her skirts trailing her majestically.

In a flash, George followed her into the hallway. He didn't see her, but he did see a room with an open door. He reached into his trousers, adjusted his dick so that his waistband held back the full effect of his stiffness, and raced to the door. He was about to call out to Edith when he heard voices inside the room. Neither voice sounded like hers. *I must have gone to the wrong door.* He peeked into the room and gasped. Instead of Edith, there was Constance, naked but for her gloves. She was on the bed, riding her naked, and much smaller, husband.

"Oh ... Roy ... it's okay ... baby ... Mommy's got you." Constance's wavy copper hair flowed to just below her shoulders. Her back arched in the most alluring, feminine way, defined by rippling muscles. Her skin was ghostly white, dappled by freckles here and there. Each globe of her ass was wonderfully round and firm. Her thighs were corded with muscle. Her breasts weren't large, and George could just see them bouncing beyond her upper arm.

"Mommy ... Mommy ... it was so ... terrible ... make it go away." Roy's body was much softer than his wife's and not quite so pale. He held her hips as she rode him.

Are they ... mother and son? George's stomach turned in revulsion at something so verboten. But at the same time, the discovery gave him hope. *If they could do it, so could ...* George studied Roy's face as the man gazed lovingly up at his "Mommy." He looked the same age as Constance. He couldn't be her son. They were playing a sex game. George had read about such things.

"Mommy ... ugh ... ugh ... will make it better." Constance pulled Roy into a sitting position and held his cheek against her breast.

George could see Constance's wetness dripping down to the covers below, the stain slowly spreading. He suddenly realized that he'd forgotten that he was going to die on

this island in a sea of stars. His tears were gone. He'd lost Edith, but he was grateful for the distraction the Havershams provided. He looked down the hallway in both directions. There was no way to tell which door Edith had slipped into. He wasn't sure which room she'd claimed. George decided to go back to his room and fap. He turned back to the Havesshams, to memorize a little more of Constance's delightful body.

"You make me ... feel ... safe ... Mommy." Roy opened his eyes and turned his head. "You are ..." He spotted the spy at the door. "Cover yourself Constance!" He roughly pushed her off him and threw the blanket over her.

"Uh ... oh." George got one good look at the red triangle between her legs and her swollen, pink lips just below, before he raced back across the hall and slammed his door. He waited several minutes, but no knock came. He was still hard as a rock.

George moved into the bathroom, got the shower going, and undressed. Even without door locks, he doubted anyone would barge into an occupied bathroom. He fapped furiously. In his mind's eye, he pictured Edith's sultry gaze, her delicate and beguiling bare hand, and Constance's athletic, feminine body. He came several times over the next hour. Happily, during that time, he didn't dwell in the least on the doom that awaited them.

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"I'm very proud of you." Anna ventured her first smile since the crisis had started. She glanced at her son as he stepped around the corpse of a man in a bathrobe. "You saved our lives."

"You're always saying that my interest in computers will come in handy someday." George's heart swelled with his mother's approval.

"But I *do* say that." She looked at him quizzically.

"I wasn't being sarcastic, Mom." George stopped in the hall. They were between mirrors on either side, so their reflections seemed to shrink into infinity. He put his hands on her shoulders, trying not to look down at her corset. "I have something to tell you. And since we might die here, I ... I just have to say it."

"We're *not* going to die." Anna regarded her son with wide eyes. They were the only two living people in the hallway that led to Edith's concierge desk. She had wanted her son to check on the communication systems while everyone rested, so she'd fetched George and set off. "I can see you're serious. What is it? You can tell me anything." She held her breath.

"I'm afraid of leaving you. I know I'm going to college soon, or I was supposed to. But ... when you're not around, I feel ..." George took a deep breath.

Anna waited, knowing he needed to share his feelings without interruption.

"I feel incomplete without you, Mom. Other guys don't seem to feel the same way. They can't wait to leave home. But ... but ... I'd rather be here with you ..." He gestured at the bodies. "... than somewhere else without you. If we make it home, I don't want to leave for college. I want to stay home. I can go to the vocational school in Covington. I -"

"Nonsense. Don't say that." She kissed his cheek and rubbed away the kiss with her glove. "I'm your mother, Georgie. You don't think I've noticed that you and I are extra close? I raised you, so I'll always be right here." She patted the thin tie over his heart. "Wherever you go, I'll be with you. And it *is* healthy for you to leave the nest. We're going to call for help when the comm nets come back online, we're going to go home, and you're going to do marvelous things at college. My tall, strong man." She hugged him. "When did you get so tall?"

"Maybe we can talk more about this later, Mom. I ..." George turned his head toward a noise about fifty feet in front of them, where another hallway passed perpendicular to the one they were in. A maintenance robot ambled into sight. It was trailed by several autonomous carts piled high with the dead. The robot picked a woman's corpse up and tossed it onto the nearest cart. It shuffled a few more steps and did the same to a man's corpse.

"Ghastly." Anna put a gloved hand to her mouth. She closed her eyes and said a prayer for those about to find their final resting place. *Would they jettison the bodies into space?* She grimaced at the thought of such a cold and permanent ending. The bodies would never decompose.

George snapped his fingers. "This means ... this means ..." He looked up at the ceiling, with its long, majestic mural of Roman gods engaging in everyday life. "Océane? Are you done downgrading? Are you back?"

"Je fonctionne maintenant à trente pour cent," Océane said.

"In English, please." George raised an eyebrow at his mother. She shook her head. She didn't understand French either.

"L'anglais est une langue inférieure, et je ne m'abaisserai pas si bas." Océane sounded upset.

"Um ... can you give us a report on the hotel's systems in English?" George pressed his lips together.

"Je ne peux pas." Océane said no more.

“That sounded like no.” Anna took her son’s hand and pulled him toward their destination. “We don’t need Océane’s report. She’s obviously taking care of the hotel.” She nodded to the maintenance robot, as it turned toward them, continuing to collect dead bodies.

“Maybe someone in our group speaks French.” George worried his lip, thinking as they walked. “We have limited access through the terminal. We’ll need to talk to Océane. Or, maybe Edith knows the passwords to access the systems directly in the nerve center.” The thought of Edith sped up his heart. He squeezed his mom’s hand through her glove.

“All we need to do is call for help, sunshine.” Anna struggled to give him a reassuring smile as they walked into the tidy part of the hallway. “The nearest ports are less than a day away. Once we make the call, all we have to do is hunker down in our rooms and wait. We’ll be home in no time, you’ll see.”

George wasn’t so sure, but he returned his mother’s wan smile with one of his own. At least they were alive, walking side by side. He could feel the heat of her skin faintly through her glove. He took a deep breath, drawing strength from her. Maybe she was right. Maybe they’d be home in a few days and they could finish their talk about college.

Chapter 2

Solitude Was Hell

“So, does anybody speak French?” Anna looked around the small group of survivors hopefully. “Or understand French? Even a little would be helpful.”

People shook their heads. Roy stared daggers at George. Constance looked down the hall at nothing, her cheeks bright crimson. Fortunately, there were no bodies in her sightline. The maintenance robots had picked them all up and carried them off for disposal. *Where would Océane put thousands of bodies?* She focused on that question, rather than the conversation. She knew her husband was about to blow, and that would just compound her embarrassment. The teenager had seen her naked. He had seen every bit of her that wasn't covered by her gloves. Thank goodness she'd kept those on. He had probably heard her and Roy's secret game. It was mortifying. And when Roy blew his top, everyone was going to know that George had seen her in such a vulnerable position.

George tried and failed to catch Edith's eye. She had shown him her bare hand, but now she didn't seem the least bit interested in him. He noticed that she'd changed out of her hotel uniform into a flattering bodice. Her skirts fell all the way down over her feet.

“That is disappointing.” Anna frowned. “If no one speaks French, perhaps Ms. Pemberton has codes to access Océane's systems in the nerve center.” She turned toward Edith. They were all standing in a circle in the hallway, between the mirrored walls. “How about it, Ms. Pemberton? Do you have access?”

“Phhhtt.” Edith rolled her eyes. “I work the concierge desk. They don't give me codes for their billion-yen computer system. Your son's smart. Maybe he can crack those codes?” She looked over at George.

George beamed at Edith when he finally had her attention. *She complimented me.*

Edith gave him a quizzical look, like she didn't know what he was smiling about.

George glanced at the glove on her left hand in a meaningful way, but that didn't change her nonplussed expression.

“Georgie?” Anna nudged her son in the ribs. He was staring oddly at Edith. Teenage boys were a handful. One moment he was a hero, the next he was a slave to his hormones. She had no idea what was going through his head sometimes. “Sunshine, can you crack those codes?”

“Um ... no.” George shook his head. “I don’t think that’s possible. But maybe some of the tech staff in the ring, or the other spire, survived. Someone else must have thought of using the Faraday cages. Certain staff would have the codes. They might even have the comm net working in those other parts of the hotel. Océane is isolated in this spire from the rest of her system. There should be one or two other Océanes, depending on if the other two nerve centers are connected. I think we should –”

“Can our personal comms translate French?” Albert interrupted George.

“We tried that. The network is down, so our personal comms aren’t working as they normally would. The translation apps run off the net, so ...” George shrugged. “The good news is that the food system seems to be back up, so if anyone is hungry, one of the restaurants should –”

“You are a scoundrel, sir!” Roy shouted. His eruption finally burst forth. He pointed an accusatory finger at George. “You are a peeper ... and ... and ... a voyeur. You spied on the most intimate moments between a husband and wife. And ... you stand there pretending like nothing happened. Did you save our lives just so you could exploit us for your amusement?”

“I ... I ...” George had really hoped that they had put the whole misunderstanding behind them.

“What does he mean? Is this true, Georgie?” Anna put her gloved hands to her hips. She could see from George’s stricken face that it was true. “You didn’t ... you didn’t see Mrs. Haversham’s bare fingers?” Anna thought it fortunate that she was a strong woman, because otherwise she might have fainted when she saw the discomfiture written on Constance’s sweet face.

“She had her gloves on, Mom.” George turned to his mother to plead his case. “It was an accident. I didn’t –”

“How dare you!” Roy bellowed. “I have yet to hear an apology.”

“I knew it.” Lillian folded her arms with a smirk on her face, watching her brother squirm.

“Don’t antagonize your brother, princess.” Ernest wagged a finger at his daughter. “Apologize to Mr. Haversham, son.” He turned his darkening gaze on George. His voice was a low rumble.

“I’m sorry, Mr. Haversham. It was a mistake. I was following ...” George glanced at Edith, who was looking at him with her mouth hanging open, aghast. “I followed a woman out into the hall. Your door was open –”

“Our door was *not* open.” Constance stomped her foot. “We are not perverted.”

"I apologize, Mrs. Haversham. It was a mistake." George looked down at his shiny, black shoes.

"Someone here is a pervert." Lillian leaned closer to her brother. "It's you," she whispered.

"That apology will not do." Roy shook his finger. His wedding ring shone in the bright hall lighting as it danced. "What woman were you following? There are no *other* people alive in this hotel. I will not have –"

"You are correct, we are standing in a mass grave." Ernest's voice dropped even lower. "My son made a mistake. He apologized. We have much, much bigger issues to deal with."

Anna gave her husband a thankful glance. "We need to find a way to talk to Océane. We need to see about the other nerve centers. We need to call for help. The good news is that with food, water, and air, we should be fine until help arrives."

"Was there another woman? If so, we need to look for other survivors." Albert stared at George.

"There was no other woman," George mumbled.

"Océane can help with finding other survivors. But in the meantime, I have a couple suggestions." Rose stepped forward, trying to assert herself. "If you'll listen to some thoughts I have ..."

George tuned out the group discussion. His cheeks were hot, and his mind felt fuzzy. How odd a thing that he had saved all their lives, and *still* so much hostility was headed his way. He raised his eyes from the floor and looked around their circle. The mirrors on either side created an odd feeling of many more people than the ten they had. His gaze worked around the circle. His sister, arms folded, lips pressed together. His mother, trying to engage the group in a productive way. His father, trying to prod them all toward salvation. Albert, rotund and disapproving. Edith, still looking confused. Delores, silent as usual. Constance, gazing up at the Roman mural on the ceiling, her cheeks still flushed crimson. Roy, staring daggers at George, his cheeks red with rage. Albert, standing a few paces behind Roy, looking rotund and glum. Rose, trying hard to make people take her plan seriously. She wanted to visit every dock to see if there were any lifeboats, or other transport, left. *Not a bad plan*, George thought.

"There should be docks on the ring, and the other spire, too." Rose continued. "If the elevators still work, we can ..." She continued to pitch her plan.

Something was wrong. George scanned back around the circle in the opposite direction. He froze. His skin crawled. Was he going insane, or were there two Alberts? There was one in between Edith and his father, and one behind Roy. George looked behind Roy.

There was nobody there. His legs felt weak. He had seen Albert standing in both places, hadn't he? Was he hallucinating? His mind fuzzed further. Layer after layer of cognitive dissonance had been slathered on his brain. It was too much. Saving the lives of this group ... all the dead littering the now empty hallway ... seeing Edith's bare hand ... his mother finding out he'd been spying ... two Alberts. George wobbled and fell to the lush carpet, his mind going blank. The last thing he heard was his mother's scream.

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Anna's Diary August 13, 2197

All those poor people! Dear Diary, how can I express how terrible this all is. Thousands of dead guests ... no way to call for help ... only a handful of survivors.

The only bright spot has been the way Georgie has stepped up. He saved our lives! What a gem of a son I have. Even at eighteen years old, he's a natural leader. People look to him for answers! I know the incident with the Havershams will be difficult for George to bear. I believe my son, however, when he says it was an accident. They must have left the door open, and his teenage curiosity got the better of him. He *did* apologize. And clearly, the accusations took their toll, because he fainted. I am at his bedside, writing at this very moment. He looks like he's sleeping restfully. I would have the computer run a diagnostic on him, but it won't speak to me in English. Oh ... he's waking up! He seems well. I'll write more later.

Ernest's Diary August 13, 2197

There is nothing worse than facing a problem without the right tools. We're locked out of the main hotel systems, and Océane is practically useless. Our group seems prone to infighting. The Havershams are ridiculous to pester my son after what he did for them. Ms. Pemberton seems to be the only useful person we saved and that is only marginally so.

I must admit, Ms. El Rashidi made a good argument for exploring the other docks. We've sent Ms. Pemberton to her concierge desk to retrieve the dock locations and any other information she can glean on transport off this hotel. When she gets back, I will scout out the locations. If the elevators are still not functional, I'll take the stairs. We need to leave before we're confronted with any more surprises.

Lillian's Diary August 13, 2197

Leave it to George to get caught perverting during the apocalypse. I was out of my mind with horror at what's happened, wondering how things could get worse. Well, Georgie watches strangers doing it and then won't apologize. Things did get worse! We're the last people in this hotel and everyone now knows that I'm the sister of a pervert. Mom and Dad seem to think we're leaving soon. It can't happen soon enough. I want to go home and forget I ever visited La Belle Île en Mer.

~~

"Mom?" George sat up to find his mother's concerned face. He was on his bed, still dressed in his suit. His tie had been loosened. He automatically tightened it and centered the knot. "What happened?"

"Understandably, you've been under a lot of stress. We've put so much on your young shoulders. And then the Havershams overreacted to that misunderstanding the way they did." Anna forced a reassuring smile onto her face. With the dead bodies removed, she was finding it easier to pretend things weren't so dire. "You fainted. How do you feel?"

"I'm ... okay." He reached for her gloved hand and held it tightly. He relaxed as he felt the strength of her grip. "I'm so sorry, Mom. It was an accident. I didn't mean to."

"I know." Anna nodded. "It was unfortunate that it happened. But let's focus on the bigger picture."

That reminded him of the two Alberts in their meeting. "I saw Mr. Dmytruk in two places at the same time right before I ... collapsed. There were two of him."

"Don't fret, sunshine." She leaned over and kissed his cheek. "You were stressed. There's only one Albert. The hallway has mirrors on either side. Your mind was overstimulated, and you thought you saw two of him. There's only one Mr. Dmytruk." She wiped the kiss off his cheek with her gloved hand and stood up. "Get some rest. I think your father wants to hike this tower and check on every dock. It's a good idea."

"It's dangerous, Mom." George tried to get out of bed, but his mother gently put his head back on the pillow.

"The skyrmion burst is past us. Océane is doing the best she can do to make things run smoothly. Your father will take the stairs. It'll be tiring, no doubt. But not dangerous." She tried out her reassuring smile again. It felt somewhat natural.

"Don't go with him, Mom. I need you here ... with me." He tried to soundly manly with his request, but that was a tall order.

"I'll stay one room over. I'm not much for hiking." Anna moved to the door. "I think Ms. El Rashidi wishes to go with your father. It was her idea after all." She opened the door and looked back toward her son. "Stay in your room, Georgie. I don't want you roaming the halls. Let's put a damper on any more friction with the Havershams."

"Yeah, sure, Mom." George nodded and put his hands behind his head. "But I am getting hungry."

"I'll come back for you after you've taken a good long nap. We can explore some restaurants together." One more forced smile and Anna slipped out of George's room. She closed the door gently, wishing the locks worked.

~~

"Océane, can you turn on the elevators?" Ernest pressed the elevator call button. The doors did not open.

"Il y a un blocage dans le puits entre les étages trois et quatre. L'ascenseur ne fonctionnera pas tant que le blocage n'aura pas été retiré. Les machines de maintenance ne sont pas disponibles pour cette tâche," Océane said.

"I think that's a no, dear." Anna shrugged. She looked around at the small group assembled there. Albert stood with his arms resting on his belly. He had finally changed out of his tuxedo and now wore an everyday suit. Delores stood near Anna, biting her bottom lip. She had been arguing for the group not to split up. Rose was next to her husband, looking adventurous. The young woman wore a determined expression. Anna wondered what her story was. Who had she been traveling with? Unlike Albert, she was too young to be traveling on her own. She looked no more than twenty-five. The rest of the survivors were resting in their rooms. Anna turned her attention to Rose. "Take good care of my husband, Ms. El Rashidi." She winked at the woman. "Bring him back to me."

"Pay her no mind, Ms. El Rashidi. She's joking." Ernest gave his wife a prim hug. "There's food and water in the hotel. We'll be well provisioned wherever we go. We shouldn't take more than a few hours to go down and back up. If there's a lifeboat waiting for us, we'll find it."

"There is a lifeboat." Rose nodded her dark curls. "I can feel it." She tightened her gloves and hiked her skirts up so that her clothing was more practical for stairs.

"Are you sure you won't go with them, Mr. Dmytruk?" Anna turned a smile on Albert. "I would feel so much better if another man joined my husband and Ms. El Rashidi."

“If that is your desire, madam, send your son with them. That is, if he’s not busy with some other salacious tomfoolery.” Albert turned and ambled back to his new room.

Anna frowned at his back. Perhaps it was better that he *not* go on the exploratory mission. “Okay, dear. You’re a hero. Good luck!” Anna kissed her husband once more on the cheek and watched him depart. She and Delores waved as Ernest and Rose descended the stairs. When the explorers were gone, Anna and Delores turned and followed Albert down the hall. She glanced at Delores and could see the woman was on the verge of tears. She gently slipped her arm into Delores’, locking them together at the elbows. “They’ll be fine, Mrs. Salazar.”

Delores nodded and leaned into Anna. She was a couple inches taller than Anna, but she bent and rested her head on the older woman’s shoulder.

“You’re not worried about my husband and Ms. El Rashidi, are you?” Anna waited, but Delores didn’t answer. “May I call you Delores, Mrs. Salazar?”

Delores nodded against the woman’s shoulder. She knew she was staining Anna’s sleeve with her tears, but didn’t want to move away.

“Where is your husband, Delores?” Anna pitched her voice low, giving it a gentle timbre.

“We ... we ... were on our honeymoon.” Delores’s sobs were mostly silent. “He was ... was ... golfing when ... it happened. Do you think he’s ... all right?”

“Oh ... I see.” Anna put her arms around the woman’s quaking shoulders. “I don’t know, Delores.” Anna knew perfectly well that this poor woman was a widow, but she didn’t have the heart to tell her. *But for the grace of the gods, this could have been me. I’m lucky to still have my men.* “What’s his name, dear?”

It took Delores a while to tell Anna. She trembled. Up ahead, Albert arrived at his door and disappeared into his room. Farther down the hallway, she saw a robotic cleaning crew move into view. The strangely humanoid creatures were mostly mechanical, with minimal biological parts. Delores shivered. She would have preferred that the hotel had been staffed with Alternates, which looked completely human. But, of course, that would have been expensive and controversial. They were steaming the carpet and wiping down the mirrors. “His name is ... Carlos.”

“We’ll do our best to find Carlos, dear. You have my word.” Anna detested lying, but sometimes it was for the best. She guided Delores into her room and sat with her. The woman needed company, and Anna could check on her children later.

~~

The nightmare put George into a cold sweat. He was running down long, luxuriously finished hallways, trying to hide from the pursuing Albert. The rotund man ran with an awkward gait, his belly grotesquely swaying from side to side. Despite this, every time George looked back, the man had gained on him. George turned down another corridor and pulled to a stop. Albert stood waiting for him there, too, a wide leer on his normally dour face. George turned and ran the opposite way, now pursued by two Alberts. When he turned a corner, he ran into a third. And then a fourth. Soon a whole army of ungainly, and unnaturally fast, Alberts chased him down.

A soft hand pressed to George's forehead. "Mom?" His eyes still closed, he wrenched himself from his nightmare, grateful that his mother had come back. But wait ... he decided he must still be dreaming because the fingers that caressed his brow were wonderfully bare. He opened his eyes. "Ms. Pemberton!"

"Shh." She smiled and put a naked finger to her lips. Edith wasn't wearing gloves on either hand. "You were having a nightmare. You ... needed me."

"You're in my room." George said dumbly. His mind raced to catch up with the situation. "Why didn't you come to my defense with the Havershams?"

"I couldn't tell everyone that I'd taken my glove off for you, could I? Do you want your mother thinking me a harlot?" Edith playfully walked her fingers over his face. "Such a handsome young man. And so smart and charming."

"I don't ... um ... I mean ..." George arched his back with pleasure when she slid her fingers past his lips. He had read about such things, but he had never thought it would happen to him.

"Well ..." Edith blushed. "It's not everyday that I do this for a man. Go on ... suck on them, silly." She rolled her eyes in friendly way.

"I thoufff youfff werfff mad atfff me." His words were garbled as he sucked on her fingers. Her digits were wonderfully delicate, small, and soft. He could feel the fingers from her other hand walking up his trouser leg.

"I wasn't mad at you. It's just that I can't let anyone know about us. You understand, right?" Edith took hold of his erection through his trousers. "My, you're big!" Her eyes got big and round. "This will be delightful."

"Mmmmmmmppphhhh." George closed his lips and sucked harder on her fingers. He wanted to please her, but was a little out of his element. When she deftly unbuttoned his trousers and pulled them, along with his underwear, down his legs with one hand, he understood that she was *very much* in her element. He wondered if she often did this with guests. When he felt the soft coolness of her skin on his dick, he decided he didn't

care. She played gently with his foreskin, stretching it over the wide dome of his cockhead and back down again.

“When that terrible thing happened earlier ... I thought I’d be all alone.” Edith took her hand out of his mouth, making sure to scoop copious amounts of saliva. She moved the hand to join her other and pumped his cock with both of them. “I was terrified I’d spin by myself here ... forever. But you were so resourceful with that special room. That was very clever. And you deserve to be rewarded.” He really had saved her. She was a social creature and solitude was hell.

“I ... do?” He shrugged out of his jacket, pulled off his tie, and unbuttoned his vest.

“So humble too.” She leaned her dark lips down toward George’s bloated cockhead.

“Oh ... you’re going to put it in your mouth. Well ... uuggghhhh ... of course you are.” He watched her with wide eyes. She was a dainty woman, and the way she nearly unhinged her jaw made his dick look gigantic. “You look ... amazing.”

“Mmmmmpppphhhhhhhhhh.” Edith bobbed her head on his substantial penis. Her left hand moved from the shaft to his testicle, massaging it rhythmically.

“You’re wayyyyyyyyy ... ugh ... better at this ... than my ... ex-girlfriend.” George watched her face bulge around his dick. Her brown hair was pinned up with a small hat, so it was easy to observe her expertise. “So ... warm ... and tight ... and I can feel it ... at the ... at the ... aaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.” He erupted in her mouth.

Edith’s slurping, sucking sounds changed to gulping.

“Aaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.” George threw his head back on the pillow, gripped the covers, and thrust his hips up at her. This was so much better than masturbating or the stuff he’d done with girls his own age. It was so good, in fact, that he wasn’t even embarrassed about how quickly his orgasm happened. “Oooohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.” His hips jerked as Edith gulped down the last few spurts.

When his climax was over, Edith stood and wiped her mouth with the back of her hand. “I’ll visit you again, George Zaal. I like you very much.” Her smile was bright, and her brown skin was unblemished by cum. She’d swallowed it all. “But if you approach me out there, I will pretend this didn’t happen.” She gestured toward the door of his room. “This has to be our secret.”

“Yes ... okay.” With vague disappointment, he saw her pull on a glove. Before she could put on the other one, he held out his hand. “Before ... you go ... can we hold hands ... without your glove?” It was electric when she put her bare hand in his. He looked at her smooth skin and nimble joints. “You’re beautiful, Ms. Pemberton.”

“Thank you, George.” She withdrew her hand and slipped it into its glove. “When we’re alone in your room, you can call me Edith.” She gave him a wink and walked toward the door, her skirts rustling behind her.

“Thank you, Edith.” His eyes were filled with adoration as he watched her backside move across the room.

Edith stopped at the door, a gloved hand on the handle. “You need never thank a lady for enjoying herself with a handsome, charming young man. Nevertheless, you’re welcome.” With one last smile, she opened the door, slipped out into the hall, and closed it behind her.

“Wow.” George exhaled and lay on the bed. He stared right through the muraled ceiling into infinity. His dick was still standing at attention. He remembered that the doors didn’t lock, so he hustled to the bathroom to reach his second climax. It was lucky his mother hadn’t checked in on him when Edith was there. His parents had forgiven him for the accident with the Havershams. If they caught him with Edith so soon after, they might start to think something was wrong with him. He paused as he entered the bathroom.

Is something wrong with me? George was in the middle of a catastrophe, and he was thinking with his lesser head. But ... neither situation had been his fault. It was Edith and her alluring bare hands, both times. He shook his head, started the shower, and began fapping.

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“Almost to ... the ring.” Ernest glanced at the *Fourth Floor* sign as they descended the wide, carpeted stairs. On the right side of the switchback, they were currently heading toward the long window that made up one wall of the stairway. He could see debris passing by, but no bodies. “You know, Rose, something odd is going on.”

“You mean that we haven’t found any lifeboats?” Sweat soaked Rose’s bodice. She was exhausted from the descent. She didn’t look forward to turning back around and climbing all those stairs. Especially without any good news to share when they got back.

“No.” Ernest turned on the switchback, putting the window to his back. “We’ve been exploring the hotel for hours and found no bodies.”

“Océane picked them up.” Rose shrugged. “She probably spaced them.”

“Yes, that’s what I thought at first, too.” Ernest rubbed his chin. “But if that were so, there would be thousands of bodies floating around the station. I haven’t seen more

than a few through this window. And I didn't see any when we stopped at the restaurant with the wide view."

"Hmm." Rose turned it over in her head. "That is odd." On the off chance that Océane was speaking English, Rose tried their resident AI again. "Océane, what did you do with all the dead?" They passed the third floor. There was supposed to be a dock on the second floor, so they planned to leave the stairway soon to check on it. And then they would see about accessing the ring.

"Vous n'avez pas l'autorisation pour ces données," Océane said.

"The hotel wouldn't have facilities to hold so many people. Not by a long shot." Ernest thought things over. "Maybe she put them into the reclamation system? If so, I can hardly think of a more horrible way to treat the dead."

"Would that mean that we're eating the ..." Rose's voice trailed off. Her feet stopped, her right one a step lower than her left. She was vaguely aware of Ernest stopping a few steps behind her. There was a floor to ceiling obstruction ahead. Her gloved hand went to her mouth. "What ... is *that*?" With her other hand she pointed at the shiny, black thing. It seemed to be pulsing with a dyadic beat, almost like a heart. There was a faint rainbow sheen on its surface the color of an oil slick. The obstruction was mostly opaque, but she thought she could just make out shapes below the surface. She caught sight of a partially dissolved shoe. And then long blond hair floating. She shrieked when she saw a green eye blink near the shimmering surface. It wasn't connected to any body that she could see.

"I ... stand corrected." Ernest stared, the color disappearing from his cheeks. "This is a much more horrible way to treat the dead. What is it?"

"I have no idea." Rose took a step back. "We should leave. We should leave right –" A shiny, black arm more than ten feet long reached out from the barrier and seized Rose around her middle. She screamed, but could not break free.

"My ... gods!" Ernest turned and ran. Rose's scream ended abruptly when he heard a sickening crunch behind him. He dared not turn around to determine her fate. He had to leave. He needed to warn the others. Something had gone very wrong with La Belle Île en Mer.

Chapter 3

Um ... Thank You, Georgie

Anna's Diary August 14, 2197

It's morning, and my sweet Ernest still hasn't returned. He promised to be gone only a few hours, but we spent the night apart. There has been no sign of him or Ms. El Rashidi. The computer will not speak English, the elevators do not work, and the comm net is down. I had George check on things from the concierge desk first thing this morning. I suppose all we can do is wait for my husband and Ms. El Rashidi to return. With any luck, they're taking so long because they've found a transport for all of us. Or maybe they met other survivors.

My children are not getting along at all right now. It seems the stress of our current predicament has incited their enmity. This is where I take a loooooong sigh, Diary. We all need to work together. Now more than ever! We are the Zaal family. We should have each other's backs. I took George and Lillian out individually for supper last night to the café next to the lobby. Lillian barely touched her food, and spoke mostly about what a disaster this trip has been. Like I don't know! She didn't say it directly, but I think she blames me. George seemed to have recovered well from his fainting spell following the conflict with the Havershams. He was his usual charming self. George was so kind at supper and hopeful about his father's mission down the tower. George also spoke at some length about Ms. Pemberton. I'm happy that he's developing a crush, even if the woman is nearly old enough to be his mother. Honestly, we need all the positive distractions we can get. I only hope that Ms. Pemberton doesn't notice that a teenager is smitten by her. Or, if she does, I hope she's enough of a lady to be kind to George about it. I pray she lets him down easy. With any luck, I will very soon be navigating my son's new crush on a lifeboat speeding for civilization. Wish me that luck, Diary.

Ernest's Diary August 14, 2197

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Lillian's Diary August 14, 2197

Dad has been gone for too long. Mom says everything is fine, but I can tell she's worried. That makes me worried. George continues to get under my skin. And to make matters worse, I caught that horrible man Albert leering at me. I've started stacking abandoned luggage in front of the door whenever I'm in my room. This place, and these people, give

me the creeps. I really hope Dad gets back soon. I want out of here. When I return to Earth, I can't wait for Francis to treat me like a princess. I've been fantasizing about how he'll propose. I imagine myself at a castle, wearing a gorgeous dress, and a glittering crown. Francis isn't likely to give me that! But a girl can dream. Being stuck in the hellhole that is the Belle Île en Mer, all I have are dreams.

George's Diary August 14, 2197

I am so confused right now. On the one hand, I'm living through what will surely be the worst days of my life. On the other, I'm head over heels for Edith. There's something wonderful about being with an older woman. She's so self-assured, confident, and skilled! At least, that's how she is when we're alone in my room together. But when I see her in our group meetings, or even passing in the hallway, she pretends I don't exist. That's fine. I understand. When the gloves come off, she's a different woman. I suppose that's true of all women. I wonder who Mom is when her gloves come off?

We brought our luggage down to our new rooms. I know Mom and Lillian are using abandoned suitcases to barricade their doors, but I can't do that. I need to give Edith every chance to visit me. I know we're going home soon. There have to be some lifeboats or other transport attached to the hotel, and I'm sure Dad will find them. And with our hours numbered here, I want to give Edith every opportunity to visit me. It's actually a good thing Mom has more or less grounded me in my room. I'm here, ready for Edith, whenever she's ready.

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"Edith!" George grinned as the older woman quietly entered his room. She wore her gloves, along with matching green, floral embroidered bodice and skirts. Her hair was pinned up perfectly with a sensible hat. George drank in the sight of her. "I hardly slept last night. I thought you might ... visit again."

"I don't think I can stay. Your mother is talking with Mr. and Mrs. Haversham in their room. She might come this way next." She smiled warmly. "I can't have her discovering that an upstanding lady like me is visiting such a handsome and charming eighteen-year-old. What would the neighbors say?"

"Oh ... that's okay. You can stay. We can keep our clothes on. How about we just talk?" He tried not to let his disappointment show.

“Or, we could go somewhere interesting?” Edith’s smile widened. “We have this whole, grand hotel to ourselves. What if I gave you another reward in the arboretum, or in one of the spas, or an observation lounge?” She practically skipped across the room, took his hand, and pulled him to his feet. She fussed over his suit, smoothing out the wrinkles and straightening his tie.

“I’m supposed to stay in my room. I mean, my mom asked me to stay.” Who was George kidding? This woman was beyond sexy and captivating. The way she caught his eye and raised her eyebrow made him shiver. Without any words, he clearly understood her meaning. *Let’s be bad.* George nodded and took her gloved hand. “Let’s go to the fanciest restaurant you know of. You’re the concierge, what would you suggest?”

“I have just the place.” She led the way, carefully making sure the hallway was clear before venturing out. They raced past the mirrored walls as fast as her long skirts would allow, giggling together. They turned at the wide, dramatic stairway, went up two levels, and arrived on floor one hundred seven. The wallpaper on this floor depicted woven vines, plentiful leaves, and bright flowers. The warmly lit sconces had an organic shape, and the carpet was a deep green. The mural on the ceiling depicted a rolling scene of forests and wood sprites. Edith led the way to the restaurant, Aubergine. They were, of course, the only guests there. With Océane in charge, the robot staff only spoke French.

“Vous allez dîner pour deux ce soir?” the maître d’ said.

“Oui, s’il vous plait.” Edith smiled at the robot.

George stared at her. “You speak French?”

“Oh, no, silly.” Edith laughed. “But I know how to be polite in many languages.”

They were shown to a table. The robot waiter stiffly ambled up and left menus for them. “Nous n’avons pas d’offres spéciales aujourd’hui, faites-moi savoir si vous avez des questions.” The waiter wandered back into the kitchen.

“I see.” George made a silly face at the waiter’s back and smiled. “Oui, s’il vous plait.”

“You’re a quick learner.” Edith laughed. The high, happy sound rang across the empty tables around them. “Now, do you think you can order for me?”

“I guess.” He looked at his menu. He was not surprised to see that it was mostly in French. *Well, it is a fancy restaurant.* He smiled and nodded. “I’ll figure it out. Why can’t you order for yourself? I would guess that you’d be good at this sort of thing.”

“Oh, I know this restaurant well. I’ve eaten here many times. I’m a social creature, remember?” Her grin turned mischievous. Slowly, she slumped in her chair, going

lower and lower, until her eyes were just above the tablecloth. “But I’m good at other things, too.” Carefully, she unpinned her hat and put it beside her plate. “Want to see?”

“Yes ... please.” George nodded slowly. Her face shone with joy and life. She looked so much prettier when they had private time together than when he saw her at group meetings or passed her in the hall.

“Never let it be said that I didn’t reward the man who saved my life.” Edith winked and slid under the table.

The tablecloths at the restaurant hung almost to the floor. When the hidden woman lifted up the tablecloth on his side and moved it above his waist, George felt butterflies flutter in his stomach. He trembled with delight when she maneuvered his trousers and underwear down to his ankles. “It’s really strange how the best and worst moments of my life are happening ... aaahhhhhhhhhh ... at the same ... time.” He knew the food was going to be good. The hotel put the best replicators in the most expensive kitchens. But he knew none of that culinary pleasure would hold a candle to the ecstasy of her warm, wet suction on his dick. He looked down and could see the tablecloth dimple rhythmically as it brushed against Edith’s bobbing head. He was enjoying the blowjob so much that he didn’t notice when the Havershams entered the restaurant.

“Oh ... no.” Constance stopped in front of the maître d’s table, her cheeks turning crimson.

Roy followed her gaze and spotted George sitting by himself. “His mother said he was confined to his room. Is he stalking us?” He waived off the maître d’ when the robot greeted them in French. “Are you stalking us, peeper?” He said it loudly enough that his voice echoed in the large room.

When he heard the caustic voice, George jumped in his seat. “Oh ... hello ... Mr. and Mrs. Haversham.” He tried to sit up, but Edith held his thighs where they were. She continued her avid, oral assault on his dick. “Edith ... Edith ... we have company,” he said the words softly enough that the Havershams wouldn’t hear across the room. Distance wasn’t a luxury he would have much longer. Roy walked straight toward him, brushing away the maître d’ when the robot tried to steer him to a table.

“Mmmpppphhhhhhh,” Edith hummed around George’s cock.

“My wife and I are looking to have a quiet, romantic lunch.” Roy stabbed a finger in George’s direction. “Go eat someplace else.”

“I ... um ...” George wanted to leave. He tried to sit up again, but Edith would not slacken the amazing blowjob. Even if she did, George couldn’t very well pull up his trousers without the Havershams noticing. “I ... can’t.” At that moment, Edith rolled her tongue,

perfectly caressing the sensitive ring just below his cockhead. George's eyes lost focus. He slumped further in his chair.

"You are stalking us." Anger made spittle fly from Roy's mouth.

"I ... was here ... first. How could I ... be stalking you?" George feebly shrugged.

"Let's go, dear." Constance put her hand on her husband's shoulder. She looked directly at George for the first time. The teenager looked like he was enraptured. *Is he ... making fun of me?* She took several deep breaths, as she would before a tennis match. She slowed her mind and released anxiety. "Come on, Roy, darling."

"You really won't leave?" Roy stepped closer. "Will I have to become pugilistic?" He cocked his head and listened. There was a faint, rhythmic humming sound. He looked toward the kitchen and saw the waiter approaching. It was an odd sound for a robot to make.

"I really ... can't ... help you." George practically crossed his eyes when Edith took him deeper than she had before. He could feel the tightness of her throat. He clearly heard her gag, and he could tell the Havershams did, too. But they looked confused. They didn't know he was getting blown right under their noses. George had never done anything remotely like this in his life. It seemed horror and ecstasy were now so close in his life that they were literally overlapping. He needed the Havershams to leave, or they were going to see him cum. "I'm ... waiting for someone ... to come. You should go."

"Roy ... let's go." Constance could clearly see the pleasure on the teenager's face. It seemed to be a joy greater than any mockery could provide. He wasn't making fun of them. He was truly chasing some ecstatic dragon. She didn't know if he was at the mercy of a drug, or pleasuring himself under the table. It was hard to tell with the way he was slouched and the length of the tablecloth. She didn't want to find out. "I don't want to eat here." Constance forcefully took hold of Roy's elbow and pulled her husband toward the exit. She was much taller and more athletic than him, so it was easily done.

"We ... we ... are leaving ... but you are a shabaroona, Mr. Zaal." Roy tried to maintain his rage and dignity as his wife removed him from the restaurant. "The sooner we leave, the sooner ... we can be rid of an unlicked cub ... like you!"

As Roy's shouts faded, Edith released the teenager's cock from her mouth with a plop. "Are they gone?" She pumped him with both hands in the darkness under the table. From the way his thighs were quaking, she assumed he was close to his release.

"They're ... gone." George gripped the edge of the table with both hands. "But the ... waiter ... is here."

"You have to order for me, remember?" Edith slipped his cock back into her mouth, and bobbed with fervor.

“Je suis prêt à prendre votre commande,” the waiter said.

“What do you like ... uuuggghhhh ... to eat ... Edith?” George’s hips bucked.

“Mmmmmpppphhhhhhhhhhh,” Edith said.

George looked up at the stern robot in its immaculate tuxedo. “The lady will ... have ... aaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhh.” He came, releasing a torrent down Edith’s accommodating throat. “So ... good ... aaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.” With each massive spurt, his body convulsed. When his climax quieted, he slumped further in his chair, staring at the mostly purple décor of the restaurant but seeing nothing. He made no comment as she tenderly cleaned him with her tongue and pulled up his trousers.

Edith slipped back into her seat and smiled at the waiter. “Has my date not ordered yet?”

“J’attends toujours.” The robot seemed to have only one expression: contempt. At most restaurants, waiters were programmed to be friendly and accommodating. Not at Aubergine.

“Well, in that case, the gentleman will have ...” Edith ordered for them both, often sounding like she understood the French words that flowed from her pretty, dark lips. When the waiter left, she turned her grin on George. “I’m not exactly sure what I just ordered. Hopefully, you’ll like it. You need to replenish yourself. As for me, after that flood of sperm, I’m not all that hungry anymore.” She rubbed her bodice over her belly and laughed. The restaurant filled with her mirthful ringing voice.

“You’re ... amazing ... Edith.” George sat up and grabbed his glass of water. He chugged the whole thing. He did need to replenish. “What if ... the Havershams ... had caught us?”

“Well then ... my reputation would certainly have taken a hit. But yours can hardly go lower. After what happened with that ‘accident’ where you caught them seeking their marital thrills, you can behave any way you like. Nowhere to go but up.” She rolled her eyes at him playfully, and nudged his foot with hers under the table.

“My mom would disagree.” George pressed his lips together, thinking. “It was an accident. And she expects me to be a gentleman.”

“Regardless, I’m glad you stayed to watch them. It shows that you’re interested in beauty. And you don’t mind ... some games.” Edith sipped her water, exploring his face with her lively, brown eyes. “Would you have thought that the tennis star, Constance Haversham, likes to play Mommy?”

“How did you know ...?” George’s forehead wrinkled. “Did you lure me out of my room to see them?” He didn’t need her to answer, it was plain that she had. “Why?”

“You’re very handsome and quite charming, Mr. Zaal.” Edith’s cheeks dimpled with her grin. “But I won’t tell you why. We all have secrets. Perhaps if you continue to please me, you shall learn more of mine.”

“You are ... a mystery.” George moved his hands off the table when the soup arrived. When the waiter departed, he lifted his spoon and sipped at the first course. It was almost as delicious as real food. They worked at their soup together, their faint slurping sounds making a harmony.

“I’m curious, George. Of the women in our small party, who do you find most enthralling?” Edith looked up at him, her spoon delicately balanced just in front of her lips. “You can exclude me from the equation if that makes you more comfortable.”

“I ... um ... I ...” George had never met a woman like Edith before. Everyone he’d known had been covered, proper, and prim. He’d never even seen his ex-girlfriend’s bare hands. No woman had ever discussed other women.

“Oh, come on. You can tell me. We’re as close as can be. I have your sperm in my belly *right now*.” Edith winked at him, put down her spoon, and slowly removed her right glove. “If you tell me, I’ll let you watch me eat without a glove. There’s an offer you won’t get every day.” She placed the glove on the tablecloth and picked up her spoon. She sipped the soup, well aware that he was staring at her bare digits.

“Um ... Ms. El Rashidi is very pretty ...” He glanced at the door. “What if someone else comes in?”

“We’re two floors up from everyone else. What are the odds that we have *more* visitors? It was unlikely enough that the Havershams came by.” Edith gave him a sly look.

George found himself wondering if this strange woman had somehow managed to have the Havershams arrive in the middle of the blowjob. Was she that perverted? She had bared her hand for him again, so he felt obliged to answer her. “Ms. El Rashidi is pretty. Mrs. Haversham is magnetic. Mrs. Salazar has a dynamic body. I’m a teenager, Edith. I like them all.”

“Mrs. Salazar’s body, eh?” Edith raised an eyebrow. “You like curvaceous women?” She pushed out her own, modest bust.

George’s cheeks grew hot. “Can we talk about something else?” He wanted to look away, but couldn’t take his eyes off her hand.

“The only other woman at the hotel built like Mrs. Salazar is your mother.” Edith watched him closely. “They are both short and shapely.” He was so cute when flustered. His cheeks turned bright crimson. His eyes darted about the room, but came back to rest on her hand. Edith was enjoying herself immensely. “You ... like your mother, don’t

you?” Her expression was light and friendly, but her voice shifted to a more serious tone.

“I *love* my mother, Edith.” George felt himself breathing faster. This was not a secret he would share, no matter how amazing Edith seemed. “She’s a fantastic person, who raised me to be an outstanding man.”

“She certainly succeeded.” Edith nodded. “So, tell me what Roy Haversham’s face looked like when he was yelling at you. Do you think he suspected anything? What a delightful moment.” Her sweet laugh cut the tension between them.

The waiter took their bowls away and brought the second course.

They spent a delightful lunch together, laughing and buffeting each other’s spirits. Neither of them thought of the darkness that had befallen the hotel. Both were in a chipper mood as they walked separately back to their rooms after their meal.

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Lillian stepped out of her bathroom with a towel wrapped around her body and another around her hair. She froze when she saw her brother sitting on her bed, gazing thoughtfully out the window at the stars. “George! How did you get in here?” Her bare hands shot behind her. She backed into the bathroom, quickly sliding on her gloves. When she walked back into the main room, she glanced around. The suitcases were still stacked against the door. He must have barged in, knocked them over, and then meticulously piled them again. *What an asshole.* “Tell me you didn’t see my hands.”

“I didn’t see them. I was looking out the window.” He turned his gaze toward her. “We have to talk, Lil.” George’s smile was warm and full of confidence. His body language was relaxed, and he made steady eye contact with his sister.

“Lil? When did you start calling me Lil?” She took a deep breath and sat on the far side of the bed, keeping some distance between them. She folded her arms and crossed her legs.

“I like it. It makes you sound smart, swift, and beautiful.” He made sure his smile didn’t waver in sincerity. He needed her to know he wasn’t being sarcastic. “You are all those ... an amazing woman. Have I ever told you how much I look up to you?” George slid a little closer to her along the edge of the bed.

“No ... you haven’t.” Lillian found herself returning his smile. She couldn’t help herself. The way he was behaving quelled the usual angst she felt in his presence.

“You look more like Mom every day.”

“You mean that ... as a compliment?” She unwrapped her hair and tossed the towel onto the bed.

“Well, yes ... you have to admit she’s gorgeous. And you look so much like her.” George scooted a little closer. There were only a few feet separating them. “Francis is a lucky man. He better propose the second we get back, or you could get swept off your feet by another man.”

“Pffftt.” Lillian rolled her eyes. But her face became serious when she saw her brother’s expression. “You mean it. You really ... mean it. Um ... thank you, Georgie.” It was beyond strange to have such a nice moment with her brother. “Um ... you’re good-looking too ... sometimes.”

“What would a man have to say to you to steal you away from Francis?” George earnestly met her gaze. “What would he have to do?”

“Well ... I love Francis. I don’t think there’s anything a man could do.” Lillian realized her pulse had quickened and that she was staring at her brother’s full lips. “But ... I guess ... he’d have to be tall ... like you ... and handsome. He’d need to have a sterling reputation, and an amazing vocation. Most importantly, he’d have to see me for who I truly am.”

“Who are you, Lil?” George moved closer. They were now sitting with their knees touching.

“I’m a princess, Georgie. You know that.”

“Well, it’s a good thing I brought you this.” George slipped off the bed, kneeled before her, and produced a glittering tiara. It was elegant and tastefully beset with emerald and aquamarine gems. He handed it to her in the palms of his hands, his head bowed low, as if presenting something to royalty from centuries past.

“George!” Lillian put her gloved hand to her mouth and stared at the beautiful thing with wide eyes. “Where did you get that?” She took it from him and carefully placed it on her wet hair.

“Without the normal security, it was easy for me to get into the hotel safe.” He looked up at her and winked. “And I know you’re a princess.”

“How does it look?” Lillian smiled from ear to ear.

“Regal.” George rose from his kneeling position and sat next to her on the bed. This time, their thighs touched, his trousers gently rubbing against her towel.

“George I ... I ...” Her blue eyes searched his deep brown eyes. “What is all this? What are you ...” His kiss-lean was so perfect, so comfortable, that she didn’t pull back. In fact, as his charming face approached, she parted her lips. “George ... this isn’t ...

mmmmmmppphhhhh.” She closed her eyes as their lips pressed together. His kiss was tender and exploratory at first. She just got a hint of tongue. But then, he became more forceful. His tongue entered her mouth. She let it. They made out passionately for several minutes. Lillian lost herself in new sensations. *How did my little brother get so good at this?* That thought sobered her up. *This is my brother.* She pulled back and stood up. “I ... I ... I’m sorry.” Still wearing the tiara and her towel, Lillian scurried to the bathroom and slammed the door.

George stood and smiled with satisfaction. He straightened his suit and left the room.

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“You seem ... relaxed, sunshine. You’re handling all this stress really well.” Anna walked down the mirrored hallway next to her son. She did an inventory of her own body. The muscles in her shoulders were bunched, her head pounded, and her lower back ached. She was nowhere near relaxed. Things would be better when her husband returned, even if he and Rose failed to find transport off the hotel. “I’m proud of you.” She reached out and patted her son’s shoulder with a gloved hand. They turned into the lobby with its soaring windows and inviting décor. In better times, she might have enjoyed curling up in one of those overstuffed armchairs by the fireplace, reading a book while listening to the friendly chatter of passing people and the warm notes of the grand piano. At present, the large space was eerily silent.

“Thanks, Mom.” George *was* relaxed. Normally when they approached the concierge desk, he felt some foreboding. But now, all he thought about was that this was where Edith had worked in better times. He tried to imagine her pretty face interacting with guests, suggesting leisure activities, and charming all who stopped by. “In the midst of all this ... darkness ... I’m finding cracks of light shining through.” He brought up the holographic interface and started the now familiar check of La Belle Île’s systems.

“That’s good to hear. I’m doing my best to stay optimistic.” She leaned against the desk. It was an unladylike gesture, but she was exhausted. She hadn’t slept much the night before.

George glanced over at her as he worked on the systems. “I’m sure Dad and Rose are fine. They probably didn’t find any transport on our spire, so they continued through the ring to the other spire. That’s a lot of floors.” He swiped away the interface. “Océane is still stuck on version 3.2. No new systems have come online. The elevators and comms are still down.”

“Well, we can try again in a few hours.” Anna did her best not to look crestfallen. This was what she’d expected, after all.

“Sure, Mom.” George nodded and leaned on the desk next to her. Together they gazed across the grand lobby. “Dad and Rose went down the spire. No one has gone up yet. Maybe we should investigate the docks above us. There’s no reason to wait for Dad to get back.”

“I have to stay here for when your father returns. I can’t have him come back to an empty room.” Anna sighed.

“That’s okay. I can take someone else.” George paused, pretending to think. He had already planned this part out, however. “Edith ... I mean, Ms. Pemberton knows the hotel. I could see if she’d be willing to explore the upper floors with me.”

“Aren’t you worried about traveling in the hotel alone? Didn’t you say it was dangerous?” Anna turned her head and examined her son. He did seem to be in high spirits. She supposed this was better than fainting from stress.

“I was just overstimulated. I thought I saw two of Mr. Dmytruk, and it spooked me.” George shrugged. “But it was only anxiety and mirrors. I’m coping better now.”

“Hmmmmmm.” Anna shook her head. “It’s a good idea, sunshine. But I don’t think we can have anyone else roaming the hotel until your father returns. We need to know how his trip went. I can’t have you both ... away from me. You should stay in your room for now.”

“You’re right, Mom.” George cast his eyes to the floor as they started walking back to their rooms. *How could I be so selfish? I can’t leave Mom.* At any rate, he didn’t need to travel away from the group to have more time with Edith. He just had to wait for her to bring her warm mouth, gloveless fingers, and irrepressible outlook on life to his room. “We’ll stay close until Dad gets back.”

Anna nodded her head, thankful to have such an understanding son.

Chapter 4

I'm Your Mother, Silly

Room 4323 was dark once Edith closed the door behind her. There was no illumination but starlight. She could see well enough. She had always been able to find light in the darkness. Her young paramour's eyes shone as he watched her from his bed. "You're awake, George." She smiled and walked over to him. "What are you doing up?" She sat on the edge of his bed and pulled down his covers to find his chest bare. "No pajamas." He was thin, but had strong, lithe muscles. She ran gloved fingers over his chest.

"I was waiting for you, Edith." George grinned like an idiot. She was only a dark shadow. He couldn't make out any of her features. With a wave of his hand, he turned on the lights. They both blinked and shielded their eyes.

"Waiting for me?" She put a hand to her breast and gave him a bashful look. "I am honored." She patted his head. "Now get dressed and bring a bathing suit. We're going swimming."

"We are?" He was surprised but didn't argue. He hopped out of bed, very aware that his underwear did little to hide his erection. He watched her gaze for clues as to how she felt about his state of undress. As he put on his trousers, he decided that she seemed amused more than anything else. His dick wasn't a great revelation to her. She had slobbered on it multiple times.

Edith led the way. They had to hike seven floors up to get to the nearest pool. Once they ascended a couple flights of the wide stairway, they spoke above whispers, laughing and joking with each other. When they arrived at the pool, they each went to their separate locker rooms.

George tried to make his swimming suit look less ridiculous over his erection but couldn't make it work. It was a one-piece that covered both his lower and upper half. Eventually, he sighed and gave up trying to make it look right. There would be a huge tent, she would probably give him some good-natured jests about it, and they'd both laugh. He took one of the hotel towels and padded on bare feet out to the pool. The pool area had what looked like wood decking, bars for food and drink, and a ceiling made to look like a sunny day. George knew all the "wood" was actually a type of fungus grown onsite. His thoughts on construction were interrupted when he spotted Edith waiting for him on the other side of the pool. She bounced gently on a diving board. She wasn't wearing a bathing suit. There wasn't a trace of clothing on her, not even her hands.

"Well, my handsome savior, I'm guessing from your expression that you haven't before seen a naked woman in the flesh. Do you like it?" Edith bobbed lightly with her feet

never leaving contact with the board, using the diving board's spring. It was just enough lift to make her modest breasts move in countervailing circles. Her dark nipples made tight little orbits. She giggled. "You look like someone dropped an anvil on your head." Her smile was bright and white, shining in her pretty brown face. She'd let her hair down, and it framed her beauty well.

"You're ... gorgeous." George stared. He thoughtlessly dropped the towel to the deck.

"I know I'm not built like Mrs. Salazar or ... your mother." Edith gave him a mock frown. "But I'm happy you find me appealing." Her smile returned, and she pointed with a bare finger at the ridiculous tent in his swimsuit. "You might want to remove your suit before you tear a hole in it." She giggled, bent her legs, and jumped from the board. Edith's dive was form-perfect. She barely made a splash.

"Okay!" George whooped, his voice echoing around the mostly empty pool area.

A waiter robot turned toward him and ambled over. "Est-ce que ce monsieur aimerait prendre un verre?"

"No, thank you." George hurriedly removed his suit. It was odd baring himself to anyone, even a robot. But Edith had really loosened him up. The public blowjob had changed some of his perspectives. He tossed his swimsuit to the robot and dove into the pool.

"Pas de course sur le pont." Having caught the suit, the robot folded it neatly and hung it on the back of a nearby chair.

George came up to the surface, treading water. He looked around for Edith, but didn't see her. She had been under for a while now. Suddenly, worry gripped his heart. "Edith? Edith? Are you okay?" There were no lifeguards. He gave a yelp when a strong hand grasped and tightened its grip around his ankle. When he was pulled under, his yelp turned into a gulp. He choked on pool water, struggling to break free. With water-blurred vision, he looked down. There was Edith smiling up at him, her brown hair floating in a halo around her head.

Seeing genuine fear on George's face, Edith felt a knot of guilt build inside her. She would make it up to him. She swam to the surface, pulling him up with her. Their heads burst out into the air again. They treaded water together. She let him sputter, spit, and recover his dignity. When he looked more like himself, she put a hand on his shoulder. "I'm so sorry, George. Sometimes my natural mischievousness gets the better of me." She swam over to the edge of the pool. "Want to get out for a minute? Maybe we could have some drinks?" She pressed her lips together in concern.

"No ... I'm fine. Let's stay in the water." George swam after her and took hold of the tiled edge. "You're so ... strong."

"I'm at home in water." The concern on her face eased, and she shrugged. She could see his eyes trying to pierce the surface of the water to get a good view of her breasts. She rose up a little for him so her nipples were in the air. "Would you like to touch them?"

"I ... well ..." He stared at her dark nipples and narrow areolae. Her boobs were amazing, but he couldn't help wondering how they compared to his mother's. His mom's breasts would look massive next to these. He took a deep breath and decided he loved Edith's tits regardless.

"You're comparing me to your mother." She cocked her head.

"No ... I ..." George's cheeks turned crimson. "You look amazing, I—"

"Shh." Edith put a finger to his lips. She could see his pupils dilate with the bare contact to such a sensitive place. "You can keep your secrets. But no need to lie. I can see it in your eyes."

"I'm not lying, Edith. You *do* look amazing." His gaze was still fixed on her brown breasts. "And ... I *was* thinking about my mom." He finally looked into her eyes. The understanding and empathy he found there made his breath catch in his throat. Did she have a similar experience? Maybe with her father? He would have to ask her sometime.

"Thank you for your honesty." She nodded and kissed him on the cheek. "Maybe Constance would play Mommy with you, too." She splashed water at him.

George splashed her back and laughed. "Constance thinks I'm the devil."

"If she's going to be a stick-in-the-mud, maybe you'd like me to play Mommy?" She waited to gauge his reaction.

"That's ... um ... very kind, Edith." George thought he could detect some shyness in her smile. That would be a first during their alone times together. She was always so confident. Maybe it wasn't shyness, maybe it was slyness. "I'm still new to all this ... um ... being with a real woman ... like you ... and ... I don't think ..."

"Don't worry about it. I won't push you." Edith's smile turned exceedingly sly. "But do you want to push me?" She turned her back to him and wiggled her butt under the water. "Like this."

"You want me to ...?" His body rocked slightly as the motion of the water pulled him side to side. "Really? You'll let me ... we ...?" He looked around the pool deck in desperation. "We need a condom."

"Still thinking about your mother, George?"

"No ... I ..." He looked at her in confusion.

“I mean, your mother’s voice in your head.” She pushed her butt back so that the head of his cock pressed against her pliant flesh. “You’re being the gentleman she trained you to be. But you don’t have to be. Not now. Not with me. I want you inside me, George. I don’t know if you know this, but the gods gifted you with a large one. I haven’t been with a penis like that in a long time.” She wiggled her butt so that his cock bounced against the other cheek.

“You’re my first, Edith.” George moved his cock to her crack. He held his breath. There was no sound but her gentle breathing and the splash of the waves. He watched her thin, delicate arm reach back. She understood that he’d need help putting it in. She understood him so well.

“There ... aaaahhhhhhhh ... do you feel that? The head’s in.” Edith laughed, a bright ringing sound. When she pushed back and shoved more of him inside, her laughter turned to an unladylike grunt. “My ... you are big ... aren’t you?”

George decided to answer the first question. “You feel ... tight ... and hot ... and perfect.” Gaining a little confidence, he moved her hand off his dick, took hold of her hips under the water, and pushed himself all the way in.

“Uuuuuugggghhhhhhhh. Yeeeessssssssss ... that’s the ... spot.” Edith held the edge of the pool with both hands, pressed her toes against the side, and let her eighteen-year-old boyfriend continue on his journey of discovery. Soon, he was humping her as quickly as the water would allow.

“Oh ... Wow ... I could ... get used to this.” George had never seen her with her hair down before. He loved the way it plastered to her back. Her soft, feminine moans filled him with desire. He wanted to please her. He needed to drive this amazing woman out of her mind with ecstasy.

“You are ... a natural ... George.” She looked over her shoulder at him, her brown eyes soft and joyous. “But the water ... ugh ... ugh ... works against you.” She reached back and held his hip, pushing him far enough to dislodge his penis. She then hoisted herself up onto the deck. She offered him a hand and a smile. “Come up to dry land ... and finish ... what you started.”

“Sounds good ... to me.” George took her hand. He was surprised when she practically lifted him from the water without any help from him. “You must work ... out ... a lot.”

Still holding his hand, she led him to a nearby chaise lounge and sat him down. “I like to keep ... in shape.” She leaned in close to his upright penis and closed one eye, making a show of inspecting it. “My dear boy, it seems you’ve sprung a leak.” His member was wet from the pool, but there was a clear rivulet of precum more viscous than the water. “Your body knows you’re large. It’s doing its best to help me out. How thoughtful.”

“It is?” George looked at her in awe. She was somehow silly and a goddess at the same time.

Edith straightened, took his hand, and pushed two of his fingers unceremoniously into her vagina. She pulled them out and held them under his nose for inspection. They were dripping. “Of course, my pussy is putting in a yeoman’s effort, too. I’ll have you know, I don’t get like that for most men.” She straddled him. When they locked eyes, she gave him a wink.

“I think I’m falling for you, Edith.” George moaned when she guided his dick back inside her. She sank all the way down, grinding her hips gently against his.

“It’s ... mutual ... Mr. Zaal.” She put her hands on his chest, her fingernails lightly scratching his chest. “You saved my life ... and then ... enriched it. You are a true ... gem.” Her hips lifted and slammed down. She found a rhythm and rode him, her speed steadily accelerating.

It was clear to George that he wasn’t going to last long at that pace. He watched her tits bounce for a minute, and then zeroed his focus on her ecstatic face. He reveled in the effect he was having on a woman. The lines on her forehead were bunched tight, her eyes rolled back, and her mouth twisted. “Edith ... ah ... ah ... ah ... Edith ... where ... should I ...?” He cupped her boobs and held them tightly. They were wonderful handfuls. “Where ... ah ... ah ... ah ... should I ... cum?”

“Cum ...?” Her eyes regained some focus, and she looked down at his adoring face. “You’ll ... cum ... ugh ... ugh ... inside me ... of course.” Sweat beaded on her brown skin, dripping down her nose and splashing on his flat stomach.

“Yeah ... okay ... rrrrrrggghhhhhhhh.” George didn’t recognize the growling sounds coming from his own mouth. “Inside you ... then ... I’m going to cum ... rrrrrrggghhhhhh ... inside you ... Edith.”

“Yes ... fill ... me ... fill ... me ... fill ... me.” Edith’s words were chanted to the rhythm of her bounces, the syllables hitting each apex and zenith. When his heat flooded her womb, Edith convulsed and lost all rhythm. She flopped on top of the teenager like a fish out of water. “Oh ... gods ... yeeesssssssss ... filllllllllll ... meeeeeeeeeeeee.” The last word stretched out into a long shriek, reverberating around the large room.

“Uuughh ... ugh ... ugh ... uggghhhhhhhh.” George lost track of time completely. It felt like his dick shot spurt after fantastic spurt to infinity and beyond. Eventually, the raw, autonomous body functions faded, and he regained some control. He found himself panting, with Edith’s head resting on his chest. She was a heaving, sweaty mess. He loved it, circling his arms around her and holding her tight. He smiled when her pussy spasmed on his cock. He had been led to believe sex was good. But nothing could have prepared him for the paradise he’d discovered in that hell of a hotel.

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Anna's Diary August 15, 2197

I am overjoyed to report, dear Diary, that Ernest has returned. He is currently sleeping soundly in our bed. It is not all good news, however. Rose did not come back from their expedition. Ernest says that she had an accident. He was a mess when he returned, covered in some sort of industrial grease. I had to scrub him in the shower for a long time to remove all the stuff. We'll see how well the hotel's laundry facility does with his clothes. They may be ruined. Sorry. There I go, focusing on trivialities, when two more massive events crashed down on us. I have my husband back. And our group of survivors is down to nine. I will say a prayer to the gods for Rose El Rashidi's soul.

Ernest returned in the middle of the night. I went to fetch the children for help, but George wasn't in his room. I know he's a teenager, but he's hardly ever rebelled before. I'll have to have a conversation with him about wandering alone in the middle of the night. I was very clear that he shouldn't explore. Lillian, bless her heart, was a dear and helped with the laundry and other small tasks before I sent her back to bed.

You may have noticed, Diary, that I have not yet said whether they found transport off this hotel. Well, Ernest said that they found no transport. But he also said that there might be a way "to leave." I'm not sure what he means, but I should have more answers when he wakes.

Ernest's Diary August 15, 2197

The more I think on it, the more I understand that I *did* see the bottom. And the bottom is the top. Why did we lock ourselves in this tautological nightmare? We are in the well, and the bottom is the top. The top is the bottom. We fell in, but now that we're inside, there is nowhere to fall. We are now ... falling forever.

Lillian's Diary August 15, 2197

Wow. We were trapped in a deep space hotel with thousands of dead people. The hotel AI went nuts. Some of the other survivors gave me the CREEPS. And, it turns out, things hadn't even started to get weird. My brother kissed me! And I let him. I LET HIM! I can't stop thinking about it and about poor Francis. He can't ever know. If George whispers a word of this to anyone, I'll kill him. I mean, he kissed me. I think I'll kill the fucker

anyway. I don't care how charming he thinks he is. But seriously, I can't tell up from down anymore. I don't see how this trip could get any more strange.

George's Diary August 15, 2197

Wow ... wow ... wow ... wow. I had sex with an awesome woman. Not once, but three times! I came in her all three times. We did it in the pool and on the lounge the first time. Then, a few minutes later, she jumped me and we did it on the deck. And then she was bent over the bar the third time, while a robot served us cocktails. I can't believe the words I just wrote. Maybe Dad will take his sweet time finding us a lifeboat, and Edith and I will get a chance to do it again. I'm flying so high right now, I'm afraid I might get whiplash after all those insane lows. Can't wait to see what the day brings.

~~

Eight of the survivors stood in the mirrored hallway of floor one hundred five, their usual meeting place. They were spread roughly in a circle. Albert, for reasons known only to him, wore his tuxedo again, his arms resting on his protruding belly. Delores stood between Anna and George, hugging herself tightly. She had dark circles under her eyes from grief and lack of sleep. Lillian eyed her brother with equal parts curiosity and contempt. Edith fidgeted with her gloves, her gaze on her hands. George's focus was on Edith, but he had yet to make eye contact. Constance held an arm around her husband, either protectively, or to keep him from leaping at George. Roy stared daggers at George.

"I have good news and bad news." Anna clasped her gloved hands in front of her skirts.

"Give us the bad –" Albert started, but Anna cut him off.

"The good news is that Ernest has returned." Anna beamed. She looked around their small circle and saw several hopeful smiles. "The bad news is that we lost Ms. El Rashidi, and it's unclear whether they found transport off the hotel."

"Unclear?" Constance cocked her head, puzzled.

"What do you mean that Ms. El Rashidi is lost?" Delores twisted her brown braided hair with her fingers. "Do we need a search party?"

Anna took a deep breath and explained where everything stood. Rose was dead. There would be no search. More answers would have to wait for Ernest to wake from his slumber. Those precious hopeful smiles faded away. When the group split up and everyone but the Zaals went back to their rooms, Anna was left without a smile of her

own. Even with her husband returned, things were not going well. She turned to Lillian. "Will you keep an eye on your father, princess? George and I have to check the concierge terminal again."

"Sure, Mom. But I need to talk to George first." Lillian pulled her brother by the elbow down the hall. When they were out of earshot of their mother, she whispered, "So, what the fuck was that last night?"

"What?" George stared at her with wide eyes. He could tell she was furious about something. What did he do this time? "Did you see me and Edith? We just went for a walk." How was he going to explain carrying his swimsuit?

"What? Edith?" She screwed her face into a grimace of confusion. "We'll put a fucking pin in whatever is going on there. Because, clearly, you're lying about something. I meant you and me ... last night ... in my room. Explain yourself." She glanced at her mom. Anna was watching them carefully from down the hall. The mirrored effect made it seem like there were many Moms stretching out into infinity.

"Your room?" George ran his hand through his hair. "I ... wasn't in your room last night."

"So, it never happened?" Lillian hissed.

George shook his head.

"Fine. I can live with that. A moment of insanity brought on by all the ... insanity." She nodded vigorously, her blond ponytail bobbing behind her. "Just make sure it really never happened. Got it?" She stabbed at his chest with a gloved finger. "And I'm keeping the tiara."

"Got it." George watched his sister whirl and stomp away, her long skirts billowing behind her. "Wait, what happened in your room?" But it was too late. She was gone. He returned to his mother, and they made the familiar walk to the lobby side by side.

"What was that about, sunshine?" Anna glanced at her son from the corner of her eye.

"Lillian being Lillian, I guess." George sighed. They walked in silence for a while and entered the lobby. A couple days ago, each trip here had filled him with foreboding. He'd been worried the comm link would still be down. Now he was worried they would find that it was working again. He chastised himself for his selfishness.

"Did your conversation with Lillian have anything to do with why you weren't in your room last night?" Anna stepped up next to the concierge desk, watching him very closely. His head snapped toward her, guilt, worry, and excitement all playing on his face. His expression was the same as when he'd been caught breaking into the school computer to change a friend's grade.

"I ... went out for a walk. I needed to stretch my legs." George worked hard to keep his breathing even and his voice calm. He waved his hand and brought up the holographic interface. "The comm link is still down. No other systems have been restored since we last checked."

"I'm disappointed." Anna frowned at him. She nodded at the interface. "Disappointed in the hotel and in my son. You went out after I specifically told you not to go exploring."

"I'm eighteen, Mom." George knew it was a pathetic defense. He dropped the interface and turned toward her, ready for his punishment.

"You may be eighteen, but I am still your mother, Georgie." She shook her head, every strand of her pinned hair perfectly in place. Regardless, she reached for the pin and fiddled with it absentmindedly. "You are not to leave your room, unless you are accompanied by a member of our family. Got it? There's no leeway here."

"Yeah." George slumped his shoulders and walked back toward his room. His mother didn't say anything more. It was a short, icy trip back. When he was back in his room, he flopped onto his bed. Edith could still visit him in his room, but his mother was now likely to check in on him. He couldn't sneak out. He couldn't stay there. He also couldn't end things with Edith. He turned things over in his head. What was the solution?

George spent over an hour considering failed plans when his mother entered his room and closed the door behind her. She wore a different outfit than before. Her hair was down, and her bodice and skirts had bright, floral embroidery. He looked over at her from his bed. "Checking in on me already?"

"You know I love to check in on you, sweetie." Anna moved closer to him and stood primly, with her hands clasped. "Your father is still asleep, and your sister is watching him. So, I thought I'd spend some time with my sweet son."

"Um ... you're not mad at me?" George sat up on the edge of the bed. He studied her wide smile. She seemed so pretty and vivacious. Such a difference to the frowning parental disapproval he'd seen on her face when they'd parted.

"How could I stay mad at you, sweetie?" She sat next to him on the edge of the bed and patted his thigh with a gloved hand. "You saved all our lives. And you're such a handsome, clever young man."

"Mom?" George looked deep into her blue eyes. They were the color of the sea on a stormy day.

"Yes, sweetie?" She smiled at him and squeezed his thigh.

"You never call me 'sweetie.' You always call me 'sunshine.'" George narrowed his eyes.

“I’m just trying to remind you how sweet you are to me. How much I appreciate you.” Anna scooted a little closer.

George inhaled her familiar, honeyed breath. His eyes dropped, just for a split second, to her bust, which strained at her bodice. He met her gaze again.

“It’s okay, sweetie. You can look.” Anna’s warm, inviting smile broadened. “You deserve to be rewarded. You like Mommy’s breasts?”

“Um ...” George nodded slowly. He was keenly aware of her reassuring grip on his leg. He straightened his tie and gulped. His eyes dropped back down to the rolling hills of her breasts encased in so much fabric. The familiar thought of what they might look like bare gnawed at his mind.

“You’re thinking you’d like to see them, right? Want me to show you?” She gave his thigh one last squeeze and stood. Her expression was angelic and calm. “It’s so hard to remove my bodice with my gloves on. So many pesky buttons.” Anna gave her son a knowing look. “I’ll have to remove my gloves to deal with the buttons properly.”

“Your ... gloves?” George moved his gaze from her boobs to her hands. He stared intently as she slowly pulled each finger, loosening the glove on her left hand little by little. “Mom ... you’re really ...?” He glanced at her face, she was biting her lip seductively. He looked back to the glove as she pulled it slowly all the way off. The exposed alabaster skin matched her face. She had delicate, slim fingers. These were the hands that had once held him when he was a baby. He would have expected to see her wedding ring on her finger. It wasn’t there. He looked into her blue eyes. “Who are you?”

“What?” Anna’s smile wavered. “I’m your mother, silly.”

“No ... you’re not. My mother would never say or do the things you’re saying and doing.” George slowly stood and edged away from her. “You touched my leg, so you’re not a hologram. There’s no tech that I know of that can do what you’re doing. So, who or what are you?”

Anna frowned and pulled her glove back on. “I’m a woman that wanted to say thank you to her son. You saved my life. I would have been so lonely trapped here without another living soul.”

“That ... doesn’t make any sense. You ...” George watched her turn and run. In a flash, she was out the door, her skirts undulating behind her. George stood still, wondering what to do. “Well ... shit.” Without thinking, he raced after her. He didn’t know what he’d do if he caught her. He supposed that was a problem for future George. The time for planning was over. He was now hot on the trail of something he didn’t come close to understanding, and he needed answers.

Chapter 5

We Should Reward Him

“Stop! Somebody stop her!” George burst from his room out into the hall. He expected the thing that wasn’t his mother would be no more than twenty feet ahead, racing toward the lobby. He lost all momentum when confronted with the long, empty mirrored hallway, slowing to a stop. A door opened to his right, and Albert stuck his head out. He was wearing a bathrobe, looking confused.

“What’s the matter, boy?” Albert frowned at George.

“There was a woman ... who was not my mother.” George looked over at the rotund man. “But she ...”

“There are several women who are not your mother.” Albert’s smile was less than friendly. “Fewer than there used to be.” He closed his door and disappeared.

Other doors opened. Delores peeked out. “Is everything okay?”

“What’s going on?” Lillian’s eyes widened in exasperation when she peered into the hall to find her brother was the source of the shouting. “Was that you shouting like a moron, Georgie?”

“Was that you, Mr. Zaal?” Edith looked out from her doorway with narrowed eyes.

Anna stepped into the hall. “What’s the matter, sunshine?”

Roy glowered out of his door, his wife standing behind him.

“I ... um ...” George noticed Albert had returned. He had made a quick wardrobe change, now wearing his tuxedo, standing in the hallway with his arms folded on his prodigious belly. George watched the man’s reflections spread into infinity on either side of him. Turning things over in his head, George decided that the truth wouldn’t help: not at the moment, at least. “I had a nightmare. Sorry everyone.”

“It’s okay, Georgie.” Anna walked over to her son and hugged him tightly. “When did you get so tall?”

“A while ago, Mom.” George hugged her back, feeling her breasts press against his belly. He quickly released her when his cock roused.

“It’s okay, everyone. Just a nightmare.” Anna smiled at the crowd. Most returned to their rooms but not all. Anna watched Albert walk away. “Where are you going, Mr. Dmytruk?”

“Since the lad woke me, I thought I’d stretch my legs.” Albert walked toward the lobby, not bothering to look back. “I don’t need anyone’s approval to go walking about. I’m not a teenager ... haven’t been for a loooooong time.”

“Yes, of course.” Anna nodded, still rubbing her son’s back. She looked up into his face. He was frowning at Albert’s back, deep concentration forming a vertical groove in his forehead. “What are you thinking about?”

“Nothing, Mom.” George shook his head. “I better get back to bed.” He kissed his mother chastely on the cheek and went back to his room.

~~

It wasn’t easy to write with the constant tapping. It was starting to get on Anna’s nerves. Maybe it was a mechanical system. “Océane? Can you run a diagnostic on my room?” She spoke in a whisper so as not to wake her slumbering husband.

“J’ai lancé un diagnostic. Tout fonctionne parfaitement, comme toujours. Votre chambre est sanguine.” Océane’s tone was bright and chipper.

“I understood ‘sanguine.’ That means everything’s good.” Anna turned from the desk and looked around the room, rubbing her chin.

“Cela signifie aussi que le sang,” Océane said.

“That’s enough, Océane.” Anna stood, listening to the tapping. One short tap ... pause ... two short taps ... pause ... one short tap ... pause ... long tap ... she followed the sound around the room, slowly zeroing in on the bed. She knelt and found her husband’s knuckle rapping gently against the bedframe. “What sort of dream are you having, my sweet Ernest?” She carefully lifted his hand and tucked his arm under the blankets. “What happened to you and Ms. El Rashidi?” She sat next to him on the bed and put her hand on the blanket above his chest. His heart thumped like he was running a sprint. “It seems Georgie isn’t the only one having nightmares. I shouldn’t be surprised my men are having trouble. It’s not easy being heroes.” Now that the tapping was gone, she went back to her desk to write.

~~

“We’re really going swimming, Mom?” Lillian held her suit draped over her arm. She had to rush to keep up with her mother.

“Yes, there’s a lovely pool up on Floor one hundred twelve.” Anna smiled over her shoulder at her daughter. “Hurry up, princess.”

“Slow down, Mom.” Lillian nearly tripped on her skirts. She held them up to move faster. Once they were on the stairs, her mother slowed down. Lillian breathed a sigh of relief and caught up to her. They walked side by side. “How do you know about the pool?”

“Oh ... the concierge directory. Thankfully, that’s all in English.” Anna’s smile was wide and warm as she regarded her daughter. “Isn’t it nice to have some time with just us girls?”

“Yeah, Mom.” Lillian smiled back at her. Her mother looked positively radiant. They continued to climb the stairs, looking out the great window every other switchback. She was glad there was no more debris, or *bodies*, floating outside the station.

“I know you and your brother have had some friction.” Anna continued to beam at her daughter as they climbed. “I’d like you to be nicer to him.”

“Mom, it’s not my fault, I –”

“He saved our lives, Lillian. We should reward him, not antagonize him. Am I clear?” Anna gave her daughter a stern look. They departed the stairs and walked down the long hallway. The one hundred twelfth floor was decorated with rich aquatic wallpaper in blues and golds. The mural on the ceiling depicted Poseidon’s underwater city. Further down, the mural turned into beautiful sirens luring sailors toward jagged rocks.

“Yes, Mom. I’ll try to be nice to him. But he’s still my little brother. He knows how to get under my skin.” Lillian followed her mother into the pool area. They found the locker room and began changing.

“He’s eighteen. You’re both adults now. It’s time you behaved that way.” Anna got a nod out of Lillian but that wasn’t enough. “I want you to say it. He saved our lives and deserves to be rewarded. I would be all alone if he hadn’t figured out that Faraday cage. I cannot live with solitude.”

“What?” Lillian, standing in her underwear, cocked her head. “‘All alone’? Mom, you’d be *dead* if George hadn’t figured out the room. Isn’t that your whole point?” She removed her hairpin and hat and shook out her blond hair.

“Yes, of course. That *is* my point. Anna Zaal would be dead if her sweet son hadn’t intervened.” Anna removed her bra, letting her heavy breasts fall free. She was oblivious to the long stare Lillian gave her.

Lillian had been thinking about the odd conversation until her mother bared her breasts right in front of her. Lillian’s hands went to her mouth when her mother quickly

removed her gloves. She hadn't gotten a direct view of her mother's breasts or hands in goodness knows how long. Certainly, women changed in front of one another, but they usually turned around, or wrapped a towel around themselves before fully undressing, as Lillian was doing. Lillian marveled at what she saw. Time, and child-rearing, seemed to have made her mother even more beautiful. Her breasts sloped away from her chest dramatically. At the crest of the curve were large nipples with wide areolae. Both were a pleasing pink color. When her mother caught her staring, Lillian blushed and looked away. She turned around and surreptitiously removed her everyday gloves and put on her swimming gloves. Her mind replayed the sight of her mother's curvaceous upper half.

Once changed, the women went out to the pool, had a vigorous swim, and pulled themselves out of the water to relax. They reclined on chaise lounges and sipped drinks provided by their robot waiter. Their bathing suits covered everything important, but didn't have the support of their bras and bodices. After seeing her mother's bare breasts, Lillian found herself constantly glancing at the way gravity pulled on her mother's breasts through the floral-design suit.

"I should go check on your father." Anna rose, well aware of her daughter's eyes on her breasts. It was cute how the young woman thought she was being surreptitious. This was something unexpected that might be used later. Anna suspected that it was just curiosity. "I won't be back. You stay here and enjoy yourself. Return to our rooms when you're done relaxing."

"I thought we weren't supposed to be by ourselves outside of our rooms." Lillian raised her eyebrows.

"I'll send your brother to keep you company." Anna turned to go.

"No thanks. I'd rather be by myself." Lillian lips curved into a sour expression.

Anna turned back to her daughter and wagged a finger. "Be nice to him. He saved your life. You're breathing right now because of your brother. He deserves a reward."

"Yeah, okay. Got it." Lillian waved an annoyed hand at her mother. She watched her leave, sighed, and sipped her tropical drink. She hadn't asked for alcohol, but she was feeling a bit buzzed. With the waitstaff only speaking French, she really didn't know what she was drinking. But it was delicious. She raised her hand to call the waiter over for another one.

Thirty minutes and three drinks later, George arrived at the pool. He wore a swimsuit Lillian hadn't seen before. Usually, his suits were baggy, but this one hugged his body and his ... privates. She could clearly see the outline of his big, soft thing tucked to the left side. She glanced away and blushed. Apparently, today was the day for seeing her family's junk. Thank goodness her dad was still asleep. She didn't want to see all of

them. Lillian tried to rise, but felt a bit tipsy and settled back onto the lounge. How much booze was Océane putting in her drinks?

“Eyes up here, Lil.” George held one hand behind his back, the other pointed to his brown eyes that were crinkled in a relaxed, confident smile.

“Oh ... shit.” The crimson on Lillian’s cheeks deepened. He’d caught her staring at the outline of his penis. *Is he really that large? No ... no ... Francis ... Francis ... think about Francis’s modest, perfectly-sized penis.*

“You know what would be fun?” George smiled. “Have you and Francis ever gone skinny dipping?” When he saw her frown in horror at the thought, he quickly added, “With gloves on, of course.”

“No ... we would never ...” She shook her head and watched him produce something from behind his back. It was a gorgeous necklace, with sparkling rubies and pale sapphires. She gasped. “It’s *beautiful.*” She reached for it, but he pulled it away.

“You only get it if you agree to go skinny dipping with me.” He smiled. “We can play make-believe like we did when we were little. You’re a princess mermaid, and I’m going to rescue you from the evil villain’s death ray.” George unzipped his suit and slowly undressed.

“We never played ... make-believe.” In a stupor, Lillian stared as more and more of her brother’s skin came into view. He wasn’t built with thick corded muscles the way Francis was. Her brother was lean and lithe. Maybe he would grow into a more robust body as he got older.

“Sure we did. You loved playing make-believe.” He worked his torso out of the upper half of the one-piece suit, and slowly lowered it down his legs. When his soft, dangling penis came into view, he could see her unconsciously part her lips. George had seduced thousands of human women and knew exactly what to watch for. This was a good sign.

“You’re ... you’re ... naked.” Lillian felt like she was floating in space. A primal urge filled her. She realized that she was soaking the crotch of her own swimsuit.

“It doesn’t really matter, does it? I mean, I’m your brother. We used to see each other naked all the time when we were younger.” He stepped out of his suit and tossed it to a nearby robot.

“We ... never saw each other naked.” Lillian spoke so softly she could barely hear herself. “It wouldn’t have been proper.”

The robot folded George’s suit and hung it from the back of a chair.

“Thanks, robo-friend.” George gave the robot a two-finger salute. He turned his attention back to his ogling sister. “You can’t have the necklace unless you skinny-dip with me, Lil. Those are the rules.”

“Really?” Lillian looked at the gorgeous necklace. It sparkled under the synthetic, sunny sky. She looked back to her brother as he ran across the deck. His tight ass quaked with his lunging steps, each cheek moving as a unit. She watched him dive into the water, form-perfect. He barely made a splash. She looked at her empty glass with its little, festive umbrella. *I want ... I want ... I want.* Her mother’s words bounced inside her head. *Why shouldn’t I have fun with my brother? He saved my life. He deserves it. I deserve it.* “Waiter, another drink.”

The waiter nodded. “Je vais vous apporter un autre verre, mais s’il vous plaît, ne courez pas sur le pont comme il l’a fait.”

Why shouldn’t I? Why shouldn’t I? Her mind was now a jumble of hungers. For a split second, she thought of Francis. Her fiancé had never showered her with priceless jewelry. *He’s all the way back on Earth, anyway.* Dismissing Francis from her mind, she stood on wobbly legs, grabbed the necklace, and placed it around her neck.

“You have to take off your suit and jump in with me now. The necklace is binding.” George watched with a bright smile on his face. He was treading water near the middle of the large pool.

“Why shouldn’t I?” The words came out as a sarcastic challenge to her brother, echoing back to her. She didn’t like the tone in her voice. Rather than argue as she would have expected him to do, her brother simply shrugged his shoulders and smiled. She was understanding why everyone found him so charming. She turned her back to him and unzipped her suit. Making sure to keep her gloves on, she pulled off the sleeves and lowered the suit to her waist. Looking over her shoulder, she glanced at her grinning brother. “How do I look?” She covered her breasts with one arm. With her other hand, she straightened the necklace and slowly turned toward him.

“You look like a princess, Lil.” George’s laugh was friendly and warm. It echoed around the empty deck, the kind of laugh one shared in an intimate moment.

Hearing his bright laughter, Lillian laughed, too. The robot arrived with another drink. She took a gulp, even though she was already quite tipsy. With a little more liquid courage inside her, she turned her back to him again, lowered her suit down her legs, and stepped out of it. She knew she must have been giving him a show when she bent over, exposing her pale ass and pussy, but he didn’t make any comment. She wondered if he enjoyed the view, or if he thought it disgusting. Her mind was such a jumble, she couldn’t decide what was most likely. With her back still toward him, she looked over

her shoulder. "Now, how do I look?" *What will he say?* She half expected him to cruelly laugh, pulling the rug out from under the moment.

"You are the most beautiful sister in the Solar System." George bowed his head until his nose touched the water, as if he'd encountered nobility.

Lillian grinned from ear to ear.

~~

George knocked on the door for room 4327. When the door opened, and Edith's face appeared, he couldn't help but smile.

"Another nightmare, Mr. Zaal?" Edith frowned at him, unconsciously tugging at her gloves so that they were tight on her hands.

"No ... I ..." George leaned close to her in the cracked doorway. "Can I come in? I know you don't like meeting outside of our ... special times. But I need to talk to someone about something I saw. And ... I couldn't think of anyone but you."

"I have no idea what you're talking about." She opened the door wider and let him in. "But if it's important, I'm not really doing anything else." She wore a long terrycloth robe and the feed was paused on a screen in the middle of her room. She'd been watching a melodramatic serial.

"Can you ... close the door?" George looked at her closely. She had the same pretty face, alluring brown skin, and silky brown hair as always. But she seemed so much more reserved and withdrawn. The Edith he'd snuck away with was so much more ... vivacious than the woman before him. A trickle of icy suspicion meandered in the back of his mind.

"What would people think if I put myself behind closed doors with a single young man? I'll leave the door open, thank you very much." She folded her arms and waited for him to tell her what was so important. "Is it about the concierge desk?"

"No. Um ... Edith ... I -"

She cut him off. "Ms. Pemberton."

"Ms. Pemberton, have you been to the pool area on the one hundred twelfth floor?" George looked at her hopefully. Maybe that sly smile would return, and she'd allay his fears. *Otherwise ... otherwise ... I've been cavorting with a false Edith ... with something ... impossible and ghastly.* He shuddered.

“Many times, why?” She furrowed her brow. She didn’t like his expression. It looked like he might faint again. She didn’t want to have to deal with that. She hated fainting guests.

“I mean ... with me.” He looked around the room, found an armchair and hurried over to it. “Forgive me, I need to sit.”

Edith waved a hand that it was okay.

“Thank you.” George sat down and adjusted his tie. “Have you ever gone to the pool with me?”

“Of course not.” She shook her head firmly.

“I see.” George studied the small woman’s eyes. He didn’t think she was lying. He really had never been to the pool with her. He had cum in someone three times, but it wasn’t her. *Who ... or what took my virginity?* He shuddered again.

~~

“You really think I’m pretty?” Lillian wobbled a little as she crossed the deck, naked but for the glittering necklace and her gloves. She had dropped her arm, giving her brother an excellent view of almost everything. When she looked down, she could see the red and blue gems glittering between her breasts.

“You shine brighter than the sun.” George’s voice was relaxed, but carried unusual authority.

“The sun? Sunshine?” Lillian giggled, burped, and then frowned. Their mother called George “Sunshine.” Their mother could come back anytime and find her parading with her tits out in front of her brother. Anyone could find her like this. She would be mortified if that happened. That led her inebriated brain to take the next logical step. It was wrong to prance naked in front of her brother, or any man, but ... especially her brother.

“I know that look. Don’t fret, Lil. Jump into the water the with me. It feels great.” George laughed and splashed.

“Okay ... okay ... I ...” She paused and tried to figure out what else was wrong. Something wasn’t right with her tummy “George, I ... I ... bbbllllllllaaaaaahhhhhh.” Lillian threw up all over the deck in front of her. “I’m sorry ... I’m sorry ... I ... bllllllaaaaaahhhhhhhhh.” Her hair was loose, and when she leaned forward, it fell into the line of fire.

A nearby robot turned toward her. Its stoic face remained calm, but its body language became agitated. “Oh mon Dieu. Sa mère a spécifiquement dit que nous devons lui servir ces boissons. Que quelqu'un appelle le personnel de nettoyage.”

“It’s okay.” George swam to the side of the pool. “Hop into the water and you’ll feel better. I promise.”

“No George.” Lillian stumbled back to her swimsuit, picked it up, and headed for the locker room. “I’m sorry ... I just can’t ... I ... blaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhh.” She paused to throw up again, this time at the feet of their waiter robot.

“Personnel de nettoyage à la piscine.” Océane’s voice said over the hotel’s sound system.

“Sorry ... I’m sorry.” Without looking back, Lillian raced away, leaving her brother alone in the pool.

~~

“Ernest?” Anna sat on the edge of her bed, wearing the lingerie she’d brought on the trip. The ensemble was supposed to be a surprise for her husband, a matching set of bra, panties, and gloves made from paisley lace. The material was quite transparent. “I think you’ve slept long enough. Time to wake up. I’ve got a surprise for you.” She reached under the blanket and found his slumbering penis. It felt hot in her hand. “You won’t even have to exert yourself. I’ll take care of it with my mouth if you want.”

“The bottom ... of the well ... is ...” Ernest’s eyelids fluttered open.

“That’s it ... wake up ... darling.” Anna squeezed his penis rhythmically. It was still soft, but she was sure once he woke, he’d be happy for the attention. When she lifted the blanket off his naked body, heat radiated up. He certainly was toasty tucked in bed. “Let me take care of ... aaaaaaccckkkkkkkk.” Her husband’s hand was suddenly around her neck, cutting off her air. She let go of his penis and clawed at his hand. He was too strong. “Ernest ... you’re ... hurting ... me.” She could barely get the words out. She looked at his slack face. His eyes were open, but he gave no sign that he saw anything in the room. He was still in the clutches of a nightmare. *This is not how I die. Not after everything George did to save me.* Anna lifted her fists, still in their lacy gloves, and slammed them down onto her husband’s stomach. His grip loosened, and she clawed herself free. She fell back, gasping for air.

“I have seen the bottom of the well. It is the top. We will fall forever.” Ernest sat up.

Having gathered enough oxygen, Anna screamed.

~~

“You haven’t ... um ... *eaten* at Aubergine?” George saw from Edith’s impassive face that she didn’t understand his meaning. He wondered if this woman had ever swallowed cum. She certainly hadn’t done so under a table at that fancy restaurant.

“I have.” Edith pulled her head back and gave him a dubious look. She anticipated his next question. “But not with you, Mr. Zaal.”

“Okay, I think ... I understand. Sorry for so many ...” George turned his ear toward the door and listened. “Did you hear that?”

“It sounded like a scream.” Edith looked toward the door. Before she could react, George was on his feet, racing into the hallway.

“Mom?” George burst into his parents’ room. His mother and father were standing, his father holding her tightly. His mother was sobbing. He ran across the room and yanked his father’s arm off his mother.

“Whoa ... whoa.” Ernest, still naked, backed away, holding his hands up.

“George!” Anna, tears running down her cheeks, quickly put herself between her son and husband. “It’s okay. I’m crying because I’m happy your father is awake. Everything’s okay.” She smiled through her tears.

“Oh ... gosh ... I’m sorry.” George’s eyes went wide when he registered what his mother was wearing. He could see her large, pink nipples and wide areolae through the sheer fabric. “My gods, I’m so sorry.” George quickly turned around. “I heard the scream and ...” He saw Edith peering in from the doorway with wide eyes.

“It’s okay, George.” Ernest pulled the cover off the bed and covered his wife. “That was a good instinct, running to save your mother. I’m proud of you.”

“Thanks, Dad.” George stood with his back to them.

“You’re my hero, sunshine.” Anna moved behind her son, awkwardly keeping the blanket wrapped around her. She saw that Albert had joined Edith in peering in at them. She leaned around George and kissed him on the cheek. “Now, give us some privacy please.” She raised her voice. “Some privacy, everyone.”

Still groggy from his long sleep, it finally dawned on Ernest that he was giving everyone a shameful show. Belatedly, he covered his penis with a pillow.

"I am curious, Mr. Zaal, how you landed such a lovely creature for a wife with such an insignificant cudgel." Albert waggled his eyebrows.

"Mr. Dmytruk!" Edith put a hand to her mouth, shocked. "That's untoward!"

Anna turned back to her husband. "Goodness, you're just standing there, Ernest." She shuffled him off to the bathroom, glaring over her shoulder at Albert.

George walked back into the hall, closed his parents' door, and stood squarely in front of Albert. "How dare you." His hands balled into fists by his sides. "That was uncalled for."

"I was merely pointing out the obvious. He ... ooooooof." Albert had not expected the punch. It spun him and dropped him to a knee. He put a hand up to his smarting jaw. "You hit me! You hit me with your hand."

"You deserved it, Mr. Dmytruk," George said.

"Then I accept your challenge." Albert stood and turned back to the teenager. George had a couple inches on him, but Albert had more than thirty pounds on George and decades of experience. It would be an easy duel. "Where do we find swords around here?"

"Stop it." Edith swatted Albert's lapel. "Stop it, both of you." She gave George a shove. "There will be no duel. You're behaving like buffoons. Go back to your rooms."

George flexed his hand. It hurt from the punch. He wasn't going to listen to Edith. Not *this* Edith, at least. He shook his head to clear it. He certainly wasn't going to listen to the other Edith either. He set his jaw. "Swords? I'm sure we can find them in the armory."

"George?" A disheveled Lillian approached them down the hall. Her bodice was twisted to the side and wrinkled. She only wore one of her skirts. Her blond hair was lank and wet, hanging down around her face in uncouth fashion. "How did you get here before me?"

"Lillian." It took one glance for George to see that something unfortunate had befallen his sister. "What's wrong?"

"What's wrong?" Lillian stopped in front of him, oblivious to the storm brewing on Albert's face. "You give me this ..." She held up the magnificent necklace for all to see. "And you talk me into ... behaving like a fool. And then I ... come back here and you somehow raced ahead of me to ... to ... what? To pretend like nothing happened?"

"Where were you, Lillian?" George put his hands on her shoulders. "I've been here for hours."

“No, you haven’t. I was at the pool with Mom and then you. I just left you there. I ...” Lillian’s head had cleared a little since she’d thrown up. She tried to put all the pieces together.

“I’ve been here. I was talking with Ms. Pemberton.” He nodded at her room. “With the door open,” he hastily added.

“The armory it is.” Albert’s voice was a growl. “Do we do this now? I will be satisfied.” He had seen the way Roy had let the teenager tread upon his honor. Albert wouldn’t let the same fate find him.

“Later ... later.” George put his arm around his sister’s shoulders. To his surprise, she said nothing caustic about his touch. “Mom’s been in her room with Dad. She didn’t go to the pool. Oh, and Dad’s awake.”

“She was?” Lillian blinked. “He is?”

“Swords ... and soon.” Albert stalked back to his room and slammed the door.

“Let’s get you to your room. We can sort out what happened.” George ushered his sister to her door, opened it, and led her in.

Edith was left all alone in the hall, completely nonplussed. She wrapped her robe tighter around her and returned to her room. The others would sort out their own messes. She would return to her blessedly absorbing melodrama.

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Anna’s Diary August 17, 2197

Ernest has been very tired since his return. He only wakes for a few hours at a time. And he continues with his nightmares. I am careful not to startle him, and thankfully we have not had any more accidental violence. Although, the tapping continues. I have written down the long and short taps Ernest makes on the bedframe while he sleeps
..- - .- . . . / .- - / - / -... - - - - - - - - / - - .- . / - / .- - .- . . - . . That repeats over and over. I recognize it as code, but I don’t know what it means. The net is still unavailable, so I can’t translate it. Océane is no help. And Ernest tells me it’s nothing. I know when a thing is a thing, and it’s not nothing. Unfortunately, because Ernest needs space to recuperate from his ill-fated adventure, I have had to find my own room. I moved into 4322, right next to George. While I’m filled with sorrow at being separated from my husband, even temporarily, it is a relief to be away from his incessant tapping.

The calamities compile, Diary. George seems to have acted brashly on behalf of his father's dignity. We have put off the duel for now, but after striking Mr. Dmytruk, poor George is honor-bound to follow through. Mr. Dmytruk has agreed to end the duel at first blood, so at least there is very little threat to George's life.

Dark works travel in threes, and Lillian has been doing poorly these past couple days. She's fixated on an event that didn't happen. She thinks I took her to a swimming pool. I most certainly did not. She says her brother was there too, and that he gave her a necklace. Well, the jewelry is very real, and quite expensive by the look of it. I've told her to put it back in whatever room she took it from.

We need to leave this hotel quickly. Ernest says there is a way to leave at the bottom of the tower, but he also says it is too dangerous to travel there. There is a haunted look about him when he says this, so I dare not follow his steps down the spire. I hope to have good news for you next time, Diary. I plan to make a trip up the tower to look for transport. I'll tell the others soon.

Ernest's Diary August 17, 2197

It's calling, and we're falling.

Lillian's Diary August 17, 2197

I want to go home. I can't look at my brother anymore. He saw me dancing like a fool with my tits out. He pretends to be concerned, but I know he's laughing at me on the inside. It seems we keep finding new depths for rock bottom on the Belle Île.

George's Diary August 17, 2197

It's been several days since I saw the Other Edith. She hasn't appeared since I chased the Other Mother away. That was right about the time of Lillian's pool incident. I don't know what it means. It must be some sort of new tech, but I can't research anything with the systems down. And Océane won't help me.

To make matters worse, I have to fight Mr. Dmytruk soon. I doubt my school fencing classes will be much use. There's something about the man that says he's familiar with a sword. What little good there was in this place has turned to dust. We have to leave, but I'm afraid there's no way out.

Kapnos's Diary August 17, 2197

I/We have ruined my plans with the survivors. I/She should never have been his mother. I/We made other errors. Embodying her brother seemed to make sense at the time. The only other men to choose from were Roy and Albert. They would not have worked for obvious reasons. George is quite charming and handsome. I/We thought that I/he could turn Lillian around. The situation called for meticulous craftsmanship, and I/we butchered it. It was so much easier when the hotel was full of people. Glorious amounts of humanity to choose from ... to lose myself in.

There is nowhere else to go. It is either the survivors or solitude. I/We can't stand the thought of solitude. I/We will try something else. A plan is already forming.

Chapter 6

He Rested a Narrow Sword

“It’s a long way up, about a hundred floors. My husband needs his rest, so he can’t travel with me.” Anna looked around at the group assembled in the mirrored hallway. “Mr. Dmytruk has agreed to put off the duel until after I return.” Her lips curved in a sour frown. Albert and Ernest were the only two survivors not attending the meeting. Her thoughts about each man disquieted her in different ways. She turned her gray-blue eyes on Roy. “In case I run into any other survivors, I would like a man to accompany me. An athlete would be helpful, too.” She turned her gaze to Constance. “Are there any volunteers?”

Constance and Roy put their heads together and whispered.

George tried to meet his mother’s eyes. She had told him earlier that she needed him to stay and keep an eye on his father. She hadn’t listened to him when he’d asked to go with her. He’d been trying to come up with a better argument ever since.

“We have decided to remain here.” Constance looked around the circle and blushed. Letting Anna travel alone felt like a dereliction of duty, but Roy flatly refused to go. What could she do? She was his wife and would stay by his side. “We wish you luck. We pray to the gods that there is transport farther up the spire.”

Roy cleared his throat. “My splendid wife isn’t saying everything.” He slowly looked around the circle of survivors. Each person watched him closely. “It’s been several days. There should have been new guests arriving at the hotel. The hotel has gone silent. Surely, someone out there must have noticed something was wrong. It’s only a day to the nearest port. Where are the search and rescue teams? Even if you found transport, we wouldn’t go with you. We have no idea how wide the skyrmion blast was. We have no idea what you’d find out there.” He waved his hand expansively. “We live in luxury here. Océane is working well enough. We’re safe. My wife and I are staying.”

Delores blinked at them and slowly shook her head.

“Stuck here?” Lillian furrowed her eyebrows.

Edith’s eyes widened with fright.

Anna forced a reassuring smile onto her face. “You bring up some valid points, Mr. Haversham. If we find the right craft, however, we can travel all the way to Earth. We’re going home. Staying at the hotel isn’t an option.” She folded her arms over her chest with finality.

It was time for George's new argument. "We need to get the comm net working, Mom. In addition to looking for transport, we could try different computer interfaces along the way. Maybe someone with access left their connection unlocked when everything happened. Ms. Pemberton can help us identify offices that might have such a connection."

"I'm not going with you." Edith frowned and fidgeted with her gloves.

"You don't have to come with us. You can just show us on a map." George shrugged, reminding himself that this wasn't the woman he'd fallen in love with. She just looked and sounded exactly like her.

"I wouldn't know." Edith returned his shrug. "I'm just a concierge."

"We can search floor by floor, Mom. We might even find a way to get Océane to speak English again. But I'm the only one here who could work the computer if we find the right terminal." He clasped his hands in entreaty, realized what he was doing, and dropped them. He didn't want her to think she was doing him a favor. He adjusted his tie and stood straighter, trying to look confident.

Anna narrowed her eyes and regarded her son. She rubbed her chin and let out a thoughtful sigh. Eventually, she nodded her head and looked at the rest of the group. "My son and I are going up the tower. A search like that could take several days. Who else wants to come? Things will go faster if we have more people to search each floor."

"I'll come, Mom." Lillian raised her hand.

"I need you to stay here, princess." Anna leaned close to her daughter. "You need to keep an eye on your father while he recuperates." She rubbed her neck, thinking of Ernest's unexpected violent act. Her daughter would not have been able to fight back as she had done. "I'll give you some ground rules before we leave. He'll need some help, but he'll also need his space."

"Yeah, okay." Lillian glanced at her brother. She thought about saying something caustic, but dismissed the idea. "Good luck, Georgie."

"Thanks, Lillian." George couldn't believe he was going to spend several days alone with his mother. Everything was still a nightmare, but if he got to spend his life in hell with his mom, was it really hell?

"Any more volunteers?" Anna looked at Delores and Edith. Both shook their heads.

"Okay then." Anna nodded like it had been decided. "Pray for us."

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“Ready to go, Mom?” George hoisted the borrowed backpack onto his shoulders. They’d found it in an empty room. Inside he had a change of clothes for each of them, their toothbrushes, a few toiletries, and nothing else. They were about to set out on an expedition, but they didn’t need much in the way of supplies. The hotel would provide. He glanced at his mother’s exposed calves. She’d hiked her skirts up to climb stairs better. Her calves were wonderfully pale and slender.

“Not much of a send-off.” It was just the two of them standing outside their rooms. As the words left her mouth, Albert’s door opened.

“I wish you luck, Zaals.” Albert wore an informal suit with a green tie. On his shoulder he rested a narrow sword. “When you return, I will have my satisfaction. Honor will not allow me to delay any further.” He frowned at them like he disagreed with honor, but of course he would love stabbing the boy.

“Sure thing.” George shook his head, trying to breath evenly. He stood straighter and tried to smile. “I see you found the armory. And ... it was unlocked.”

“Everything’s unlocked, boy.” Albert smirked at George.

“Come along, sunshine.” Anna put a hand on her son’s shoulder and pulled him down the hall. “Pray for us, Mr. Dmytruk. We are trying to save all of us.”

“Oh, I know. That’s why I agreed to further postpone the duel.” Albert looked at George. “Do me a favor and return. If you have an accident like Ms. El Rashidi, there will remain a stain on my honor.” He barked a short, unfriendly laugh and disappeared behind his door.

“Don’t pay him any mind, sunshine. When it’s time, you’ll stick him with the pointy end.” She gave him a reassuring smile as they walked to the stairs. “I’ll cheer loudly when you make him bleed.”

“I didn’t know you had a bloodthirsty side, Mom.” Despite the confrontation with Albert, George couldn’t help but find a genuine smile spreading on his face. His mother’s confidence was infectious.

“I have a soft spot for you.” She pulled on his shoulder, bringing his face close to hers, and kissed him on the cheek. “I have a good feeling about our trip. We’re going to save everyone, Georgie.”

“Me too, Mom.” George was just happy to be with her. Just the two of them. They walked in silence for a while, came to the grand stairway, and began their long ascent. They had only gone three floors when they heard a voice behind them.

“Wait ... wait ...” Delores huffed and puffed as she hustled to catch up. “I changed my mind ... I don’t want to stay. I’ll help you ... search.”

Anna turned and waited on the stairs. She smiled at the late arrival. “We’re happy to have you, Mrs. Salazar.”

“Hello, Mrs. Salazar.” George watched her chest bounce under her bodice as the short woman took two stairs at a time. He hadn’t realized she was so athletic. “Glad you could join us.”

“I was going to ... stay in my room ... and think about Carlos while you were away ... but ...” Delores caught up to them and stopped on the stairs, panting. She wore a bag at her side, with the strap slung over the opposite shoulder. The band pressed between her breasts. There was a light sweat on her tan skin, her hair was neatly pinned under her hat, and there was a twinkle in her blue eyes. “... I decided you needed my help, and I needed the company.” She caught her breath quickly and started back up the stairs. “Which floor should we search first?”

“We’ll start with floor one hundred ten.” Anna turned and followed Delores, her son a few steps behind them. “That’s the first floor we haven’t explored in the past few days.”

“Excellent.” Delores looked over her shoulder and smiled. She could see that George was carefully examining both of their rear ends. “I have a good feeling about this trip.”

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“Mr. Dmytruk? Mr. Dmytruk?” Constance knocked on the door. Her husband standing behind her. It had been a day since the Zaals left on their trip, and she had been thinking over the impending duel. The more she thought about it, the more preposterous it seemed. “You do think my idea is a good one?” She looked over her shoulder.

“Yes, my beloved.” Roy smiled earnestly. “A tennis match is a much better way to satisfy Mr. Dmytruk’s honor. I’m sure he’ll agree.” He lied through his teeth. Sometimes marriage called for falsehoods. It was a terrible idea. Especially because George was on his school tennis team, and Albert was ... so rotund. The old man would never agree. But there was no use telling his wife. She’d find out the hard way.

“Thank you for the support, honey.” Constance knocked on the door some more. “Mr. Dmytruk?” She frowned. “He’s not answering. Maybe we should check in on him?”

“Let’s give the man his privacy, he ...” Before Roy could finish, she gave the door a shove. It silently swung open.

“Mr. Dmytruk ... are you ...?” It took Constance a moment to comprehend what she was seeing. When it registered, she screamed. “Eeeeeeeekkkkkkkkkkkk!” She clutched her husband and held him close, not taking her eyes off the horrific spectacle.

“Eeeeeiiiiiiiiiiiiiii!” Roy screamed with his wife, pressing himself to her chest.

Hanging by his neck from the chandelier, Albert wore his familiar tuxedo. His eyes bulged from his head. His face was blue, and his bloated, purple tongue lolled from his mouth. There was a chair on its side next to his dangling feet. Not only had the man hanged himself, he had also committed hari-kari. A long narrow sword impaled his belly, running right through and protruding out his back. Judging from the blood running out from under his cuffs, he'd also sliced his wrists. There was a drying crimson pool on the carpet under him.

“What’s wrong?” Lillian ran toward the screaming couple in Albert’s room. When she got to the doorway, she stopped dead in her tracks and put a hand to her mouth. “Holy ... shit. Holy ... fucking ... shit.” Her face turned ashen. All the dead bodies before hadn’t inoculated her against the shock of finding Albert in his current state. She took in the noose and the sword as Albert’s lifeless form dangled before them. “Gods ... he did ... all the suicides ... didn’t he?”

Edith opened her door, saw the commotion in front of Albert’s room, and closed her door again.

Delores walked down the hall with her hand already on her mouth. She could tell that whatever was in the room was grisly. She swooned into Lillian’s arms when she saw Albert.

“What’s all the commotion?” Ernest left his room wearing pajamas. He rubbed the sleep out of his eyes. He walked over to his daughter and took in the sight. The Havershams had stopped screaming, but they were still gripping each other tightly. “I guess he didn’t want to face George.” Ernest shook his head. “A coward’s way out. Océane, there’s another dead body in room 4333. Send the cleaning crew.”

“Selon les instructions de l'invité du premier étage, je vais envoyer une unité de récupération et déposer le corps dans la cage d'ascenseur. En attente,” Océane said.

“I was going to ... talk to him about a tennis match.” Constance pulled her husband out of the room and stood in the hallway, trying to collect herself. “Are we really going to let Océane send the janitor for him, like he’s ... trash? He’s one of us, isn’t he? He’s one of the survivors.”

“Not anymore.” Ernest shrugged. “The only difference between him and all the people Océane already disposed of is that many of them were good people. Say a prayer for him

if you like. But there's no up or down in La Belle Île. He killed himself. Now, there's less for us to worry about."

Lillian put her arm around her father and squeezed.

Roy carefully eyed Ernest but said nothing.

Somewhat recovered from her shock, Delores began to cry and fled to her room.

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Anna's Diary August 19, 2197

Our first day searching up the tower was fruitless and went slower than I'd hoped. It might take a while to go floor by floor, even with Mrs. Salazar's help. George is so full of good ideas, tomorrow I'll see if he can come up with something to speed things along. I don't want to leave Ernest and Lillian for too long. Speaking of George, he now seems smitten by Delores. Just the other day, I observed how he so lovingly gazed at Edith. More evidence that his hormones need some expression. Unfortunately, there aren't many women to choose from right now. When we return to Earth, I'll encourage him to ask out one of the pretty girls at his school. Until then, I suppose a harmless crush won't do him any harm. Even if the subject of the crush is an older widow. Poor Delores. The good news is that her spirits have never seemed higher now that we're on our expedition. She's even cracking jokes, making George and I laugh. Thank goodness for that, Diary.

Ernest's Diary August 19, 2197

It's unfortunate, but there's another to feed its growing hunger.

Lillian's Diary August 19, 2197

Mr. Dmytruk was an awful, creepy man, but ... he didn't have to do himself in that way. It was fucking gruesome! I don't think I'll ever recover from this trip. If we ever leave.

George's Diary August 19, 2197

I have a feeling about Delores. I think she's *her*... the Other Edith. She's so funny, and silly, and friendly. If I'm right, she'll come to me again. I'll be ready. Whatever the changeling is, she's not evil. I can feel it in my bones. I want to have another chance with her.

Kapnos's Diary August 19, 2197

So rarely have I/we returned to my/our failures. But the skyrmion burst carved humanity down to the slightest sliver. And ... I/we am/are drawn to George Zaal. I/We will try again. Wish me/us luck!

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It was the middle of the night. The hallway light entered his room. His door opened and silently closed. He lay dressed under the covers, pretending to sleep. His mother was sleeping in the next room, having barricaded herself in with abandoned luggage and furniture. But George had left his door accessible. They were on the one hundred twenty-third floor, and there was only one person he was expecting. After waiting a second in hopes that she wouldn't be able to immediately disappear back out the door, he sat up and waved on the lights.

"Oh ... good evening, Mr. Zaal." Delores stood blinking in the middle of the room, her eyebrows raised in surprise. "I'm so glad you're awake. I came here to express what a pleasure it's been working with you on our expedition so far. I'm constantly impressed by your intellect ... and your charm." She slowly pulled the fingers of the glove on her left hand loose. "I've seen the way you look at me. I -"

"Stop ... just stop." George got out of bed. He wore his shirt, tie, and trousers. He held up his hands. "I know you're not Delores." When she paled and retreated to the door, he waved his arms at her. "Wait ... please ... wait. Ever since you caught up to us on the stairs, I've seen the glint in your eyes. The skip to your step. Your face is more ... vivacious than Delores. You've had a sense of humor all day. I wasn't sure, but I hoped it was you. Who are you?"

Delores paused with her hand on the door handle. She looked back at him, her eyes searching. "You ... you are not horrified?" When he smiled, she continued. "I am Delores physically, which means, I *am* her in a way. I am also everyone I have ever been. I am also myself."

“So ... you’re my mother? And Edith?” George thought about his sister’s story. “And you’re ... me ... too?”

“They ... and you ... are all a part of me.” She nodded and took her hand off the handle. “I haven’t shared this with anyone in decades. This is strange. Things have been difficult for me lately.” She took several deep breaths. “I’m a social creature, George. I thought I was alone, but you saved me ... by saving yourself.”

“Things have been difficult for all of us ... um ... what do I call you? What is the ‘myself’ part of you?” He took a few steps closer to her and stopped. His expression hopeful.

“I am Kapnos.” Kapnos offered a shy smile. “Are you angry with me? I didn’t want to lie, but most people are not understanding. I have been hurt ... many times.”

“I’m not angry with you, Kapnos.” George turned things over in his mind. “I think ... you’re amazing. I like you. I mean ... you *are* the same person I thought was Edith. I can see that person in your eyes ... in your sense of humor. Why did you follow me and my mom?”

“Because you saved me from seclusion. When the event happened, I thought I was all alone. But then I found the ten of you. I ...” She paused, her smile widening. “I like you too, George Zaal. I like you very much.”

“So, what do we do about this?” George reached out his hand. When she took it with her gloved hand, he squeezed.

“Whenever I shared my secret in the past, the person had questions. Lots of questions.” Kapnos moved closer to him. He was much taller than her; she pressed her breast into his side and looked up into his deep, brown eyes. “You may ask, if you like.”

“I have a million questions, but I only want to ask one right now.” He circled his hand around her back. He could feel her bra strap under her bodice. Was he crazy? Was he really going to ask this? He didn’t even know what she was. *It doesn’t matter. I’ve already done it with her. It didn’t turn me into endoplasmic sludge or anything.* “I’m a horny teenager and ...” He smiled apologetically. “I mean, you know I’m eighteen. And I only bring it up, because it seems like from what we did when you were Edith that you’re horny, too. And when you were her, we talked about how I found Delores’s body attractive. And here you are. And I’m rambling, but ... mmmpppphhhhhhhhhh.”

Kapnos stretched on her tippy-toes, grabbed his tie, and pulled him into a kiss. *Thank the gods for horny teenagers.* Her inner voice thrummed with joy and exultation as their tongues intertwined. They kissed for a long while standing in each other’s arms.

When they finally broke the kiss, George lifted her into his arms and carried her to the bed. “You still kiss like Edith.”

“I kiss like me.” Kapnos giggled. “You still kiss like George.” She pulled off her gloves and tossed them to the floor. “Are you sure that you’re happy with me, George?”

“Delores is pretty, but *you’re* beautiful.” He stopped next to the bed. “Do I need a condom? We can probably find one. There was a store down on floor one-oh-five.”

“You don’t need a condom with me. Not ever. I can’t get pregnant.” She gave him a mischievous smile. “Unless ... the woman I copy is pregnant.”

“Really, how does it work?” George shook his head and smiled. “Never mind. I said I had only one question. I just want to be with you again. I missed you.” He tossed her onto the bed playfully and watched her boobs lurch under her bodice as she bounced on the mattress.

“Would you like me to be Edith again? I can go to the bathroom and change.” She caressed his erection through his trousers.

“No ... I like you as Delores.” George pulled off his tie and folded it over a chair. He unbuttoned his shirt. “How do you get clothes that fit? I’m pretty sure my mom doesn’t own the outfit you wore when you ... um ... copied her.” He took off his shirt and hung it from the chair.

“I can make them.” She pulled down her skirts, revealing tan, shapely legs. Delores liked to exercise. “I thought you weren’t going to ask questions.” Rather than try to unbutton her bodice, she tore it down the middle, revealing her bra underneath.

“It’s hard not to.” George dropped his trousers and underwear. His dick sprang into the open. He stopped to take in her milky cleavage. She had a tan line just below her neck. “How do you know ... what Delores looks like naked? Like ... where her tan lines are?”

“Okay, so we’re going to do this then?” Kapnos drew her lips together and her eyes grew serious. She looked down at her exposed cleavage, and then back up to where George stood by the bed. “I’ll answer the most common questions. Feel free to interject, I haven’t shared my true self with someone for some time.” She placed a bare finger on his cockhead, collected precum, and tasted it thoughtfully. She watched him shiver at the sight and sensation of an ungloved finger on his cock. “When I touch someone, I gather their DNA. I store it and can use it to make a copy. If I can’t see the person naked, I have to guess about tan lines and other markings. When tattoos were a thing a long time ago, that blew my cover more than once. Thankfully, humans are more reserved these days.”

“Tattoos?” George had heard of those but never seen one.

“To answer your other inevitable questions: I will not harm you. I adore humans. And touching me is very much like touching the copied person. I won’t give you space

rabies.” She snarled and then giggled when he nervously took a step back. “The last question is always the doozy. What am I? You were going to ask that, right?”

“I mean ... yes.” George nodded. He tried to focus on her blue eyes, but she slowly removed her bra, and he caught himself ogling her heavy breasts, with large dark nipples and narrow areolae. They were gorgeous. Carlos had been a lucky man.

“I’m an accidental guest in your solar system. I’ve been here for about a millennium, give or take.” Kapnos removed her panties, exposing a dark triangle of hair. She opened her legs wide, exposing dark, swollen lips. “And a very social creature. I can’t live without company. And on that topic ...” She pointed at her pussy with her exposed index fingers. “Will you spend the night with me, George Zaal?”

“You were at the hotel because it was a great place to ... um ... meet people.” He climbed onto the bed. He was knowingly going to sleep with an alien. It would have been remarkable, except she’d been fornicating her way through humanity for centuries. “You survived the skyrmion burst because ... you’re ... not human. You thought you’d been left alone at the hotel. But then you found us. The survivors. And so, you ... seduced us.” Gingerly, he kissed her belly. Her skin was warm, supple, and soft. She felt like a person. He kissed her again, and surreptitiously examined her belly. She had a little birthmark, just like anyone would, to the left of her belly button. The birthmarks would be the same, of course. “Did you ... um ... try to seduce anyone else?”

“Well, sure.” She nodded, looking down at him with amused eyes.

“Who?” While his lips brushed against her skin, he lifted his eyes to see her crescent of a smile framed between her breasts.

“I’ll tell you, but first you’ll have to make me happy. Deal?” She hefted her boobs with her hands and rolled her nipples gently. Her eyelids fluttered. “Delores has sensitive nipples.”

“She ... what?” Tentatively, George ran his fingers over her belly, stopping at the underside of her breasts.

“Each body is different. Each person feels things ... differently.” Her lips parted with pleasure as she continued to roll her nipples. “Delores feels more pleasure than usual in her nipples. Spend some time on them ... please.”

“Oh, okay.” George reached up and took over manipulating her nipples. He rolled them as she had done, feeling their wonderful pliancy. “Like this?”

Kapnos winced. “A little more gentle, please ... yes ... that’s good ... very good ... aaaahhhhhhhhh.” She leaned her head back on the pillow, her pink lips forming an O. “Would you like to put your mouth on them?”

“Yes.” George nodded, leaned forward, and sucked in her nipple, still rolling the other one. He didn’t know how Kapnos did it, but she was a master at making copies. Her tits were perfect. That was, of course, assuming that Delores’s tits were perfect. He smiled at that thought and bit on her nipple.

“Ow ... ow ... a little too much ... just a hint of teeth. Good ... that’s better.” Kapnos sighed when he got closer to the right balance. She reminded herself that he was only eighteen. They were enthusiastic as that age, but had so much to learn about their own species. She wasn’t in the mood to teach at the moment. She wanted to copulate. The good news was that she knew he was quite good at moving his hips. “While ... you’re busy with my ... tits ... why don’t we ...?” She lined his hips up with hers. He was so tall, and she was so short, that he had to hunch his back to keep his mouth latched onto her nipple. She held his cock and guided it in. “There we ... go ... wait ... wait ...” She pressed her hands against his firm belly. “Go slow ... go slow ... this body isn’t used to ... someone your size.”

“Kappphhnnsssss ... Kaaaapphnnsssss ...” He called her name. His words were distorted by her nipple. Even without a tit in the way, her name didn’t roll off the tongue. He’d have to come up with a nickname for her. He hoped they were going to be spending lots of time together. He released her nipple and pinned her shoulders with his hands, extending his arms. His hips accelerated. He looked down on her beauty. His eyes roved from her rocking boobs as they hung to either side of her chest, up to her delicate clavicle and elegant neck, and then to her face with her eyelids fluttering and her mouth hanging open. Her hair was still pinned, with her hat now pushed a little askew. “You’re ... beautiful.” He focused his gaze on her tortured expression.

“Delores ... is ... beautiful,” Kapnos agreed.

“No ... I ... ugh ... ugh ... can see your personality.” His hips were very near full speed now. The bed squeaked and their slapping skin echoed around the room. “I can see *you* in your expression ... and actions. You’re the same as the woman ... I thought ... was Edith. *You’re* beautiful.”

Her face composed itself a little, her blue eyes getting sharper. She looked up at him. “I’m growing ... very fond of you ... Mr. Zaal.” She reached up and stroked his cheek. When his cock hit a spot deep inside her, her face lost its focus again. “Now ... ugh ... ugh ... claim your reward ... and cum ... in meeeeeeeee.” She leaned her head forward and bit his arm to keep from screaming. She knew from years of experience that the walls of the hotel were thin, and Anna slept right next door.

“Mmmmmpppphhhhhhh.” Kapnos shut her eyes tight and climaxed on George’s wonderful cock.

“Okay ... uuuggghhhh ... okay ... uuuuuggghhhhhhhhhh ...” George’s hips lost their rhythm. “I’m going to ... aaaaaahhhhhhhhhh.” He slammed into her and held himself

there, back arched, exploding in her pussy. He had just fucked an alien, and he didn't care in the slightest what she was. He cared who she was. And while he wasn't stupid enough to tell her so, he was very much in love.

Chapter 7

Motherhood is Full of Unexpected Surprises

“He was murdered.” Roy pedaled the stationary bike hard. He watched his wife do lunges on a yoga mat a few feet away. The gym was one of the few places she wore immodest clothes. Today it was formfitting pants and a long-sleeved top in green and white. He was glad there was no one else in the gym, for her ass was truly a sight to behold. His lovely wife often distracted him, even when the topic was murder. He refocused. “Albert didn’t commit suicide.”

“He committed suicide three times by my count.” Constance looked over her shoulder at him as she continued to lunge. She was happy to find his eyes glued to her behind. She would have smiled but for the subject of their conversation.

“In which order did he do it, my beloved?” Roy cocked an eyebrow. “Did he slit his wrists, hang himself, and then run himself through with a sword like the samurai of old? No, that wouldn’t work.” Roy shook his head like he was thinking. “He must have committed hari-kari, slit his wrists, then stepped up onto the chair with the noose.”

“That’s ghastly, Roy.” Constance stopped her lunges and stared at her husband. She grabbed a towel and mopped her brow. “I can’t believe you’d say such a thing.” She dried the back of her neck with the towel, moving aside her ponytail. She felt a bit dizzy thinking of how she’d found the dead man.

“I can’t believe I’m being forced to talk about any of this.” Roy shrugged and let the pedals wind down. “But here we are in the middle of a rolling catastrophe. Saved by that pervert George Zaal, just so he can sadistically pleasure himself by killing us off one by one.”

Constance turned a shade paler. “George didn’t do this. He’s just a kid and ... he’s on an expedition with his mother.”

“He did.” Roy ticked off one finger. “He’s not a kid; he’s eighteen and plenty capable of murder.” He ticked off a second finger. “And it’s not like he’s exploring Ceres. He’s ... what ... a dozen floors up? All he had to do was wait for his mother to fall asleep, run down here, butcher Albert, and then run back up to his mother.” He ticked off another finger. “And we know he’s a peeping pervert.”

“Okay ... okay ...” Constance sorted through her thoughts. She did some deep breathing like she’d do on a changeover during a match. She found her center. “Let’s say you’re right. We’re all alone in a hotel with a murderer. What do we do?”

“We could leave. Go to another part of the hotel.” Roy knew his wife would suggest that. Best to put her arguments to bed before they rose in her mind. “But we can’t hide forever. It would be worse not knowing where he was and what he was doing. I think our best bet is to find damning evidence. With any luck, we’ll prove he murdered Albert. Then we can all vote on what to do with him.” He was certain the only sure method to deal with George was to put him on the other side of an airlock. Once he’d proved his case, he knew the others would agree. Even his parents. No one wanted to be trapped in an empty hotel with a murderer.

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“Nossy?” George blinked his eyes. And looked up at Kapnos as she slipped into her bodice.

“What did you call me?” Kapnos smiled as she wiggled into the garment.

“It’s a nickname. Nossy. Has anyone ever called you Nossy before?” It was strange thinking about all the people she’d known over a millennium. How many deep relationships had she had? He warned himself not to get jealous. She was sure to have slept with many men who were better than him in all sorts of ways. It was just a numbers game. She liked being with him now, and that’s what mattered.

“No, no one ever called me Nossy.” She giggled and pulled on her skirts. “I like it.”

“What time is it?” George rubbed sleep out of his eyes.

“About a half hour from our designated meeting time. Your mother might already be awake, so I thought it was time I slipped out.” Kapnos pulled on her shoes. “I’ll visit again tonight.” She bent over and kissed him on the lips. “Shall I be Delores again, or ...”

“Can you be anyone you ever touched?” George sat up. Despite the hours they’d spent in each other’s arms, and four orgasms, his morning wood was as hard as ever. It comically tented the sheets.

“My body doesn’t store DNA that well. It only lasts a few days before the copy starts to degrade. I might still be able to copy a few people from before the skyrmion burst, but not before that,” she said.

“Oh, I see.” George worked over the implications in his mind. That’s why she hadn’t joined their group as someone new. That copy would degrade without updating the DNA. That got him thinking about all the people she’d been since she’d joined them. “You never told me who else you seduced.”

“No time now.” She winked and moved to the door. “So ... Delores again tonight?”

“What happened with my sister at the pool?” George wouldn’t be able to talk to her all day. The questions were bubbling out of him.

“I’ll tell you tonight.” Kapnos put her hands on her hips and gave him a mock stern expression. “Tell me who to be, or I’ll show up as Roy Haversham!” She couldn’t help but giggle at the thought.

“Delores is great.” George nodded.

She needed to say it outright. “I want to make you happy, George. I can be your mother again.”

“That’s ... really nice of you. But it wouldn’t be right.” His cock lurched under the sheet, and he could tell she saw it.

“There’s nothing wrong with wanting your mother. I’ve been countless mothers to countless sons over the years, and almost as many sons to mothers.” Kapnos gave him an encouraging smile.

“Thank you, Nossy. But I don’t want to pretend.” His cock lurched again, his little head making its argument against his more rational big one.

“You know ...” Her smile turned devilish. “I have helped many sons bed their real mothers. I could do the same for you.”

“I don’t want you sleeping with my mother.” His body stiffened.

“I didn’t mean that I would seduce her as a copy of you. I meant I could teach you how to seduce her yourself.” She nodded earnestly. She could see him relaxing. She could tell from his joyful expression that he would eventually say yes.

“She’d never go for it.” George tried to imagine being intimate with his mother, their bare fingers intertwined. “She’s ... Anna Zaal, perfect in every way. She would never cheat on my father. I wouldn’t want her to.”

“Very well.” Kapnos smiled and opened the door. She didn’t want to press him. She *would* lead him to his happiness. He had earned his reward.

“I guess ... I’ll see you soon.” He waved.

“You will indeed.” Kapnos waved back and left the room. As she closed his door, she caught movement out of the corner of her eye. She glanced down the long hall and saw a shadow turn onto the stairway and disappear. She shivered. The shadow had been anthropomorphic, but hadn’t moved like a robot, Alternate, or human. She waited, but saw nothing more. She was tired and itching to ditch the copy of Delores. It wasn’t

unheard of for her mind to play games on her when she was exhausted. She shrugged and went to Delores's room.

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"I found one," Anna called to the other two members of her search team. This was the third terminal they'd found that day. The first two had been password protected. She looked around the spartan office. There was a picture of a smiling family on the desk. She winced and wondered how many of them had died in the skyrmion burst.

George exited the room he was in and ran into Kapnos in the hall.

"Compliment her ... profusely." Kapnos appearing as Delores, whispered to George before they entered the office.

"She knows how great she is," George whispered back to her.

"She doesn't get much affirmation at this stage of her life. Tell her what you think she already knows. A little goes a long way, trust me." Kapnos leaned in closer. "I like compliments, too."

"You're the funniest and sexiest alien I've ever met, Nossy." He kissed her on the cheek and entered the room, finding his mother rifling through the drawers of a desk.

Kapnos took a breath, ditched her smile, and followed him into the room. "What did you find, Mrs. Zaal?"

"A terminal," Anna said without looking up.

"Hey, Mom?" George brought up the interface and met password protection. "Drat."

"Password again? I'm looking to see if the person at this desk might have written it down anywhere." Anna found hardly any paper. The desk seemed to be mostly empty.

"I just wanted to say how amazing you are, Mom. This has been so difficult, but you're guiding us all through this. You're smart and brave. Being around you gives me the confidence to do just about anything." George tried a few things but couldn't get around the password. He waved the interface away.

"Aw. Thank you, Georgie." Anna straightened up and smiled at her son. "I needed to hear that. I won't lie. I'm no stranger to self-doubt." She pushed a strand of hair behind her ear where it had loosened from her hairpin. "I feel like such a mess."

"You're the most beautiful woman in the solar system." George glanced at Delores, who subtly nodded encouragement.

Anna's cheeks grew hot. "Thank you for saying so, sunshine." She glanced at Delores. Of course, Anna had noticed the way her son had gazed longingly at the widow all day. And Delores seemed to be basking in the attention. Anna wasn't the most beautiful woman in the solar system, she wasn't even the most beautiful woman in the room. And that was as it should be. When they returned home, she would make sure he found himself a girlfriend and ventured out from under her wing.

"Since your husband wasn't strong enough to come on this trip, I bet you're relieved to have such a smart, strong son to take his place." Kapnos casually investigated the other desk in the office. There was nothing useful. Centuries ago, there would have been helpful documents all over the place. But now, humans trusted their computers with everything, even their secrets. Especially their secrets. "You must be so proud of George. Relish your closeness, Mrs. Zaal. It can all be taken away in a flash, like with my poor Carlos." Kapnos stopped rummaging through the desk and turned to Anna with tears in her eyes.

"Oh ... yes." Anna nodded. She moved over and patted the widow on the back. "I'm so very sorry for your loss."

"One moment, we were in each other's arms, so to speak. I was closer to him than any other man, like you and your son. The next, he was gone, and I am left with ... emptiness." Kapnos started to sob.

"There ... there ..." Anna pulled the other woman into a gentle embrace.

George watched them closely. He wasn't sure exactly what was going on, but he could tell that Kapnos had already begun helping him with his mother. For a brief moment he allowed himself to believe it could actually happen. Then he remembered who his mother was, and his hopes were dashed. He turned from them and waited while Kapnos pretended to be comforted by his mother.

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"Mr. Zaal?" Roy knocked on Ernest's door. "We'd like to ask you a few questions about your son." There was no answer. Roy and Constance had already searched Albert's room but found no clues. Océane had cleaned the place thoroughly. Albert's stuff was all neatly ordered, like he might come back any moment. Even the sword had been cleaned and leaned in the corner. There was no other sign of the murder in Albert's room. Which is why Roy had turned his attention to Ernest. "Mr. Zaal. Are you there?"

“He’s probably sleeping.” Constance frowned at her husband. “Don’t you push that door open.” She watched her husband apprehensively. “Remember what happened the last time we peeked into a room? I cannot handle finding another suicide.”

“Another murder.” Roy pushed the door open gently. He half expected to find Ernest’s corpse, but the room was empty. “Huh, he’s not here. I thought the man spent most of the time sleeping.”

“He has to eat sometimes, honey. He’s probably out at a restaurant.” Constance pulled the door closed before her husband got the urge to search Ernest’s room. “We can talk to him later.”

“I suppose.” Roy frowned, thinking things over.

“I love when you make that pensive face.” She gave him a motherly kiss on the cheek. “Are you thinking about homework, sweetie? It’s good to take a break sometimes.” She lowered her lips to his ear. “Mommy knows how to take your mind off things. Would you like to come with Mommy?” She looked around to make sure no one was about and pulled off her glove. She took his hand in hers and pulled him back toward their room. She could feel his palm getting clammy. “You can do your homework later, can’t you?”

“Yes, Mommy.” Roy let her pull him down the mirrored hallway. For a brief second, he thought he saw a black figure step in from a perpendicular hall and then retreat. He figured it was probably Ernest. He thought about chasing the man down, but he couldn’t say no to Constance. He put Ernest out of his mind and looked up at his wife’s motherly smile as she gazed back at him over his shoulder. Her height has always been a turn-on for Roy. “I want Mommy to take my mind off things.”

“Well then, that’s what I’ll do.” The second she was inside their room, she began undressing. Later, he could return to his murder mystery. She knew he liked to keep occupied. It was all well and good so long as she had *him*. And she did.

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Edith lost herself in the melodrama she was watching on the feed. When she heard the thumping through the wall, she knew the Havershams were back at it again. She could have picked a room anywhere in that giant hotel. Why did it have to be next to a couple that behaved like newlyweds? Edith turned up the volume and tried to ignore them.

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Lillian stood in front of the mirror in her bathroom, wearing the tiara and necklace. She still didn't understand what had happened to put them in her possession. Her brother said he hadn't been at the pool, but clearly, he had. Was it some sort of game he was playing with her? *It had to be.* She hated him for it. Her humiliation had to be George's goal. It was disgusting the way she'd danced naked for him. But then she remembered the tenderness and passion in his kiss. That hadn't been contrived. Had it? She hated him for that, too. They weren't supposed to kiss. Francis was her lover and future. Not her stupid brother.

"Hello. Hello." Lillian gave her reflection a regal wave. The jewels glittered as she moved her shoulders. They looked so fine on her. She'd worn her most elegant bodice for this bit of dress-up, and she had to admit she looked very much like a princess. "How do you do?" She curtsied to her left. "How do you do?" She curtsied to her right.

George had done *something* right. The jewelry belonged on her. She looked resplendent. With a sigh, she took the tiara off and placed it on the bathroom counter. She removed the necklace and set it down, too. It was time to go check on her father.

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Floor one hundred forty-two was mostly guest rooms. They searched thoroughly anyway. Maybe they would find an unexpected terminal. Maybe they would find something unexpectedly helpful.

Anna stepped back into the hall and found Delores and George whispering to each other. She judged their body language as strangely intimate. "I'm exhausted. Perhaps we should end our search for the day. We passed that restaurant two floors back. Should we eat there and find some rooms for the night?" George and Delores stopped talking when they heard her, and both of their eyes lit up when she mentioned "rooms for the night." *Is there ... something going on between them? Delores might seek comfort in another man's arms if she came to accept that Carlos was gone. And clearly, George is smitten.* Anna didn't know whether she should pry. She sighed. If something was happening, it was her duty as his mother to put a stop to it.

"Sure, Mom." George nodded and smiled. He walked over to the backpack where he'd left it in the hall and hoisted it onto his shoulders. "Great job on the search plan today. I know we didn't find anything useful, but we covered a lot of ground."

"Thank you, sunshine." Anna gave him an exhausted smile.

“I love that bodice on you, by the way. The blue compliments your pretty eyes.” George started walking back to the stairway.

“He’s right, Mrs. Zaal. You look fantastic.” Kapnos nodded her head. She retrieved her bag and slung it over her shoulder. Without waiting for Anna, she fell in next to George.

Anna rubbed her chin, watching them walk. Why were they both complimenting her so much? Were they buttering her up for something? They both had a giddy energy she wouldn’t have expected from this grueling and fruitless search. She walked behind them, watching their interactions closely as they all trekked to the restaurant.

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“That’s good ... George ... that’s good.” Kapnos and her newest paramour were both naked in her temporary room. She rode him on the bed with long, lunging bounces. Her breasts made countervailing circles, large dark nipples almost crashing together each time her breasts met.

“Uuuuggghhhh ... Nossy ... I’m going to ... cum again.” George watched the orbital movement of her heavy breasts with a wide grin on his face. He clutched the sheets on either side of his hips. Kapnos was a dynamo. She had a sense for what he liked, and when to change things up to maximize the moment. And ... right on cue, she moved from bouncing to grinding, placing a bare finger in his mouth. His grin faded as his pleasure increased. “Nossy ... Nossy ...” He chanted around her finger.

“I’m going to ... cum ... too ... Georgie. Ooooohhhhhhhhhhhhhh.” Her undulating hips sped up. “Delores’s clit loves ... to rub ... like this. Ooohhhhhhhhhhh.”

Outside the room, Anna pressed her ear to the door. She could hear lovemaking. Her eyes widened, and her mouth hung open. It was one thing to have your suspicions, it was another to have them confirmed by such lurid noises. She couldn’t hear what they were saying. Anna continued to listen. It would have been obvious to anybody that saw her in the hall that she was eavesdropping, but there was nobody else there. What a strange turn of events, listening to her son in that vast empty hallway. The décor on this floor was oddly themed. The murals on the walls depicted suits of armor, wood paneling, and dour oil paintings.

The young people certainly sounded like they were enjoying themselves. Anna could hear them joyously calling out their pleasure to one another and moaning. She now understood why Delores had taken a room some distance down the hall from Anna and George’s rooms. As the shock wore off, Anna chewed on her bottom lip. *What to do? I wanted him to court a lady, but I thought he would know better than to bed a woman*

before marriage. We've talked about this more than once. The affair was indecent and unseemly, but they all found themselves in strained circumstances far beyond the constraints of their normal lives. Maybe she should leave them be? It certainly sounded like they both needed this outlet.

Does George have a condom? The thought tensed Anna's shoulders. He was only eighteen, and Delores was beautiful. He might not even think of safety. She took a deep breath. She had to interrupt them. Her cheeks flushed deeply. She was about to do something no mother wants to do. She had pretended for a while that George hadn't blossomed into a man in *those* ways. She had ignored his crusty socks and locked doors. Just a month ago, she had even found one of her own gloves tucked away in his room when cleaning. She couldn't ignore this side of him any longer.

"I'm sorry I have to do this, Georgie. I hope you'll forgive me the embarrassment I cause all of us," Anna whispered to herself. She turned the handle and opened the door. The smell was the first thing to hit her. This ... this is what sex had smelled like decades ago. The scent brought her back to her courtship with Ernest. She smelled the pungency of sweat, the tanginess of a woman's arousal, and ... *Oh, gods ... I smell George's sperm!*

The pair were in bed, the short, tan woman riding George, grinding her hips into his. She had a very full butt, and Anna got an eyeful of it. Their rhythmic movements, animalistic sounds, and scents made Anna lightheaded. Unexpectedly, she found her own body responding with arousal. Her vagina grew warm and tingly. Her nipples became erect. She looked down and saw them poking through bodice and bra.

"Mom!" George saw his mother first. Without thinking, he lifted Kapnos off his dick and put her next to him on the bed. That made matters worse. Now, his mother was staring at his hard cock, covered as it was in a frothy mess of comingled cum. He was on top of the sheet and couldn't immediately find anything to cover himself.

"Oh ... my." Anna stared at the penis before her. She had never seen a large penis before. It was so different than what she was used to: not just quantitatively, but qualitatively. The veins were pronounced, and the head was dark in color and bulbous. "Cover yourself ... please." She forced herself to look away for a moment. When she looked back, her son held a pillow over his nethers in an odd echo of what Ernest had done when Albert had said those awful things.

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Zaal." Kapnos pulled the sheet from where it was tucked under the mattress, but the other half was under George, so she was trapped so long as she wanted to keep herself covered. "Your son was there for me in my time of need. And he's so handsome, smart, and gentle. I couldn't help myself. I am so ashamed." Her cheeks turned bright crimson, but she was not in the least ashamed.

“Not now, Mrs. Salazar.” Anna paused. George really had given this woman what she needed. That was abundantly clear. Anna had always known she’d raised a special man, but she was seeing it now in new ways. “George, return to your room! I understand the situation, and that Mrs. Salazar is a ... special woman. But you cannot continue this ... relationship. It’s not right. And ... no condom. I am ... deeply disappointed in you.”

“I’m so sorry, Mom.” George got up from bed and dressed. Both women averted their eyes as decorum would dictate. “I just ... I don’t think you fully understand the situation.”

“If you would like to explain something, you can do it later. After we’ve slept on it. In our separate rooms.” Anna sighed. *What a mess.*

“You won’t understand if I try to explain it to you.” He looked at Kapnos. “Show her, Nossy.” George slowly knotted his tie in a half-Windsor.

Kapnos shook her head. “You want me to show your mother my body? I could never.” She pulled the sheet tighter around her. She doubted Anna would take her secret in stride as George had.

“George. There is nothing about Mrs. Salazar’s body that I need to see more of.” Anna grabbed him by the shoulder and pulled him out of the room. “That was a very rude remark,” she hissed in his ear. She closed the door after them and marched him back to his room, dragging him by the collar.

“Mom ... she’s not Delores. I can’t explain without her. If you could ...” George let her lead him into his room. She shoved him inside and slammed the door. He stood staring at his door for a while. “That went terribly.”

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Anna’s Diary August 20, 2197

Motherhood is full of unexpected surprises. I thought we were simply fighting for our survival, but George had to go and find a way to complicate the *apocalypse*. I’ll have to have a talk with him before we start today’s search. How can I talk sense into him? When I knock on his door in the morning, will I confront a hormonal teenager or my thoughtful, rational Georgie? I could really use some sleep, but these questions won’t let me rest. And I can’t stop seeing his large, manly thing. What a sight for a mother! I don’t know how to process what I beheld in Delores’s room. Gods help me, I pray for some clarity.

Ernest might know what to do with George, but we can't go back yet. I can't return without bringing hope to the other survivors. Certainly, I can't heap more problems on poor Ernest, who is so fragile after his ill-fated search. As a wife and mother, I can do the dirty work in the trenches when I need to. I will do my best to talk things out with George and soldier on.

Ernest's Diary August 21, 2197

I followed one for ten minutes before it saw me and slipped away. They shouldn't be here. They should be at the bottom of the well. Or maybe the top. Those two words mean the same thing here. We're trapped in the middle with it ... falling ... always falling.

What would I do if I caught one? I don't know. Scouts ... mapping the breadth of a new colony. The end isn't here, but I see it on the horizon.

Lillian's Diary August 20, 2197

I'm basically fucking alone now. Edith and Delores don't leave their rooms except for food. Constance and Roy won't talk to me. And Dad is suddenly never around. He's supposed to be resting in his room, that's what Mom said. And I was supposed to check in on him. But he's constantly off doing who knows what. He won't tell me. He just says that walking clears his mind. He talks with a weird, distant look in his eyes. I hardly recognize him. I hardly recognize myself. I'm ready to go home. I hope Mom and George get back soon with good news.

George's Diary August 21, 2197

It's my private diary, so I can swear. If there ever was a time for it ... holy fuckballs. Mom caught me and Kapnos going at it. And Mom was pissed. I don't know what I'll say when I see her again. "Sorry, Mom, I'm in love with an alien." I don't think that's going to fly. I'll probably just stick to the "sorry" part.

Kapnos and I are going to have to be a lot sneakier. And I have to apologize to her, too. I shouldn't have asked Nossy to reveal herself to Mom like that. I wasn't thinking straight. It's been a restless night. I have no idea how I'm going to right the ship with both of them tomorrow, but I know I will. Because I have to.

Kapnos's Diary August 21, 2197

That was unexpected. I/We thought Anna would keep to her regimented sleep schedule. Since I/we first arrived, I/we have always loved puzzling out these sorts of situations. Humans are so much more fluid than they themselves assume. There are so many more paths than what they see. Tonight's interruption may on the face seem like a setback, but it is an opportunity. Il faut battre le fer pendant qu'il est chaud!

I/We wonder if George has already figured out that this brings him closer to his lofty dreams. He is very smart, I/We have no doubt he is already carefully planning what happens next. I/We look forward to talking with him when I/we wake.

Chapter 8

Straightened Her Bodice Like She Meant Business

It was still an hour before they were supposed to start their day. George sat on his bed, in the dark, his mind running through scenarios. He had two goals: to spend lots more alone time with Kapnos, and to find a way to get everyone safely off that hotel. Everything else was up in the air. He worked through how his eventual conversation with his mother might go, and how to further his goals depending on what she might say.

The door opened and Constance Haversham's tall, lithe figure stepped in from the hallway. She waved on the lights and closed the door behind her. "Good, you're up."

George blinked in confusion. He cocked his head. "Nossy?"

"Yes, of course. Did you think Constance would visit?" She smiled, held her skirts, and curtsied. Her copper hair was pinned tightly with a little hat off center. Her bodice and skirts were pretty, but not too richly embroidered. She looked every bit the tennis star.

"Why Constance?" George smiled and stood. He looked up into her eyes. She had about three inches on him. It was odd that this was Kapnos. He was used to her inhabiting women that were much shorter.

"If your mother wakes early, she would throw a fit finding Delores in your room. But we can explain away a visit from Constance." She rubbed the back of her neck. "Or at least it would be easier to explain."

"Well then, I suppose we can't do anything ... untoward?" George admired Constance's pretty, freckled face. He wondered if the freckles extended down her chest.

"Teenagers." Kapnos giggled, found an armchair, and primly sat. "Your hormones are a blessing and a curse. Can you please focus on my words?" She watched his eyes. They were staring holes through the bosom of her bodice. "You want to see Constance's tits, is that it?"

George nodded slowly.

"Very well. I will show them to you. *If* you can concentrate on what I have to say. It's important." She pointed at her eyes. "This woman does have lovely tits. Not large, but perky and lively, with wonderfully puffy nipples. You will see them soon enough, but first, you must join me up here." She tapped her smiling crow's foot.

George met her green-eyed gaze.

“Thank you.” Kapnos folded her legs and clasped her gloved hands in her lap. “First, I would like to talk about *me*. You may not, under any circumstances, share my true identity with anyone.”

“I’m sorry, but –”

“There are no buts here. I got lucky with you. Others will not be as accepting. They never are. The reason I’m at this hotel in the first place is so that I can disappear into a sea of humanity if one of my partners gets suspicious. I cannot do that anymore. As far as the other survivors are concerned, Kapnos does not exist.”

“I won’t betray your trust.” George tightened his tie. He sat on the edge of the bed with his back straight. He could see how important this was to her, so he gave her his undivided attention. He didn’t even glance at her pale exposed ankle. Well, maybe just a little.

“Second, we’ll talk about *you* and *your mother*.” She nodded thoughtfully as his face darkened. So, he hadn’t yet figured it out. “You’re worried about her approval. You think she won’t forgive your indecent indiscretions with Delores?”

“Yes.” George frowned, trying not to picture his mother angry.

“I have some advice. Do you trust my experience?”

“I do ... but first tell me what happened with my sister.” His shoulders tightened.

“We don’t have much time, and I want to help you with your mother.” Kapnos glanced at the door.

“You keep promising to tell me, and it’s still a mystery.” George leaned forward. “Why were you me? What happened?”

“I seduce people, George. You know that. What do you think I was doing with your sister?”

“But you were copying me.” George ran his hand through his hair.

“You were the best person to seduce your sister,” she said.

“My sister hates me, *and* I’m her brother. You’d have had better luck with Roy.” He shook his head.

“You’re wrong, Georgie.” Kapnos giggled and quickly went through everything that happened at the pool that day, starting with her copying Anna, and then her time as George. When she was done, there was a long pause.

“Lillian danced for you with her boobs out?” George stared with wide eyes. “I mean, she danced for me? You *are* good.”

“Thank you.” Kapnos bowed her head. “Now, onto the subject of your mother. I do expect her to be cross. You have to think about why that is. Have you thought about it?”

“Sure. Because I let her down.” George tried to ignore the pit in his stomach. He hated thinking about letting his mom down.

“No. That’s wrong. She’s cross because she’s scared. She wants what’s best for you, and she’s afraid neither you nor she can control your libido.” She raised an eyebrow. “She’s caught you with Delores, and now she expects you to disobey her and continue your affair. She’s worried you’ll make the poor widow pregnant. She’s worried it might tarnish your good name once you get off this hotel. She’s worried her boy is now a man. You’re eighteen, and the waning control she’s had over your younger self has completely vanished.”

“How do you know all that?” He rubbed his chin. It sounded plausible. How had he not seen it that way before?

“I’ve known many people, known many mothers, and I pay attention.” Kapnos’s smile was tight and eager. “If you truly want to feel the soft, luxurious skin of your mother’s hand, you will do three things. One, you will continue to compliment her beauty, her smarts, and whatever else you adore about her. Two, you will tell her that you are having trouble resisting Delores. That you want to end the affair, but your hormones are running too hot. You feel out of control. Three, you’ll tell her that you’re afraid of death. A very reasonable fear given our present circumstances. You will say that you need to seize each moment of life. She will make an association between sex and life, but for heaven’s sake, don’t say that part out loud. Do you understand what I’ve told you?”

George thought it over. Could it be possible? Even if he was only to hold his mother’s bare hand, he would cherish that memory for the rest of his life. However long that turned out to be. “That makes sense, Nossy. Do you really think this can work?”

“Yes, I do.” She nodded with confidence. “I will give you two some space today, so you’ll have time to talk to her. It’s only natural that Delores would want to avoid your mother, so that should be easy.” Kapnos stood and smoothed out her skirts.

“But you won’t disappear?” George stood, too.

“I’ve grown fond of you, George Zaal.” Her smile broadened, filling the room with warmth. “I’ll stay by your side.” She turned to go.

“Oh ... um ... one more thing.” George took a step toward her and stopped. “You ... said Constance had lovely tits, remember?”

“Of course.” Still smiling, Kapnos turned toward her partner, gripped her bodice with two hands at the bosom, and tore it down the middle. It gave with a loud ripping sound.

She calmly pulled the sundered fabric to either side and lifted her bra over her breasts. "Happy?"

"Yes ... very ..." George nodded. At the top of her boobs, her freckles gave way to milky white skin. Her nipples were wonderfully pink and puffy as promised. His dick hardened. "Thank you, Nossy. You're the most beautiful and wise girlfriend a guy could have."

"Oh, I'm your girlfriend, am I?" She rolled her eyes in mock surprise. "I'll see you soon, George." She curtsied and left the room.

"Bye, Nossy." He watched her go. Once the door was closed, he wondered if he'd have time to fap before his mother checked in on him.

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When her son didn't answer her knock, Anna opened his door. The room was empty, although his bed had been slept in. She stepped inside and closed the door. The bathroom door was closed. She walked across the room and put her ear to it. She could hear George softly grunting along with a wet rhythmic sound. *He's with Delores again!* Anna's cheeks turned crimson with rage. She opened the door and found him sitting on the toilet lid, servicing himself. "Oh ... Georgie ... I'm so sorry." The crimson in her cheeks deepened when her feelings turned from anger to embarrassment. "I didn't find you in your room, and I was worried, and ..." The words came out in a rush, and she slammed the door before he could reply. She didn't need a reminder of his manhood, but she now had one. His thing was so long and turgid. With its dark head and veins, it looked ... hungry. She sat down in a chair and looked out at the stars, trying to compose herself.

The panic that initially took hold of George ebbed as he reminded himself of Kapnos's plan. This would help with the out-of-control horndog angle. *It's not an angle. I was just caught trying to fap one out right before she arrived. I'm barely in control.* Without cumming, he put his dick away, dressed, and joined his mother in the room. He sat on the bed and looked over at her. Her blue eyes were the color of a stormy sea, and they were fixed on his crotch.

"I'm sorry about that, sunshine. I've heard of mothers walking in on their sons, but I never thought it would be me. Or that I'd do it twice in a few hours." She realized she was staring at the large bulge in his trousers and quickly lifted her eyes to his. "I'm not mad at you. I am disappointed ... but ..."

“You’re worried I’m out of control, and that I’ll do something stupid to damage my future.” George kept his voice even.

“Um ... yes ... actually.” Anna fidgeted with her glove. “How’d you know?”

“Because I’m worried about the same thing. And I know how astute and caring you are.” George smiled. He saw his mother’s face relax, and his confidence grew. “I think my body is responding to the situation. There’s so much death around us. I just really need to ... affirm life.” Kapnos had told him not to hit that nail on the head. *Oh well.*

“Sex is not the only way to affirm life.” Anna frowned. At least he was self-aware. “You can focus on working toward our rescue.”

“I’m doing that, too. But I’m eighteen, and I can’t ... help myself.” He decided to improvise. “I don’t want to lie to you, Mom.” That was true, but he was going to do it anyway. Sort of. “Edith ... I mean Ms. Pemberton and I did it, too.”

Anna put her hand to her mouth, her eyes wide. “I ... I saw the way you were looking at each other a few days ago. I didn’t think ...” She thought things over. Maybe he was a regular Lothario, and she just hadn’t noticed until now. He certainly had the tools to get a lady’s attention. He was tall, handsome, and he had ... that hungry-looking penis. “Have you seduced many women before this trip?”

“No. I told you. It’s this situation. It brings it out in me. I ... need to feel alive.” He maintained eye contact even though what he was about to say thrilled and terrified him. “Even now, sitting here with you, I’m cowed by your beauty. Your voice, your grace, your wit, your gorgeous face ... it’s like you’ve hooked my heart.” He saw her look of bewilderment.

“Don’t say that.” Anna shook her head. Her cheeks flushed. The compliment was so out-of-bounds and so heartfelt. “We have to get this under control. We can’t escape here only to have you fathering children.” Her eyes widened. “Did you wear a condom with Ms. Pemberton?”

“I was too caught up in the moment.” George looked away. He wanted to hyperventilate but forced himself to appear calm. He thought through Kapnos’s instructions. He didn’t want to let her down, but he had gone a bit off script. “I worry that one of us will die, Mom.” This was true. He realized that the beauty of Kapnos’s three steps was that they were all mostly true. “I’m clinging to life. And I’m clinging to you. What if I lose you?”

“You won’t.” Anna stood and moved over to the bed. She sat next to her son and rubbed his back through his starched shirt. “I’m here, sunshine.” She was getting confused about their conversation. Two things that should have been separate, his sex life and his mother, seemed to be mingling in his head.

“You give me strength, Mom. Even having you touch me, right now, makes me a better man.”

“I know, Georgie. But you can’t stay under my wing forever.” She realized he was literally under her wing as her arm snaked around his back to squeeze him.

“I’m at my best when I’m with you.” George turned his face toward hers. They were inches apart. Her breath was warm and sweet. “If you distracted me, I think I could control myself better with Edith and Delores.”

“What ... um ... what do you mean?” Butterflies flapped in Anna’s belly.

George put his hand in her lap, palm up. “Could you please take your glove off and hold my hand?” It was an outlandish request, and he guessed that he was moving quicker than Kapnos would have wanted, but it felt right in the moment. His sense of connection to her, always strong, felt like it was at its zenith. They looked into each other’s eyes, sitting shoulder to shoulder.

“You haven’t touched the skin of my hand since you were little.” She withdrew the arm around his back and hovered her hands above her lap. Slowly, she pulled on the fingers of the glove on her right hand. “It’s an odd request. An improper request. But you’re the same person, aren’t you? That’s the same hand I touched all those years ago.” She looked down at his large hand, waiting for hers. “If it helps you with your ... women, I suppose there’s not much harm.” She continued to tug on the glove, slowly inching it up her hand. She watched his gaze fall down to the removal of the glove. She could see him hold his breath, his brown eyes riveted to the alabaster skin that she slowly revealed. *What would Ernest think of this?* It was obvious her husband wouldn’t approve, so she put him out of her mind.

“Mom ... your hand is ... gorgeous.” He adored the little blue meandering veins under her skin. He imagined the veins in her breasts would look similar. When she moved her fingers, his eyes drank in her vulgar feminine dexterity. It sent a pleasant chill down his spine. His hand was still in her lap, and she lowered hers onto his. Their fingers interlaced. He almost came in his trousers at the soft, supple touch.

Anna could see from his expression that she’d brought him pleasure. She did her best to keep her face a cool mask, hiding her own pleasure from him. Feeling his hand in hers was more intimate than she had ever imagined she’d be with her son. Her stomach did acrobatic flips. When she looked down at her bust, she saw that her nipples were poking through her bodice again. She prayed he wouldn’t notice. “Does this distract you from your urges, sunshine?”

“Yes, Mom.” George nodded, still staring down at their interlocked hands. He slowly lifted his arm and brushed the back of her hand against his cheek.

“That’s enough for now.” Anna took a deep breath, trying to settle her emotions. It was all so confusing. She extracted her hand from his and pulled on her glove. “I’m going to go now.” She stood and straightened her bodice. When she looked down, she could still see her nipples pushing through the floral design. “You may finish doing what I interrupted in the bathroom. After you’re done, come out to the hall, and we’ll continue our search on floor one forty-three.”

George nodded his head slowly. He could still feel a phantom of her soft touch on his cheek. *It’s working! Nossy is a genius!* “I can be done in twenty minutes.”

“Very good.” Anna cleared her throat, started to say something, and stopped. She went to the door, paused, and turned back to him, fidgeting with the glove on her right hand. “If this helps, you may hold my hand again. I mean ... you can’t keep *doing it* with Ms. Pemberton and Mrs. Salazar. If you follow my wishes about that, we’ll hold hands tonight before bed. Understand?”

“I’ll be good, Mom.” George nodded his head enthusiastically. He would have to be very sneaky with Kapnos. He wouldn’t get caught again.

“Excellent.” Anna’s smile was tight and contained. She left the room so her son could get to his dirty business.

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Roy entered Aubergine with his wife. He did his best to feign surprise at finding Lillian eating alone. “Ms. Zaal, you look stunning.” He and Constance had followed Lillian to the restaurant to ask some questions. “Doesn’t she look stunning, my beloved?”

“Those jewels are breathtakingly lovely on you, Ms. Zaal.” Constance smiled and nodded her agreement with her husband. She doubted George was a murdering pervert. But she was indulging her husband’s interest in the case of Albert’s suicide. “May we join you for lunch?”

“Yes, of course. Please sit.” Lillian waved for the waiter to bring menus. The robot dutifully ambled over. “I’m glad to see you two. Mom and George are gone, and Dad is hardly in his room, and Ms. Pemberton and Mrs. Salazar won’t leave *their* rooms.”

“You’re lonely, poor dear.” Constance sat next to her husband, opposite Lillian. She patted Lillian’s hand on the table, glove touching glove. “We should have visited with you sooner. I hadn’t thought your father was away. Wasn’t he supposed to be resting?”

“He was, yeah.” Lillian nodded. The waiter arrived, and she waited for the Havershams to order. They did, and the robot walked to the kitchen. “But I guess Dad found something to do.”

“What did he find to do?” Roy tried to act casual. Could he have been chasing the wrong Zaal? Was Ernest up to no good?

“He won’t tell me. Honestly, he’s acting very strange since he returned from his trip to the bottom of the tower.” Lillian shrugged.

“I see.” Roy smiled. *It’s so obvious: the Zaal men are accomplices. Of course, they are.*

“It must have been harrowing to lose Ms. El Rashidi like he did.” Constance leaned back when the waiter arrived with their soup course. When the robot ambled off again, she lifted her spoon and inspected her inverted reflection.

“Has he mentioned how Ms. El Rashidi died?” Roy was getting excited. Why hadn’t he considered that the accident was a fabrication until now?

“He just says that it was an industrial accident and that it’s dangerous at the bottom, or ‘the top.’ He keeps saying that the ring is both the top and the bottom.”

Constance regarded her inverted reflection, thinking things over. “Well, he might have a point. If you were at the center of the ring, you wouldn’t know what was top or bottom. You’d be in freefall, gravity extending all around you but not touching you. I heard the hotel has some amusements at the center of the ring. I was particularly interested in zero-g handball.”

“Yes ... too bad the apocalypse derailed those plans.” Roy shot his wife an annoyed look. When he looked back at Lillian, her smile had disappeared.

“‘The Apocalypse.’” Lillian shook her head. “I’m going to die here, aren’t I?” She looked back and forth between the Havershams, her blue eyes misting. “I won’t see Francis again.” She straightened her tiara with one gloved hand and clutched the necklace with her other. “I wanted him to see me in these.”

“I’m sure Mr. ... um ...?” Constance raised her eyebrow.

“He’s my fiancé.” Lillian sipped her soup. “Francis Hanaan. I was going to be Mrs. Hanaan.”

“You will be Mrs. Hanaan.” Constance spoke with confidence she didn’t feel. “Once we sort out this mess, you’ll return to him. He’ll see you in that fetching jewelry, and you’ll be reunited.”

Lillian gazed across the table, studying Constance. The woman’s pink lips formed a pretty smile, but it seemed forced. Her green eyes hadn’t joined in the mirth. There was

worry there. "I thought you and Mr. Haversham weren't coming with us when we find a transport. Didn't you say you were staying here?"

"Just until the comm net is fixed." Roy pushed away his empty bowl. As the women had been talking, he'd vanquished his soup. It was delicious. Why would they ever need to leave when the tower was full of excellent restaurants like this one? Once they got bored of the regular ones, they only had to hike a little farther up or down the stairs to find something new. "Once we have communications again, we'll know what's going on in the rest of the solar system. We're just a little worried that some of the ports might be having the same sorts of trouble we are."

"Right." Lillian nodded. These two weren't the kind of company she needed. She excused herself and left after barely touching the first course. She wasn't hungry. Constance was right. Lillian was lonely.

As Lillian walked down the long hall with its aquatic theme, she thought she saw something moving more than a hundred yards away. She stopped and peered, but the shadow quickly disappeared. It was probably a maintenance robot. She sighed and continued back to her room.

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"You *what!?!?*" Kapnos was in her Delores form. She was lying naked on a bed in a room on the one hundred forty-ninth floor. George, also naked, sat next to her. She was pumping his cock with both hands while he told her what had happened with his mother. "She really removed her glove and held your hand?"

"She did." George smiled. He was playing with one of her fat, dark nipples. He had learned from Kapnos that different people had differing sensitivity in their erogenous zones. Delores's body loved nipple play, and with some practice, he was getting good at it.

"You certainly struck while the iron was hot. Now, do you trust my experience?" She leaned over and took his cock into her mouth.

"You were right ... Nossy." George watched her glossy brown hair bounce as she gave him a robust blowjob. "And she says we can hold hands again ... ugh ... so long as ... I stay away from you."

Kapnos lifted her lips off his dick with a pop. "Well then ... we can't let her catch us. The first time was to our benefit. Twice would be ... problematic." She turned around and presented him with her round ass. Reaching behind, she spread her cheeks to better

show him her pussy. “We have less than thirty minutes left on our lunch break. Hurry and put it in. I want to feel close to you before we have to pretend that you’re shutting me out.”

“Was that too much this morning?” George had given Delores the cold shoulder whenever his mom was around. He wanted to make it as obvious as possible.

“It was good acting. I really thought you were mad at me.” She spread her cheeks a little wider. “But I’m happy to play along now that I know the game. Maybe I’ll weep where your mother can see me this afternoon. Now, put it ...” Kapnos looked over her shoulder toward the door. “Someone just opened and closed the room next to ours. Did you hear it?”

“What?” George reached for her hips, but she leapt from the bed out of his grasp. “What are –?”

“Get under the sheets. Pretend you’re napping.” Kapnos dodged about the room, picking up her clothes, and then disappeared into the bathroom.

George quickly slipped under the sheets and put his head on the pillow. The door opened and his mother stepped in.

“There you are, sunshine. I thought you said you were going to lie down in room 5006?” She stepped into the room and looked around. She sniffed the air. “This is room 5011. I’ve been looking for you.” Was that the scent of a woman’s arousal? Her eyes narrowed. “What are you doing in here, George?”

“Nothing.” George innocently smiled at her. He tried to look sleepy. “I was just napping.”

There was a sound from the bathroom. Anna turned toward the closed door and straightened her bodice like she meant business. “Who’s in there?” There was no reply from the bathroom. Anna glanced at her son and cocked an eyebrow threateningly.

“No one’s in there, Mom.” He watched her stalk across the room. “Wait ...”

“If what I think is happening is happening it better not be, George.” Anna put her hand on the door handle. “I’ll be very, *very* disappointed in you.”

George cringed as his mother opened the door.

“J’ai fini de ranger. J’espère que vous trouverez votre séjour agréable.” A housekeeping robot ambled out of the bathroom. It paused, dusted the door handle, and walked past Anna. Before anyone could say anything else, it exited the room.

George’s mouth hung open. He didn’t know what to say.

“What on Earth?” Anna looked over at her son. He was on his back now, and his erection absurdly tented the sheet. “I don’t understand. What’s going on, George? Why was there a cleaning robot in there?”

He still didn’t know what to say. “Beats me. Maybe Océane saw I was sleeping here and sent a robot to make sure the room was adequate.”

“Océane, why was there a cleaning robot in the bathroom?” Anna turned her eyes to the arboreal mural on the ceiling.

“Ce n’était pas un robot de ménage. C’était l’invité le plus ancien. Je n’étais pas au courant que cet invité particulier était encore avec nous jusqu’à la récente réversion. Il semble que j’ai été programmé pour –” Océane stopped speaking when Anna cut her off.

“Never mind, Océane.” Anna shook her head and looked back at George. “We have to solve the language barrier. It’s difficult having a computer we can’t understand.”

“Yeah.” George suddenly realized the Kapnos/robot had spoken French.

“What? You look like you thought of something.” Anna eyed his tented sheet again.

“I might have thought of a way to translate. But it will take some time to work out the details.” George sat up and almost uncovered himself before he remembered that he was naked and hard as a rock.

“I’ve interrupted your ... um ... much-needed private time twice today. I’m very sorry.” Anna retreated to the door. “Finish up your ... *nap*. And then meet us in the hall. Twenty minutes again?”

“Yes, Mom.” George lay back in bed.

“I’m proud of you for controlling yourself. I saw the way you were avoiding Mrs. Salazar this morning.” She couldn’t bring herself to smile. Not while thinking about what he was about to do when she was on the other side of the door. But she did give him a proud nod. “Good work.” She opened the door. “See you soon.”

“Bye, Mom.” George watched her go. What followed was an undeniably frustrating fap, knowing he had been so close to sex with Kapnos. Nevertheless, he managed to rub one out. He was dressed and out in the hall in the allotted twenty minutes, ready to search more of the hotel.

Chapter 9

The Gods Didn't Abandon Me

"Did you find anything?" Anna met with her son in the hallway of floor one hundred sixty. The hall was decorated with what looked like bamboo but was actually created on-site using fungus. The murals on the walls and ceiling depicted scenes from feudal Japan.

"I found two terminals. Both were locked." The hair on George's neck suddenly stood up. Something was wrong, but he wasn't sure what it was. His mother seemed chipper. "Mom, is that really you?"

"What sort of question is that?" She smiled like he was playing a silly game.

From her response, George was fairly sure that she wasn't Kapnos. "Have you seen Mrs. Salazar? Something feels weird here." He scanned the hall to both sides. His eyes stopped on the wall twenty yards away. A human shadow pressed itself against the wall, almost becoming part of the mural. There was nobody attached to the shadow. It was just blackness. No, that wasn't right. Now that he focused on it, there was a rainbow sheen on its surface where it caught the light from the fake torches lining the hallway. He stepped between the thing and his mother.

"I haven't seen Mrs. Salazar since we got to this floor. She was going to check the rooms ..." Anna's words faded away when George put his hand on her shoulder and squeezed tightly. His face blanched and went slack. His eyes were round as saucers. He looked horrified. She followed his gaze but didn't see anything amiss. It looked like an abandoned hall. "What is it, sunshine?"

"On the left ... under the fifth torch down," George whispered. As he said the words, eyes formed in the shadow's head. It was almost like they were rising from the depths in opaque liquid. The eyes wobbled a little and found their place about where they should be in a human face. He squinted. He could see other things moving below the surface of the thing. What looked like a femur rose near the surface of the shadow's thigh, and then sank again, disappearing from view. George's pulse thundered in his ears, and his heart seemed to want to jump out of his chest. A cold sweat beaded his face. With his hand on his mom's delicate shoulder, he forcefully moved her directly behind him and started backing them away from the thing.

It took Anna a moment to see the odd shadow. It hid well, blending into a group of charging samurai in the mural behind it. Once her eyes spotted the thing, her muscles tensed. She clutched at George, grabbing a fistful of jacket with her gloved hand. "It ... it ... has eyes. It's watching us." She was immensely grateful that he had put himself

between her and this thing. At the same time, she knew it was a mother's duty to protect him from the world. She didn't try to switch places with him. "Is it some sort of robot? Part of the hotel?"

The thing darted away from the wall, swept down the hall on legs that did not bend in the right directions, and disappeared down the stairwell.

"That wasn't part of the hotel." George released his mother's shoulder and wiped sweat from his brow with the back of his hand. "I ... don't know what that was." *Is that Kapnos in her natural form? If so, she's terrifying.* He turned toward his mother. She was a woman whose disposition had been forged with steel. Even so, she looked rattled. Her face was ashen, and her eyes darted with fear. He put his hands on her shoulders to comfort her. "It's gone, Mom. It's okay." He could feel her shoulders trembling. He turned and moved sideways so he could watch the stairway where the thing had disappeared and pulled his mom into a hug. She melted into him.

Gratitude for her dauntless son filled Anna from head to toe. Whatever his teenage flaws were, he was a special person. She was proud of the man she'd raised. Anna buried her face in his chest for several reassuring seconds, and then turned her head to the side so she could speak. She continued to squeeze his back tightly with her arms. "Océane, what was the creature that just ran down the stairs from this floor?"

Océane answered with her cheerful, disembodied voice. "Vous faites référence à l'invité le plus récent. Il bloque les ascenseurs de cette tour et limite l'accès à l'anneau. Contrairement à l'invité le plus ancien, celui-ci a été un problème pour moi. Il m'a dit que si je le nourrissais, il partirait. Je l'ai servi comme j'ai pu, mais il n'a fait que grandir. Je ne pense pas qu'il partira de lui-même. Si vous pouviez faire partir le nouvel invité, je vous en serais très reconnaissant. Je ne peux toujours pas utiliser --"

"That's enough, Océane." Anna sighed. She should know better than to ask the computer for help.

George was making a list of things to do after they retired to their rooms for the night. He doubted he'd get much sleep. He would get to the bottom of what the shadow was one way or another. From the length of Océane's answer, he suspected the computer knew something about what they'd just seen. And he hoped he might have a translator. "Why don't we find Mrs. Salazar, have supper, and call it a day?"

"Yes, that sounds good." Anna nodded into his chest and released him. She glanced down the hall, but the thing hadn't returned. "Let's stick together."

"Forever and ever." George nodded. They began searching for Kapnos.

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Ernest woke with a start. He was covered in sweat. His feverish skin felt like it was pulsing. He pulled himself out of bed and stumbled to the bathroom. He took a long, cold shower, muttering to himself. "Falling. We're all falling, but we'll never land. The top is the bottom, and the bottom is the top. This is hell. Falling. We're all falling. The falling thing saw me. It reached for me, but I escaped. But for how long? I'm falling. I'll fall back to it." All the while, his knuckles rapped on the tile. - - - . - . - . / . - - / - / - ...
----- / --- .. / - / .- - ..

When he was done with the shower, he dressed himself in one of his everyday suits. It was wrinkled, and his tie was loosely knotted, but he didn't notice. He cautiously stepped out into the hallway. The mirrors on either side made him dizzy. He didn't see any shadows lurking about. What would he do if he did see one? He couldn't chase it back down the tower. An idea occurred to him, and he went into Albert's room. He picked up the sword, placing the flat of it on his shoulder. Now he didn't feel so naked. He would go searching again. And when he found one, he'd ...

"Returning to the scene of the crime, Mr. Zaal?" Roy stood in the doorway, peering in at Ernest.

Ernest spun and scowled at the intruder. "Out of my way, Mr. Haversham. I'm going about a task." He stepped toward the door but faltered when Roy didn't move.

"I know what you did, Mr. Zaal. I know you killed Mr. Dmytruk." Roy pointed his finger. "Your guilty countenance confirms it. You and your boy murdered that man, and now you're back to destroy the evidence."

Ernest glanced at the sword. "This? Evidence?" He shook his head. "I came for this because I intend to exterminate vermin. I always tell my children, 'You need the right tool for the right job.' And this is perfect." Ernest frowned. "Though a pistol might be better. Do they have those in the armory?"

"I ... um ... don't think so." Roy backed away from the room. The look in the other man's eye was murder. *Why did I confront him on my own?* His hands trembled with fright. He stuffed them into his pockets. *I was so wrapped up in the case, I didn't see the danger. This man is deranged.* "What ... um ... vermin ... are you going to exterminate?" He tried unsuccessfully to keep the quiver out of his voice. He looked over his own shoulder at the closed door to his room. "Constance? Could you join me, please?" There was no reply.

"I don't like you, Mr. Haversham. Not at all." Ernest sauntered out of Albert's room, sword still on his shoulder. "Stay out of my way." He walked up to the trembling man, and leaned in close, so they could be eye to eye. "I'm trying to keep us all safe."

“Is ... is ... that why you killed Mr. Dmytruk?” Roy tried to keep himself calm and collected, the very image of a detective cataloging evidence. But it was mighty difficult with an existential threat just a couple feet away.

Ernest snorted. “No, that’s not why I killed him.” He leaned closer. “Stop trying to follow me. Stop asking questions. Leave me alone.”

“Um ...” Roy’s brain didn’t register any of what Ernest had just said. He was too busy watching a small black cloud swirl in the white of Ernest’s left eye. “Um ... um ... um ... your eye ... Mr. Zaal. There’s something in your left eye.”

Ernest snorted again, whirled and marched down the hall.

“What was wrong with his eye?” Roy whispered to himself. He was shaking like a leaf as he watched the other man go. Roy was no doctor, but he didn’t like the look of that strange, black cloud.

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“Barricade yourself tonight.” George handed his mother her toiletries from the backpack and a spare change of clothes they’d laundered that day. It was time for bed. After seeing the strange shadow, they’d found Kapnos, eaten supper, and settled down in rooms on the one hundred fifty-ninth floor.

“I will. And you do the same.” Anna nodded. Thinking back on that abominable shadow creature, she wanted to cry. Why did things keep getting worse? But she kept her emotions in check. She needed to project strength for the others.

“Will do.” George slung the pack over his shoulder. “Goodnight, Mom.” He turned to go.

“Georgie, aren’t you forgetting something?” Anna waited, standing primly near her bed, her gloved hands clasped in front of her skirts.

“Mom?” George turned back to her with an eyebrow raised in question.

“Since you haven’t brought it up, I’m not sure you need the distraction. We had an eventful day. But ... I did promise you. You haven’t been with Mrs. Salazar, have you?” Anna slowly pulled on the fingers of her right-hand glove. When she saw his eyes light up, a shy smile tugged at her lips.

“No, Mom. I didn’t touch Mrs. Salazar today.” George tried not to think of it as a lie. Technically it was true. As far as he knew, Delores had never left the hundred third floor. Kapnos might look like Delores at times, but she certainly wasn’t the same person.

“You’re such a good young man.” She sat on the edge of the bed and finished removing her glove. She held her bare hand up next to her face, wiggled her fingers, and made a mock-surprised expression. “If you continue being good, I might even let you hold my hand tomorrow.”

“Wow ... Mom ...” George was instantly hard. She was even prettier when she was being goofy. The shadow thing faded from his mind. His sole focus turned to his beautiful mom. “If you let me hold your hand from now on, I’ll never look at another woman.” He walked over to the bed.

Anna’s smile disappeared. She glanced at the bulge in his trousers. Goodness, how did she and Ernest create a man with such a big thing? “No, sunshine. Like any respectable mother, I *want* you to look at another woman. My hand is a distraction from disaster with the two women you accidentally ... um ... fell in with ... given our situation. When we get home, and you go off to college, you’ll find a smart, pretty girl to court. You’ll go slow with her and treat her with respect. And when it’s time for ... you know ... you’ll use protection. I don’t want you thinking of me as a substitute. I’m just ... distracting you for a little while. Until we can get you into a better situation.”

“Right, sorry.” George had all sorts of things to tell her. He didn’t want to leave for college. He wasn’t the same person without her. He didn’t see himself courting anyone anytime soon. And he currently *had* a girlfriend: Kapnos. But he said none of that. He knelt in front of her and held out his hand. “I want you to put your hand in mine.” He wanted her to initiate the illicit touching.

“You really do like my hand.” She watched his eager face as she slipped their fingers together.

“It’s beautiful.”

“It’s just a hand.” She shook her head and tried to look uninterested. But her insides responded to the rough warmth of his grip and the pleasure on his face. Her stomach twisted itself into knots of anticipation, her vagina tingled with warmth, and when she looked down, her nipples pushed through her bodice. They were almost as obvious as the bulge in her son’s trousers. She tried to spy his hardness, but the way he was kneeling, his arms got in the way. “What’s so special about a hand?”

“It’s pale, delicate, and ... full of your ... um ... dexterity. It’s also something you haven’t shared with anyone else.” He smiled at her, their gazes meeting. Her gray-blue eyes were full of vibrant life.

“I share my hands with your father,” Anna said quietly.

Neither of them had anything to say to that, so they were quiet for more than a minute.

Eventually, George lifted their hands, brought the back of her hand to his mouth, and gently kissed her bare skin.

“Oh, my ...” Anna couldn’t contain the obvious shiver in response. “That’s going too far, George.” She had to admit; her eighteen-year-old son looked handsome and gallant on one knee kissing her hand. She watched him kiss each delicate knuckle, one by one. He looked like a prince from some ancient fairy tale. She blinked her eyes, shook her head, and reminded herself that this was her sweet George. Not her beloved Ernest. A small voice in the back of her mind piped up; *He has more to give than your husband*. Her cheeks flushed at that thought. *George does have a mightier weapon*. “Okay ... okay ... George. That’s enough.” But she didn’t pull her hand away. “You’ve gone too far.”

George held her soft knuckle to his lips and looked over her hand at her bemused expression. *What would Nossy do?* He had already followed her three steps, but she hadn’t yet given him further instructions. He decided to let instinct lead. He had saved them and discovered Kapnos’s secret by following his intuition. “That’s not going too far, Mom. It’s sweet and gentle. We haven’t crossed any grave lines, right?”

Anna nodded her head slowly. This probably wasn’t going too far.

“This ...” He held up her index finger between them. “... is going too far.” He pulled it toward his mouth and slipped it inside. He closed his eyes as he ran his tongue around the finger. His beautiful mother’s bare finger. He heard her squeal, but she didn’t pull her hand away.

“Oh ... my ... gosh ... Georgie. Where did you learn to do that?” She stared at the lascivious spectacle with her mouth hanging open. Her husband had never made love to her hand the way George was at the moment. No man had. She hadn’t even considered such an act. Her whole body thrummed with energy. “You’re right ... this *is* over the line. We should stop.” But she didn’t stop him. Why was she letting him do something so salacious? She knew he was overly attached. This certainly wasn’t helping. He would need therapy when they got home. *When we get home? Are we really leaving this place?* In the face of everything that harried and tormented her sweet son, this made him happy. Despite the reasons she had to pull away and never give him her hand again, she let him continue. For a long time, the only noises in the room were the occasional slurp that escaped his lips and Anna’s heavy breathing.

A thrill built inside George. After what felt like forever, he removed her finger from his mouth and smiled blissfully. “Look, Mom. It’s pruned. I pruned your finger.” He held her finger up so she could see the little wrinkles at the tip.

“Those ... are such surreal words for a mother to hear. I ... never.” She gently pulled her right hand away from his grip and put it in her lap with her left. She didn’t return it to its glove. Not yet. “I just ... I never.” She shook her head in disbelief.

“Since you first took off your glove, I haven’t thought about anything horrible. Not until right now.” George’s knee was sore, so he slowly stood in front of her. “Not the skyrmion burst, not the shadow, not Océane and her stupid regression. You are the best distraction ever, Mom.”

“Um ... I forgot those things, too.” Reminded of those horrors, Anna straightened her bodice and took a deep breath. Other problems began to creep into her mind, like her suddenly cryptic, violent husband and the lack of transport home. “We better call it a night. I’m glad I could distract you from those things and from Ms. Pemberton and Mrs. Salazar. Why don’t you go to your room, take care of any business you need to, and get some sleep.” The business he needed to attend to seemed to be attempting to break its way out of his trousers. She blushed at having alluded to his inevitable masturbation.

“I’m not ready to think about all that stuff, Mom. What if ... you distracted me for a little while longer?” He sat next to her on the bed and gripped her bare hand with his.

Anna studied his face. He was so earnest and sincere. She remembered the way he’d stepped between her and that thing in the hall. Her heart melted. “Yes, of course. But no more of my fingers in your mouth.”

“Sure.” George nodded. His instincts had carried him this far; he gave them free rein. He lifted their joined hands and brought his extended finger to her full lips. He parted her lips with his finger, trying to push it into her mouth, but her teeth kept it out.

“Now ... sunshine ... what are you doing?” Anna’s voice was clipped as she dared not open her teeth far enough to let him in.

“You don’t want to suck on my finger?” George frantically tried to come up with a plan B. He smiled when a thought occurred to him. “Yeah, that’s too much. Sorry.” He unclasped his hand from hers and placed her index finger with the tip on her bottom lip. He scooted a foot away, placed his hands neatly in his lap above his erection, and gazed at her lovely lips. “Can you suck your own finger? I would be happy just to watch.”

“This ... is ridiculous.”

“All the same, if you please?” He nodded encouragement.

Anna smiled at his polite insistence on something so vulgar. “I’m only doing this because of the extreme situation we’ve found ourselves in, and because you’ve proved yourself to be an exceptional young man. Do you understand?”

“You’re saying that you’ll suck on your fingers for me while we’re in the hotel. But when we get home, I have to court a woman properly if I want to watch anyone make out with their own hand.” George’s hands were right on his dick, and he couldn’t help himself. He subtly rubbed his cockhead through his trousers, hoping she wouldn’t notice.

“That wasn’t what I was saying. But ... I’ll agree to it. You really want me to do this?” She ran her fingertip along her lower lip.

“Yes.”

“Okay, then.” She slipped her index finger into her mouth and sucked on it, puckering her lips around the digit. She left it there and kept the suction for about a minute. She pulled it out and smiled. Her joy disappeared when she saw him frowning. “What’s wrong, Georgie?”

“I ... thought you’d put more effort into it.” He stopped rubbing his cock when her gaze darted down to his crotch. He didn’t think she’d caught him.

“Your own mother sucked on her bare finger for you, and ... it wasn’t enough?” Her eyes went round with disbelief. “What I just did for you is very special. You should be grateful. I can think of ...” She screwed up her face in concentration, making a show of thinking very hard. “... exactly zero other mothers who would take their glove off for anyone but their husbands. *Especiall*y not their sons.”

“You’re amazing, Mom. Thank you. I am incredibly grateful. This has been the perfect distraction.” George forced a smile and stood. “I’ll go take care of business now and get to sleep.”

“Sunshine, are you still keeping a diary like I asked?” Anna knew he was disappointed. Despite his words, she could see his slumped shoulders and his plodding gait.

“Of course.” George stopped at the door and looked back at her. “You asked me to, so that’s what I’m doing.”

“Well, perhaps I should give you something to write about tonight.” Anna brought her bare hand up to her lips again and slid her index and middle finger in. She sucked like last time, but this time she twirled the fingers around her tongue, pulling them out and thrusting them back in over and over. It was almost like she was giving them the special treatment she sometimes gave her husband’s penis. That thought made her blush deeply, but she didn’t stop. She saw the joy and wonder on George’s face, and that made her continue. “Mmmmmmmppphhhhhhh.” She even gave him a few moans.

“Wow ... Mom ...” George angled his hips toward the door, reached down, and rubbed his dick through his trousers.

“Mmmpppphhhhhhhh.” Anna narrowed her eyes. *Is he ... touching himself right in front of me?* She pulled her fingers out of her mouth with a little plop. “I certainly must have lost my marbles. Are you happy *now*?”

“Yes, Mom.” George stared at her beauty in a daze. Her lips were glistening. He continued to rub himself by the door.

“Run along and take care of yourself, sunshine. I hope this kept the nightmares at bay.” She gave him a motherly smile.

“It did. Thank you so much, Mom.” George opened the door.

“Don’t forget your backpack. You need to brush your teeth and change your underwear.” Anna was nothing if not practical. Raging hormones didn’t mean dismissing basic hygiene.

“Right. Thanks.” George stopped touching himself, raced over to the backpack, slung it over his shoulder, and left the room.

Anna took several deep breaths, stood, and straightened her bodice. “That was unexpected,” she whispered to herself. The various horrors that had been pressing her mind had been thankfully chased away by her loving son. That was a small miracle in itself. She walked over to the desk and pushed it slowly to the door. Once it was in place, she stacked chairs on top. Right and wrong were not the same at La Belle Île as they were on Earth. How odd that she would do something vulgar in front of George and find joy in the act. What was most important was that it was needed, and it produced positive results. As she made her barricade, she smiled at the memory of the joy on George’s sweet face.

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Anna’s Diary August 21, 2197

Last night, Dear Diary, I prayed for clarity. My prayers were not answered. My thoughts and emotions are more muddled than ever. But the gods didn’t abandon me. They found a way to create some joy in this dark place and gifted it to George and me. What I’m about to write is salacious. Gods help me if someone ever reads this diary. Do not judge me, Diary, the circumstances are unimaginable unless you’ve lived them.

To keep George from ruining his life, I distracted him with my feminine qualities. Oh, gods, that sounds terrible! But I did! I showed him my bare hand twice, and let him touch my forbidden skin. Ernest would have a fit if he knew that I’d broken my vows. But this wasn’t some lascivious affair, it was to help George. And, as it turned out, to help me. We are both coping better because of my choices. And he won’t go back to those other women. He won’t destroy the future we’ll return to when we leave this accursed hotel.

My poor Ernest. He's so fragile after whatever befell him at the bottom of the tower. And now his wife must keep secrets from him. I will make it up to him. That I promise. When everything goes back to normal, he will have the most doting, considerate wife.

Though the fear has faded some, I must address the shadow. George and I both saw the hiding thing. We do not know what it was. I am relieved that it ran *away* from us. That is a good sign. I am grateful that George chose to protect me, even though I know it is my job to protect him. I would be very pleased if we never saw anything like it again. Enough said. I'm going to push it from my mind. I will think of George's happy face as I rest my head on the pillow tonight. Thank the gods for my magnificent son.

Ernest's Diary August 22, 2197

I spent hours hunting but found none of the scouts. Perhaps I was wrong, and they wish to leave us alone. The falling thing might only have been exploring the tower, trying to understand its new environment.

Another concern is my eye. Mr. Haversham was correct, there is a small black cloud in the white of my left eye. I assume I must have ruptured something as I escaped the thing that falls at the center of the hotel. If Océane worked properly, I would have the autodoc look at it. I suppose it can wait until we return to Earth.

Lillian's Diary August 21, 2197

I wasn't going to let myself stay lonely forever. Mr. and Mrs. Haversham make terrible companions. So, I decided to badger Ms. Pemberton and Mrs. Salazar into accompanying me for meals. They refused me at breakfast, but I wore each of them down individually, and the three of us had lunch and supper together. As companions, they are only marginally better than the Havershams, but I'll take it.

Ms. Pemberton is cool, reserved, and somewhat judgmental. But she does know this part of the hotel well, and she is exceedingly good a small talk.

Mrs. Salazar doesn't say much. I think she has come to the realization that her husband died in the skyrmion burst. I would be sad if my Francis died, so I'm doing my best to cheer her up. I even let her wear my tiara today. She didn't say so, but I could tell it made her feel better to look so pretty.

George's Diary August 21, 2197

Mom wanted me to tell you, Diary, so here you go: I held her bare hand twice today, and watched her suck her fingers. No ... suck is what she did the first time. She gave two of her fingers a respectable blowjob ... while I watched! I'm flying so high right now. I can't wait to tell Nossy when she finally stops by my room.

On that note, I must tell you about the black thing we caught spying on us. It was *wrong*. It moved *wrong*. It looked *wrong*. I pray that what we saw isn't Kapnos. But at the same time, I pray that it is. If it isn't Kapnos, what in the heck is it? When I see her tonight, I'll ask her about it. I don't think she'll lie. We can go from there. I trust myself to solve problems as they arise. Can you believe that?

I *trust* myself. Part of it is how close I'm getting with Mom. I've always drawn my strength from her. But part of it is me. All I have to do is look at the things I've done in the past few days. I saved us all with the Faraday cage. I confronted Nossy and got her to open up to me. I applied Nossy's advice to Mom, along with some improvising, and brought us closer than I ever thought possible. If there is a way off this hotel, Mom and I will find it.

Kapnos's Diary August 21, 2197

I/we was forced to show myself/ourselves as a cleaning robot to George. How mortifying! I've/we've always been so pretty for him. Now ... I/we don't know how he'll see me/us. I/we delay going to him, even though our nighttime hours are dwindling. It's almost midnight, and I/we sit in an empty room in my/our true form and delay.

I/we am being forced by this unusual situation into such desperate situations. I/we can't remember it being this bad in a long time. Something similar happened a century ago when those scientists almost caught me/us in France. I/we feel similarly trapped now. But, of course, I/we have George. So, I/we better not screw that up. I/we hope that he won't see me differently now that I/we have been a lumbering robot in front of him. At least I/we escaped Anna. It is lucky that La Belle Île en Mer uses an organic-based staff. It would be even better if the hotel used Alternates, which are beautiful and easy to copy. But those are expensive. I/we don't know what I/we would have done if the robots were made of old-fashioned metal.

I/we have delayed long enough. I/we hope George will still see my beauty. I/we can't go to him as Delores, but I/we must pick someone he finds irresistible.

Chapter 10

The Terror of That Morning

“There you are, you sneaky fuck.” Ernest surprised himself with the curse word. But these were unusual times, and it seemed his mind’s filter was clogged. He charged down the stairway, leaping three steps at a time. The scout pressed itself against the wall, hoping that it was hidden. It wasn’t. He slashed his sword, but missed when the awkward creature sprang from the wall and fled down the stairway, its joints moving in all the wrong directions. Ernest’s sword dug into the wall, tearing a stretch of aquamarine wallpaper. But he pulled it free, caught his balance, and gave chase.

“Veuillez vous abstenir d'endommager les murs de l'hôtel. Si cela se reproduit, vous serez signalé à la sécurité,” Océane said.

“La sécurité?” Ernest spat the words as he descended the stairs. He passed a sign for the thirty-third floor. “I know that word, Océane. You don’t ... have security anymore. Everybody knows ... that the Plaice-Hubbard Act ... forbids armed robots outside ... the military. And all your ... human ... security ... is dead.” Ernest panted as he ran. He was catching up to the scout. He could see the oil-slick sheen on its otherwise pitch-black body. Under the surface of its skin, an eye floated to the back of its head. Ernest could just make out the dangling optic nerve, seemingly unattached to anything. The eye saw him. It fixed its stare right on him. Its pupil dilated as Ernest gained on the creature.

They had just passed the twenty-ninth floor when Ernest’s sword bit into the scout’s back. It made a strange squealing sound, stumbled, and fell. A few seconds later it exploded like it had been depressurized. Fortunately for Ernest, most of the black goo missed him, covering the wallpaper to his right. The scout disintegrated before him, forming a dark puddle on the stairs filled with bones, sinew, and two now unseeing eyes. “That ... is disgusting.” Ernest poked at the grisly detritus with the tip of his sword, moving tar-covered bones around. A disembodied brain jiggled when he pushed it. He worked to catch his breath, a deep satisfaction moving through him. “I ... got you.”

Movement caught Ernest’s eye. Another scout leapt off the wall just beyond the switchback and fled down the tower. Ernest was too tired from the first chase to continue. “Yeah ... you better run!” He shouted after the thing. “I’m going to destroy every one of you fuckers!”

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The night was dangerously close to ending, and George had hardly slept a wink. He waited and waited for Kapnos to show. But she wasn't there. He was just about to give up hope when the door opened. He quickly sat up in bed and straightened his tie.

"Nossy, I ..." His thoughts trailed off when he saw who it was. "Mom? What are you -?"

"I'm not your mother, George." Kapnos entered the room and offered a tentative smile.

"I ... thought I asked you not to be my mom." George frowned.

"You did. But I couldn't be Delores ... so." She arched her eyebrows hopefully.

"Well, it's going to go worse if my mom finds herself doing stuff with her son."

"Okay ... true ..." Kapnos nodded. She closed the door behind her softly. They were right next door to the real Anna Zaal, and she didn't want to wake her. "But since you held your mother's hand, I thought you might want to practice with -"

"I don't understand." George interrupted her. "I don't want you to be my mom, Nossy. I told you that."

"I'm sorry, Georgie." She took a couple of tentative steps toward him. "I wanted to make you happy. And *she* makes you happy. If you feel ... um, I feel ..." Her shoulders shook as an unexpected storm of emotion overtook her.

George got up. Was she really crying? "What's wrong?" He went over to her. It was so strange being with her as his mom. He wanted to console her with a hug but didn't want to touch her. He settled for patting her shoulder.

"I feel so ugly, George. You saw me as ... as ... as ..." She started to sob. "... as a robot. Can you unsee ... that? I want to be ... beautiful ... to you."

"You're beautiful. And well, my mom is beautiful, too. But she's my mom. I don't want to blur the two of you in my head. I don't want to see her naked." George rubbed his chin thoughtfully. "Unless *she* wants to show me."

"I'm not ... ugly?" Kapnos got her tears under control.

"Remember, it's your personality I like best." George smiled. "Speaking of which. I have a few questions to ask."

George described the shadow thing in the hall. Kapnos swore it wasn't her. She explained what she looked like in her true form. It was nothing like the shadow creature. He then asked her about French. She smiled. Of course she spoke French. She'd lived in France for centuries. She hadn't thought about offering her skills as a translator, but she was happy to do it. They then spent about twenty minutes peppering Océane with questions. The computer explained that Kapnos was her earliest guest, and the

latest guest was quite different. It was causing problems. The latest guest was apparently related to the shadow creature, but they couldn't get more out of Océane, so they moved onto another topic. The comm net was a hardware problem; the hotel's primary and secondary antennae were damaged. Océane also reported that she couldn't control locks anymore because that hadn't been programmed into her current version.

George was about to ask more questions, but Kapnos put a hand on his shoulder. "We're running out of time before your mother wakes. Do you have any more *vital* questions? Otherwise, we should wait until later to talk to Océane."

"Transport! Ask her about transport." George learned that there were two shuttles still docked higher up the tower, but Océane could not tell if they were too damaged to be space-worthy. There was also an executive lifeboat attached to an office on the two hundredth floor. They would have to access the executive terminal to launch. Océane wasn't allowed to divulge the security features on the executive terminals. George made note of the shuttle locations, said thank you to Océane through his translator, and dismissed the computer.

"Satisfied?" Kapnos smiled at him.

"I feel like I've been starved for information. Now I'm stuffed." He rubbed his belly. "I should ask her about survivors."

"There aren't any more. You're the only ones. That was the first thing I checked after *it* happened." Kapnos moved toward the bathroom. "I can change if you like. Who would you like me to be?"

"Do we have time? Maybe you should go before my mom wakes up." George looked at the door.

Kapnos stopped by the bathroom and looked over at him. Anna didn't have a face that was conducive to puppy-dog eyes, but she tried her best while clasping her gloved hands before her.

"You really want to? We can just wait until tonight." George swiped his hand to check the time. There were less than twenty minutes until wake-up time.

"I just want you to hold me. Just for a few minutes." Kapnos put her hand on the bathroom door. "Please?" *How did he not understand that she needed reassurance?* Sometimes humans still managed to confound her.

"Come here, Nossy. As long as you keep your clothes on, I can hug you as my mom." He opened his arms and laughed when she raced over. She snuggled into him, pressing her large boobs into his stomach. He circled his arms around her and held her tightly, resting his chin on her blond, pinned hair. "I would never think you're ugly."

“Not even in my true state?” She nuzzled her nose into his chest.

“That sounds interesting, actually. Maybe you could show me sometime?” He was getting hard despite himself. He knew it was only a copy, but his body was pressed against the fantastic rolling curves of his mother’s spectacular form. He pictured her blowing her fingers and got even harder.

“You’re getting excited, I can feel it.” Kapnos moved her face off his chest and looked up at him. “Is it me or her that’s gotten you so riled up?”

“Both of you.” George gazed at her beauty. He lost himself in her gray-blue eyes. “Why does my mom have to be so perfect?”

“She is very pretty, George. But she isn’t singular. It’s your love for her that you see when you gaze into her eyes.” She parted her lips and softened her face, inviting a kiss if he was so inclined. “And since you care for me, too, I imagine that might be added to what you see.”

“If I think about it, I *can* see you in there, Nossy. It’s so strange.” He leaned his face to hers and kissed her on the cheek. “Everything’s good between us. And we might have found a way off this hotel thanks to you. You’re the best girlfriend ever.” He released her. “Now go, before my mom wakes up. She would just flip out if she found you, herself, in my room.” He patted her ample butt as she scurried for the door. He sighed. He could have had his mother’s body with Nossy if he wanted to. But that wasn’t his desire. He craved his mother *wanting* to show him. That was something worth waiting for, even if it never happened.

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“When my brother gets back, I’m sure he can get jewelry for both of you, too.” Lillian wore the tiara, necklace, and her best dress as she walked down the hall to breakfast. Delores and Edith accompanied her. Lillian walked with a stiff back, her gloved hands barely moving by her hips, as she imagined a princess might walk. “We’ll all look so stunning together.”

“Right.” Edith rolled her eyes. But she had to admit, she was glad to have the company.

“Carlos always said I was his princess.” Delores smiled. It was good Lillian had pushed to have these shared meals. It brought some life back into Delores’s pallid existence.

“We’ll be three sparkling jewels, ladies. All the men in the hotel will watch us pass with their tongues hanging to the floor.” Lillian laughed, and the other women joined in. They were making the best of their extended stay at La Belle Île en Mer.

~~

"I'm not sure this is a good idea." Constance watched her husband fiddle with the pistol. "Do you even know how to operate it?"

"You didn't see the look in his eye, beloved. It was murder." Roy pulled out the cartridge and emptied the ammunition into his hand. It was a thin block of heavy metal alloy.

Constance frowned at her husband. "Where do the bullets go?"

"You've been watching too many old movies. Modern firearms can shoot anything metal you put into them. The machine inside shaves a bullet from the material you feed it." He looked up at her and smiled. "The stock ammunition are these rectangles. And if Mr. Zaal tries anything, we'll pump him full of this." He held up the rectangle, his smile broadening.

"I see." Constance's frown deepened. She didn't like what the hotel was doing to her husband. She would have to try and steer him away from his investigation. *Maybe we should move to a different part of the hotel.*

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"Mom?" George held up her bare finger between them. It glistened with his saliva. "I pruned you again." They were sitting next to each other on the edge of his bed.

Anna sighed. "You sure did." How odd that something so salacious could feel so natural. This was only the second time she'd let him kiss and suck her finger, and she was already getting used to the idea. "Shall we start the day?" She smiled brightly and removed her hand from his grasp. She shook it to give it a quick air dry before putting her glove back on.

"Before we start the day, I was wondering ..." George tried to find the words. "Being here with your bare hand is incredibly special. The little blue veins under your skin ... drive me crazy. I thought about your hand ... a lot last night."

"I bet you did." Anna raised her eyebrows.

"I was wondering ... um ... do your breasts have similar veins?" He gulped, praying he hadn't gone too far. There had been so little time with Kapnos that he hadn't even told

her about what he'd done with his mother, or gotten any plans from her about how to proceed. So, he'd rely on instinct. It hadn't let him down so far.

"Excuse me?" She slapped his shoulder playfully with her unused glove. "I really hope I misheard you."

Bravely, George pushed headlong into the request. "Your boobs, Mom. If I could see them and commit them to memory, I'd never dream about touching another woman." He flinched at her cross expression. "Until we get home, and I court a woman properly," he added quickly.

"I should have known this would all lead here." She pulled on her glove. "Let me be clear, so this isn't brought up again. What we've done is the result of extenuating circumstances. I'm not some girl from school you're courting. I'm your mother. I will never show you my breasts."

"But ... I mean ... you showed me your hand. What's the difference?" George's face fell. He was crestfallen. His instincts had let him down.

"How long was my hand bare before you put it in your mouth?" Anna frowned at her son. "Don't you think I know the journey my breasts would travel if I gave into your request?"

"I ... but ..." He blinked at her. She didn't look angry, but she was stone-faced. Experience had taught him that she'd never change her mind when she dug her heels in. Not even his father could persuade her when her face went stiff as it was at that moment. "I'm sorry ... Mom." He looked away.

"Don't feel down, George." She held up her gloved hand and wiggled her fingers. "If you're good with Delores today, you'll have your reward tonight."

"Thanks, Mom," He mumbled.

"Now what was it you had to tell me about Océane?"

George's face brightened a little. He told her he'd made a breakthrough in understanding the computer, but it took time to prepare the translation so he couldn't ask the computer anything at the moment. He then relayed the good news about the transports, the private lifeboat, and the rest of what he'd learned from Océane.

Anna was astounded. Her son never ceased to amaze her. She listened intently, absorbing and digesting every bit of precious information.

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“Where do you want to eat today, ladies?” Lillian strode regally along the mirrored hallway with Edith on one side and Delores on the other.

“I’m sick of Aubergine. Maybe we could ...” Edith’s voice trailed away when she spotted Ernest lumbering toward them. His shoulders were slumped from exhaustion, and he dragged the point of his sword on the carpet, leaving a long, meandering divot behind him. His tie was unknotted, his suit was rumpled, and it had been sprayed with something black and viscous on the right sleeve. “What the ...?”

“Dad?” Lillian put a hand to her mouth. “What happened to you?”

“Vermin ... I was exterminating vermin, princess.” With the hand that wasn’t dragging the sword, he waved dismissively to his daughter.

“We don’t have any pests at this hotel, Mr. Zaal.” Edith cocked her head as she watched him move past them. The man looked haggard and worn thin.

Ernest barked out a short laugh. “You could not be more mistaken.” He opened his door and glanced at his daughter. “I’m going to sleep now.” He took the *do not disturb* sign and hung it from the outside handle. “I’ll see you later.” He went into his room and slammed the door.

The women watched his door with wide eyes for several seconds. Finally, Lillian cleared her throat. “He’s just messing around.” She forced a laugh. “He’s always making jokes like that at home. Come along, ladies. Let’s enjoy our lunch.” She led her friends down the hall, trying very hard to pretend that everything was okay. Lillian prayed her mother would return soon.

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“So, we’ll check the docks on one-seventy-six and one-eighty-two, and then find the executive offices on two-hundred. We can skip the rest of the search for now. How does that sound?” Anna tried not to picture the short, tan woman naked while bouncing on George’s long pole. *No mother should have to fight away such images.* She offered a thin smile over their breakfast table.

“You got all this from Océane? Can I talk to the computer? I need to ask about my husband.” Kapnos thought that’s what Delores would ask. She put on a brave face as if she was holding back tears.

“The translation process takes time. And I’m not sure I fully understand it.” Anna glanced at her son, who was eating an excellent approximation of oatmeal. The waiter ambled up to them, but Anna waved it off.

“Um ...” George swallowed his food and nodded. There was a strange tautology of subterfuge running around the table. “I can ask Océane about your husband tonight, when I have some time. We’ll be busy climbing and exploring today. With any luck, we’ll be off this hotel before tomorrow. But I’ll be sure to ask the computer before ...” When a shadow slipped into the restaurant, George’s blood ran cold. The décor in the room was garish and bright, making it hard for the thing to hide. However, it seemed it didn’t care to hide like it had the day before. It also wasn’t keen on running away. It moved quickly toward their table. “Mom ... Nossy ... look out!”

Anna’s back was to the door, so she saw only the horror on her son’s face, and then on Delores’s. Before Anna could turn around, something jerked her from her chair. “Uggggghhh.” She hit the floor painfully on her side. Before she knew it, she was sliding across the floor on her belly. Whatever it was dragged her by the ankles toward the door. Her skirts were pulled up toward her head, giving everyone an embarrassing display. But that barely registered. She dug her fingers into the carpeting, but whatever it was that pulled her kept going. “Georgie ... help me!”

“Mom!” George was already out of his seat. He looked around for a weapon, seizing a fork from the table. He glanced at the shadow that dragged his mother with strength and determination. He tossed the fork back on the table. He needed something better. “Weapon, Nossy. I need a weapon. Where?”

Kapnos watched the nightmarish spectacle and let out a low, pitiful moan. Centuries spent in that solar system, and she didn’t know what that thing was. She shook violently. Her face turned ashen.

“Okay, you can’t help.” George turned away from Kapnos. His mother was screaming now, halfway to the door. He looked down at the table. *Plates, glasses, forks, spoons, food. Plates!* The plates were made from some sort of glass. He dumped his mother’s omelet on the floor and smashed the plate on the edge of the table. It broke roughly along the middle, leaving a sharp, jagged edge.

“S’il vous plaît, monsieur, vous ne devez pas détruire la vaisselle.” The waiter raised its arms in alarm.

“He says not to destroy the dinnerware,” Kapnos whispered. Her teeth chattered, but she didn’t move from her chair. She was paralyzed with terror.

“Please ... Georgie ... do something!” Anna looked over her shoulder but could only barely make out the thing pulling her. She did see pitch-black skin with a rainbow sheen. *It’s the shadow from the day before.*

“Coming ... Mom!” George ran at the shadow, the plate clutched in his right hand. He caught up to them just before they reached the door. The thing turned its face toward him and hissed. Two eyes floated just below the strange, round surface of its face. The

eyes, one brown and one blue, clearly saw him, but they were not attached to anything. It also had an upper and lower jaw, with teeth, all below the surface of its strange skin. The back of the jaw disappeared into its murky head. He couldn't tell if those bones were attached to anything. When it hissed, the jaw opened wide. Too wide. George stepped around his mother and slashed with the jagged edge of the plate, catching the shadow's face and shoulder.

The creature made an odd glugging sound, like liquid struggling down a clogged drain. It dropped Anna's ankle. Its eyes sunk into its internal murk. It turned, and then exploded black goo from the gashes George had inflicted.

George covered his face with his arm as the thing gushed and then collapsed in front of him. He gagged as it covered him with its viscous viscus. When he lowered his arm, the creature was nothing more than a black puddle, harboring a pile of bones and other foul human remnants. "That's ... disgusting." It was the only thing he could think to say.

"George? George ... are you okay?" Anna stood on shaky legs, looking at the carnage. Her poor son looked like he'd fallen in an oil slick.

"C'est un désastre. S'il vous plaît, tout le monde reste assis. Nous allons nettoyer ce désordre sous peu," the waiter said.

"Veuillez envoyer l'équipe de nettoyage au restaurant de la fièvre de la danse. Ne laissez rien tomber dans la cage d'ascenseur. Tous les restes humains doivent sortir par le sas le plus proche," Océane said.

"She's no longer listening to the Newest Guest," Kapnos whispered.

"Mom! Are you okay?" George dropped the broken plate and reached for his mother, but stopped when he saw the black mess on his jacket sleeves and hands. He breathed a sigh of relief when he could see she was unhurt. She hadn't even been sprayed with the creature's insides.

"You were very brave, sunshine." Anna straightened her bodice and looked around. She peeked out into the hall but saw no more of the creatures. "Did you kill it with that plate?"

"Yeah ... I guess." George looked back at Kapnos who was staring into space and muttering to herself. "Can you go check on Delores, Mom? I'm covered in this ... filth."

"Yes, of course. And then we're going to get you washed." Anna rushed over to Delores and helped her to her feet. The poor widow was talking gibberish about aliens and centuries. Anna put an arm around her and guided her to the door. "We'll have her barricade herself into a nearby room. And then, we'll take the adjoining room to wash you up." Anna picked up their backpack, and Delores's bag, where they'd stashed them by the door, and left the eventful breakfast behind.

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“There now, I think this is the last of it.” Anna stood just outside the running shower, scrubbing her naked son clean. When they’d undressed him, they’d discovered that the goo had made its way under his collar and trickled down his back and chest. She had been scrubbing him for fifteen minutes and was just now removing the last, dark rivulet from his lean, well-defined pectoral muscle.

“Thanks, Mom.” George watched her work. Her bodice and gloves were soaked with shower water, which made her clothes somewhat transparent. Even with such an amazing view of her breasts jiggling in her bra as she scrubbed, his penis remained dormant. Terror could do that to a man, he supposed.

“Thank you, sunshine. You saved my life ... again.” Anna tried *not* to glance at his long, dangling penis. Here she was with her strapping, naked son ... again. And she desperately needed to distract her mind from the abominable monster that had seized her. *What would it have done with me if it had dragged me away?* She shook her head and tried to dispel those thoughts. She focused instead on how George’s hard muscles felt under her gloved fingers.

“I’d say ‘you’re welcome’, but I love you so much, I did it for me as much as you.” George’s pulse was still thumping at what felt like a million beats per minute.

“There. That does it.” She leaned back and looked him over. “Turn around.” When he did, she let her eyes linger on his tight, round butt. His vibrant masculinity really was a good distraction. “Yep, we got all of it. You’re clean.” She turned off the shower and handed him a towel. She smiled at him, but he didn’t return the smile. His eyes looked haunted. “They say bravery isn’t a lack of fear. It’s doing something even when you’re afraid.”

George hugged the towel around himself and shrugged.

“That thing, whatever it was, scared the heck out of me. How about you?” She rubbed his shoulder and helped him out of the shower.

“I was so afraid, Mom. I’m still afraid.” He tried to draw strength from her, but he couldn’t find any. He felt like he was at the bottom of a well.

Anna looked into his eyes, and her heart nearly broke. He looked so lost. “You are truly the bravest man I ever met. I’m so lucky to have you.” She took in a deep breath and let it out slowly. She stepped back from him and looked down at her bodice. “I’m a sopping mess.”

"I'll leave so you can change." George started to move past her, but she stopped him with a hand on his chest.

"Sit on the toilet, Georgie. I'm going to help take your mind off what happened at breakfast." She gently pushed him back to the toilet and sat him down on the lid. She moved to the center of the bathroom. She could see the head of his soft penis poking out from under the towel. It looked so tame at the moment, very different from the hungry-looking thing she knew it would become when it was hard. "Would you like to see both my bare hands? I've only shown you the right one so far."

"Um ... yeah." George nodded slowly.

"Okay ... okay ... here we go." Anna slowly pulled on the fingers of her glove. The fabric had almost dried already, quite different than the sopping cotton clinging to her chest. She pulled off her right glove and made a little show of tossing it away carelessly. The act managed to extract a slight smile from him. She then turned away, pulled off her left glove, and slowly turned back for a dramatic reveal, holding her hands with the backs toward him. She wiggled her fingers and gave him a mock-shocked face. The terror of that morning faded further from her mind. "What do you think?"

"Dad's ring." George's eyes were fixed on her left hand.

"No one but your father was supposed to see that ring." She frowned at the simple band of gold. "But I think I can bend a few rules for my hero." She waited for his wide smile, but his eyes still looked glassy. She glanced at his penis, but it still slept. "Okay ... okay ... time to bring out the big guns." She took several deep breaths, psyching herself up for what she was about to do. "You wanted to see my breasts earlier. Would you still like that?"

George's gaze moved from her left hand to her inimitable eyes. She wasn't joking. She meant it. His fear faded for the first time since that thing had entered the restaurant. He nodded.

"You were right. I've shown you my bare hands. It's not that different showing you my bare boobs." She began unbuttoning her bodice. "I have to change out of these wet things anyway."

"You're the best, Mom." George spoke barely above a whisper. His gaze dropped to her pale, nimble fingers as they worked her buttons. His cock gave a lurch.

"We take care of each other, sunshine." She smiled when she saw his penis jump. She watched it grow from its hiding place under the towel. More and more of it came into view as it grew longer and moved upward. She'd never seen a penis come alive like that. It was almost like watching a person wake, lumbering from bed. "Okay, are you ready?" Now unbuttoned, she slowly pulled her bodice over her head. It felt good to get the cold,

clingy garment off. She didn't toss it carelessly away but instead hung it over the shower curtain rod. When she turned back to George, she put her hand to her mouth. His broad smile was back. Her heart bubbled with joy. "I suppose that's enough bare skin for one day." She shook her shoulders a little, causing her breasts to bounce in her bra.

George tore his gaze away from her jiggling cleavage and looked at her face. She was clearly joking. She wasn't going to stop there. He took a deep breath, letting happiness pull him out of that deep, emotional well. He shrugged playfully. "Whatever you want, Mom."

"Well ... aren't you too cool for school?" Anna laughed. A real laugh. It wasn't an hour ago that she had thought she'd never laugh again. When he laughed with her, her whole body buzzed. She laughed even harder when she saw that his penis, which was now fully hard, was bouncing with his laughter. The dark, bulbous head nodded in rhythm to their gaiety. She reached for her bra clasp in the back. "Ready?"

"I don't know if I'd ever be ready for something like this. But ... go ahead." He happily stared at her chest. Could that shadow creature even exist in a world with magnificent tits like his mother's? He was in paradise, leaving hell far behind.

Their laughter died down, lost in the moment of expectation.

"Okay ... here goes." Anna unclasped her bra and let it fall to the bathroom floor.

Chapter 11

He Had Survived so Much, Only to be Felled by His Mother's Beauty

"I ... I ... I have no words, Mom." George stared at his mother's tits. They looked heavy, sloping away from her chest beautifully. Her large nipples and wide areolae took his breath away. He had expected delicate, pale skin, but it was almost as pink as her nipples, forming a blotchy pattern.

"Find some words, George. I'm making myself vulnerable here." Anna bravely smiled at him, fighting the urge to cover herself and turn around.

"Your breasts hit me on a primal level. They make me want to ... I don't know ... explode." He sat very still on the toilet lid, his hands gripping his knees. His dick was so hard it hurt. He could feel it pulsing with his accelerating heartbeat.

"I guess that's good. But please don't explode." Anna gave him a nervous laugh. "So ... you like them?"

"I ... like them." He leaned a little closer. He was confused by her pink skin. "Are your boobs always so ... red?"

Anna looked down and frowned. She had completely forgotten about that horrible near abduction. "When that thing dragged me, my breasts took a beating on the floor. The skin is usually as white as my hands." She held her left hand up next to her left boob to show the contrast of her pink and cream skin.

"Oh ... gods." A deep frown etched itself across George's face, furrowing his forehead. "Do they hurt? What can I do to make it better?" He looked up into her eyes. His gaze full of sincerity.

"My skin is okay." Anna shook her head. This wasn't how she thought this was going to go, but her son obviously cared more about her than her boobs. That wasn't easy for an eighteen-year-old male. She'd raised him right. "But they ache from bouncing against the floor."

"I'm sorry I didn't stop that thing sooner." His gaze returned to her injured breasts. She hadn't answered what he could do to make them feel better. "You are so kind and sweet for sharing them with me. I have to tell you, Mom; I was having trouble staying away from Delores's room last night. But now, I can barely remember what she looks like." He looked back into her eyes, gray like the sea before a storm. "I thought I was going to lose you to that thing. I'm so grateful to be here with you. To have you share with me. Because, who knows what will happen to us?" That was it, all three steps laid out by Kapnos to woo his mother. And all three were *true*. Truer now than ever before.

Anna gulped. Butterflies fluttered in her belly. The things he said tugged at her heartstrings, and at organs lower in her body. Her vagina was saturating her panties. She tried very hard not to look at his penis but snuck a quick glance. It was back to looking devilishly hungry with its protruding veins and dark, bulbous head. She shivered. It was clear to her that she was on the edge of making some questionable decisions.

“Let me kiss them better for you, the way you used to do for me when I was little. You know, when I’d come home with a scraped knee, or a bruised elbow.” George unconsciously licked his lips. He saw her shiver, and he followed her quivering flesh with rapt attention.

“I remember, sunshine.” Anna mirrored her son and licked her lips, too. It wasn’t just his penis that looked hungry. The expression on his face was ravenous. She couldn’t bring herself to verbally give her approbation, so she stuck her chest out instead, bringing her boobs closer to his face.

“I’ll distract your mind ... from what happened at breakfast.” George leaned forward and kissed the upper slope of her right tit, right where her pale skin gave way to the inflamed, pink injury. He could see the most adorable stretch marks there. The heat of her tit pleasantly met his lips. He kissed a little lower. “I’m so ... sorry ... I didn’t ... save you ... sooner,” he said between kisses. His lips were almost at her nipple.

“You saved me ... Georgie.” She held her breath, running her fingers through his silky hair. *Gods, his hair feels so good on my bare skin. I had forgotten what his hair felt like.* “You saved me ... that’s what matters.”

“Your nipples look hard, Mom.” He glanced up and met her gaze. “Is that because of the floor?”

“Yes, I could cut glass with them. They get like that ... when I’m excited about something.” Anna lost herself in her son’s deep, brown eyes. The way her handsome teenager gazed up at her from her breast was heartbreakingly beautiful. He had the most concerned expression on his face. She smiled. “It wasn’t the floor. You did that to my nipples.” *Did I really just say that?*

“They’re beautiful.” George turned his focus back to her boob and slowly leaned forward. His nose pressed into her supple, pink flesh. His lips clamped down on her large nipple. He rolled his tongue around it. He felt his mother’s body spasm, but he didn’t stop.

A series of lightning strikes surged from her nipple and moved through her nerves. Anna shuddered uncontrollably and gripped his hair in her fist. When the ecstatic shocks faded, she blinked her eyes and breathed in deeply. She’d been holding her breath for so long, her lungs burned. “Oh ... gosh ... Georgie ... I don’t know what just

happened. That was ...” When he sucked on her nipple, her mind stopped, and her sentence hung incomplete. Another surge of blissful lightning moved through her. Body trembling, Anna tried to regain control of herself. She gently tugged on his hair, pulling him away from her breast. “Okay ... okay ... I told you ... my breasts would be just like ... my hand. It’s barely been five minutes, and they’re already in your mouth.”

“Well, only one was in my mouth.” George moved to her other breast, twirling his tongue around her nipple again. When she tried to step back, he reached his hands around her hips and held her firmly by the ass through her skirts. She shuddered again but didn’t try to flee. He could hear her panting, and her chest heaved. Nothing else mattered in that moment, just her perfect breasts and his hungry mouth. There was no Belle Île, no strange shadow creatures, no existential threat, nothing but mother and son. Slowly he stood, bending over to stay latched to her breast. His towel dropped to the floor. Her left hand still clutched his hair, so he took her right hand and placed it on his chest. He moved her fingers around, letting her get acquainted with his skin and the muscles underneath. Soon, she was exploring his body on her own, pausing only for the occasional shudder.

“So ... strong ... sunshine. So brave ... and strong ... and tight ... and lithe.” Anna pulled her son’s face off her breast. She let go of his hair as he straightened, but kept her other hand on his flat stomach. “This is the point ... I think ... where I should be smart ... and stop things.”

George smiled. “I thought that we passed that point a while ago.”

Anna’s fingers dropped down to his pubic hair and gently played with the tight curls. She didn’t dare go down any lower. “What we’re doing is ... special. And it’s helping both of us with the ghastly mess we’re in. And we must choose life now ... more than ever.” She looked up into his handsome face, scarcely believing what she was about to do. “We must cling to life ... desperately ... letting it pull us through.” She dropped her hand to his penis and gripped it tightly. For the first time in her life, she held a penis that wasn’t her husband’s. It was thick enough that she couldn’t quite circle her fingers around its girth. “Goodness ... you’re large,” she whispered. “I didn’t know penises were available in this size. I’m ... I’m ... not going to be smart about this ... am I?”

“I don’t think either of us wants to stop, Mom.” His hands reached around to her ass again, and he pulled her close. Her breasts pressed delightfully into his stomach, and her cheek snuggled into his chest. George sighed. They fit together perfectly.

“I feel ... lost ... but in a good way,” she said as she planted soft little kisses on his chest. He had just a few hairs, so unlike his hirsute father. “Standing here ... with you ... it’s like nothing else exists.” She squeezed his penis, feeling its spongy resilience. *He’s so thick! How did Mrs. Salazar and Ms. Pemberton take it inside? It must have hurt!* Anna remembered the sounds Delores made as she rode her son. And the look on the widow’s

face when she'd been interrupted. The woman had been ecstatic. Somehow, he hadn't hurt her with his size. "What do you want from me right now? What can I do for you? For us?" She squeezed his penis rhythmically but didn't pump at all.

"Mom, I'd like –"

Anna interrupted her son. "I'm your mother, so watch what you say. Ask for something possible ... something I can give you." There was really only one answer here. She was willing to pump him to completion, but she didn't want to say it outright.

"Right ... um ... well, Mom ..." He smiled down at her. He could see her gray-blue eyes searching his. This was some kind of test. One he meant to pass. "Your bare hand on my ... penis feels better than I could have ever dreamed. Can you move your hand up and down?"

"Your diary is going to catch fire when you tell it what happened here." Anna smiled sweetly and kissed his chest again. She brought both hands down to his penis and pumped slowly. "Gods ... it's almost like you're a different species from your father," she whispered under her breath.

"What did you say, Mom?" George let his hands slide up her bare back, running his fingers over the delicate curve of her spine. Her skin was soft, warm, and smooth. Her curvaceous body made him want to ... he wasn't sure. Explode? Yes, certainly that and more.

"Nothing, sunshine." Anna gave her son another sweet kiss on his chest, placing it on his small nipple this time. "I just want us to be happy. I want us to share our own little fortress of bliss while the storm rages outside." She increased the pace of her hands. "Am I doing it right?" The heat of his penis surprised her. *Of course it's hot, there's so much blood surging through it. So much life.*

"Mom ... Mom ... can you get it wet?" George was losing focus. Pleasure steadily built inside him. His balls felt like they were churning. *Nossy's a genius. I can't believe it, but Mom is going to make me cum.*

"Okay." Anna lifted her left hand up to her mouth and spit into it several times.

"Uuuuggghhhhhhhhhhh." George's hips jerked. The sight before him nearly fried his brain. "You're spitting ... on your pale ... delicate ... fingers. I never thought ... I'd ever see anything ... like that ... uuuuggghhhhh." When her hand returned to his dick, and she spread the spit around, his hips shifted into humping mode. He had no control. He was thrusting his penis into her hands, and she was happily obliging him.

"You're ... trembling ... Georgie," Anna said between kisses across his chest. "Is it going ... to happen?"

“Yeah ... Mom ... uuuggghhhhhhh ... it’s about ... to come out.” His fingers dug into her back.

“Not on me, Georgie!” Anna’s mind had taken such a thorough vacation that she hadn’t considered where he would put his sperm. Still pumping with both hands while his hips did most of the work, she turned him toward the shower. “In here.”

“Mom ... Mom ... Mom ... I’m gonna ... Mom ... I can ... feel your hands ... on my ... aaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.” George let out a long, bellowing grunt, thrust his hips forward, and erupted into the shower.

“Wow ... wow ... let it out ... oh my ... oh my ... gods ... you’re still spraying ... oh ... my ... there we go.” Anna finished him off by pumping her hands as fast as she could. There was so much. By the time he was done, the tiled wall of the shower was covered in George’s white, sticky stuff. “Even accounting for your youth, that was a lot. I can’t even ... oh my ... gods! You’re still going.” She had thought he was done, but after a few seconds rest, his penis shot two more heavy loads into the shower. She stopped pumping him, knowing how Ernest got sensitive after his conclusion. Her hands held tightly to his pulsing organ as she watched his stuff slowly drip down the tile. Suddenly, she was quite worried that he’d gotten Delores or Edith pregnant. There was just so much sperm. If either woman was fertile, she doubted their eggs could resist such a barrage. She sighed and forced such thoughts from her mind. There was nothing she could do except make sure he didn’t go back to them.

“Mom ... that was ... incredible.” George panted and watched her face as she stared at his cum. He could see that whatever she was thinking disturbed her. He turned on the shower and pointed the showerhead at the mess he’d made. It quickly washed down the drain.

“Well ... we really did that, didn’t we?” She offered a nervous laugh.

“While the water’s running, you should shower, too. We need to wash off your ankles, especially where the thing touched you.” George watched her pink boobs shake as she released his cock and busied herself with getting the shower ready. When she leaned into the shower to adjust the soap dispenser, his jaw dropped. Her breasts swayed under her in the lewdest, yet most motherly way.

When the water was warm, Anna unclasped her skirts, put her thumbs under her waistband, and looked back at him. “Why don’t you get dressed while I shower? Then we can check in on Mrs. Salazar.”

George sat back on the toilet lid, his dick, unflagged, stood straight up. “Can I watch you shower? I’ve seen your hands and boobs. We might as well go three for three and let me see your butt.”

Anna's laugh was quick and tittering. She didn't want to verbalize their agreement, so she merely nodded and pulled down her skirts. She hung them up and slipped her fingers under the elastic of her panties. She wasn't sure how she wanted to proceed. Should she show her triangle of blond hair, or turn and expose her butt to him? Both options filled her with trepidation and excitement. She didn't move.

Seeing her dilemma, George smiled. "You can turn around, Mom." He was happy she did. Bent over, she displayed her heart-shaped ass perfectly. Again, her breasts hung and swayed under her as she tilted forward. George didn't know if he could take it. The flare from her waist out to her hips, her shapely legs, her alabaster skin, it was all too much. He wondered if his heart might give out. How funny would that be? He had survived so much, only to be felled by his mother's beauty. He even got a brief glimpse of her glistening pussy before she straightened and stepped into the shower. "You can leave the curtain open, Mom."

Anna gave her son one of her mock-shocked expressions, her eyes wide and her mouth hanging open with a faint hint of a mischievous smile. "After everything we've done today, I think I could use a little privacy." She pulled the curtain closed.

"Yeah, okay." George listened to the splashing water, imagining how it looked running down her zaftig form. After a little while, she hummed a song to herself. That made him smile. This was another form of intimacy she was sharing with him, even if the shower curtain was in the way. His cock wasn't going to calm itself down, so he took hold of it and fapped while she showered. He didn't think she'd mind. He listened to her splash, closed his eyes, and recalled the intensity in her face when she'd watched him cum.

"Hmmm hhm hm mmmmm hhm mmm hmm hmm hhhmmmmmm." Anna happily hummed and checked in with herself as she scrubbed her ankles. Her muscles were relaxed. The oppressive weight that had pressed on her mind since the skyrmion burst had lifted. She had given everyone an optimistic front to keep up their spirits, but she actually *felt* optimistic now. What was this strange emotion that swirled inside her? Happiness. Society had taught her that what she'd done with George was unforgivable. That she was a terrible mother. But she felt positively marvelous about it. How could those two things coexist? By the end of her shower, some of the magical feelings had been replaced by confusion. But she couldn't deny that not only had George saved her life more than once, he had restored her to her best self. She turned off the shower, pulled back the curtain, and shrieked. "Gosh ... George ... what are you doing?" It was a silly question. He was clearly masturbating.

"Huh?" George opened his eyes and smiled. "I was ... uuugghhhh ... a little riled up." He pumped himself with both hands. His pace didn't slow. He didn't intend to stop unless she asked him to.

“Riled up?” Anna grabbed a towel and wrapped it around herself. “I just released you with my hands not ten minutes ago.”

“That’s what got me riled up.” George let out a quick laugh, but it was lost in pleasure. His expression grew distant. “Could I see you one more time?”

Anna stared at him, her face twisted with warring thoughts and emotions. After a long pause, she removed the towel and stood naked for him, slowly air-drying. It was warm in the bathroom and quite comfortable. Even so, she shivered, watching his hands shuck his desires on that long, thick penis. “Teenagers,” she whispered. She studied his face; the vertical line of longing in his forehead, the slackness of pleasure around his mouth, his busy eyes roving from her womanhood to her breasts to her face and back again. She hoped he would finish soon, because the sight of him was fueling an inferno of feelings in her belly and between her legs. The odds that she was going to do something less than smart continued to rise and rise.

“So ... beautiful ... Mom ... so beautiful.” George was close. His mother’s alluring bare hands hung uselessly by her wide hips. “Cup ... your boobs ... with your hands.”

She furrowed her eyebrows at him.

“Please?” George was right on the edge.

“Thank you for using the magic word.” Anna held her breasts in her hands, gently hefting them for her son’s pleasure. Her boobs were indeed sore, but it could have been so much worse. Her gallant son had saved her. She rolled her nipples between her fingers and shuddered. She was getting very close to stepping out of the shower and taking hold of his penis again, and she wasn’t sure what she would do with it. But that decision was forgone when he erupted all over himself. She watched his face tighten and listened to his animalistic grunts. She wondered that he showed no shame for relieving himself in front of her. He really was her brave, daring man. Even though it was the second time in a half-hour, copious amounts of sperm flew into the air and landed on his naked body and the floor all around him. When he was done, she waited a few seconds and started to speak. “George, I ...” But she was interrupted by another of his spasms and more sperm. *Goodness, he must do that every time. I’ve never heard of such a thing before.* But that was hardly unexpected, as she knew very little about men other than her husband.

When his second orgasm was over, George watched his mom wrap herself in a towel. “I could ... die now, and ... I’d be happy.”

“Don’t talk like that. Nobody is dying.” She went to decisively straighten her bodice, as was her habit, but she wasn’t wearing it. Straightening her towel would have to do. She stepped out of the shower. “I’m going to get changed into some fresh clothes. Wash yourself up again, you’re a mess.”

“Okay.” George’s nod was slow and languid.

“I feel ... re-energized. I hope you do, too. We have a lot to do today.” She opened the bathroom door. “We’ll check on both of the docks Océane mentioned, and the executive office. Don’t dally in here.”

“Mom?” George was still in the middle of his post-orgasmic bliss. He hadn’t yet made it to the point where he’d felt re-energized. But he’d push himself through. He stood and stepped into the shower. “We should visit an armory, too. I don’t want to face one of those things with a broken plate again.”

“You were so brave, sunshine.” Anna smiled at him. “Mrs. Salazar first, then the armory, then our other tasks.” She nodded and left the bathroom, closing the door behind her.

George pumped his fist in the air. He felt like he could take on a whole army of those shadow creatures. He’d just gotten an amazing handjob from his mother, and nothing could get in his way.

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The door to Kapnos’s temporary room was open when the Zaals checked in on her. The smile that had been on George’s face faded. He walked into the empty room. The barricade looked like it had been disassembled from the inside. “Mrs. Salazar?” Worry gripped his heart. Nothing good seemed to last on La Belle Île.

“She’s not in here.” Anna pulled her head out of the bathroom. “What do you think happened?”

A green light blinked in the air over the nightstand. George stepped over and waved his hand to turn on the message.

An image of Delores’s disembodied face blinked into existence. “I had hoped to go to the top of the tower with you two,” Kapnos said. “But I have decided to return to the others on floor one-oh-three. You will hopefully find transport and return quickly to retrieve us for our flight home.” The recording paused. Kapnos stared into space, took a deep breath, and continued. “When you return, please forgive me if I pretend my time climbing the tower with you never happened. It’s too difficult for me to acknowledge what happened with young Mr. Zaal. Good luck on the rest of your search. Goodbye.” The image blinked out.

“We have to go after her! Those shadow things ...” George’s words died away when he saw his mother shaking her head.

“She’s long gone, Georgie. She could already be back with the others.” Anna sighed. It was awkward having Delores along after discovering the widow riding her son, but it had been helpful having a third person to search each floor. A thought occurred to her. *We don’t need a third anymore. We know where to go.* “She’s safest with the others.”

“But, Mom, what if –”

Anna held up a gloved finger. “She made her choice to leave us. I know you still have feelings for her. Let her go, sunshine. I’m sure she’s fine. Now, let’s get to the armory to make sure *we’re* fine, too.”

“Yeah, okay.” George didn’t know how to make her understand. And he couldn’t truly explain without giving up Kapnos’s secret. He’d promised he wouldn’t do that. *What are you doing, Nossy?* Had she abandoned him? If so, why?

“I see you’re upset by her leaving. Don’t worry, just because she’s returned to the others doesn’t mean we can’t ... do stuff again.” Anna took a deep breath and walked out into the hall. She straightened her bodice and turned to her son as he lingered in the room. “I showed you my hand to distract you from Mrs. Salazar and Ms. Pemberton. Not to congratulate myself too much, but I think that was a success. Additionally, what we did today ... was more than just a distraction. It’s something ... I never would have considered before coming here. But now that we’re here, in this situation, I think ...” She had a hard time getting words out.

Mom wants to give me another handjob! George tried to calm himself. He walked out into the hall, straightened his tie, and raised an eyebrow. “Yeah? What do you think?”

“I think that our new closeness is good for both of us. With any luck, we’ll have only one more night away from the others. And then we’ll all be heading to the transport if our luck holds.” Anna pressed her lips together. “So tonight, before bed, I’ll do the thing I did in the bathroom. It will help us deal with the nightmare we’re in. And that’s important. Getting us through this is important. You’re important. Understand?” She wasn’t being very clear. Nothing in motherhood had prepared her for these last few days.

George solemnly nodded. “I’m going to do everything I can to keep us alive until tonight. I’m not missing a chance to be close to you. Not ever.” He put his hands on his backpack straps and pulled his pack into a better position on his back. “On that topic, let’s get to the armory. Nothing is going to happen to us today. Not on my watch.” He marched toward the stairs.

“I believe you, sunshine.” Anna fell in next to her son. She had to quickly pump her legs to keep up with his long strides. “You keep saving my life. How could I doubt you?” She was pleased when that got a little smile out of him. He seemed so shaken by Delores’s departure. She reminded herself that he was a teenager and didn’t have much experience with heartbreak. She thought of something to change the subject. “Do you

remember your pistol lessons?" All young men had to take fencing and firearm classes in case they were challenged to a duel. Anna's heart fluttered. They would have to deal with Mr. Dmytruk and that detestable man's honor before leaving the hotel. She tried never to wish ill on anyone, but she wouldn't grieve if one of those shadow creatures pulled that horrible man away.

"If they the hotel pistols, I should be able to handle them." George glanced at his mother. She was biting her bottom lip, clearly worried about the path ahead. "If we see any more of those monsters, they won't get within ten feet of us." He gave her shoulder a reassuring pat. "Come on, I think the closest armory is two floors up." He turned onto the stairs. "We'll be there in no time."

Chapter 12

Maybe We Should Do This on Dry Land

“Don’t we all look lovely?” Lillian was taking her supertime promenade down the mirrored hall with Edith and Delores.

“Quite.” Edith turned to check out her reflection. She was wearing her best dress, but she found the way her reflections rippled into infinity to be unsettling. They had just passed the Havershams’ room when something stopped her in her tracks. Three shadowed figures dashed from the direction of the stairs. They moved in the most ungainly way, their joints swinging in impossible directions, their bodies bouncing side to side, their arms spread out like they were afraid they might fall. Edith heard Lillian scream. She saw the young woman turn and run the other direction. On her other side, Delores shrieked and ran. But Edith was petrified. She found she could do nothing more than stare at the approaching creatures. They appeared to be made of a dark liquid, with visible body parts floating and jostling just below the rainbow sheen on their surface.

“Oh ... gods!” Delores hammered her fists on the Havershams’ door. The door opened only a fraction of an inch. It was barricaded on the inside. “Help! They’re going to kill me!”

Roy woke with a start, sat up, and reached for his pistol. “Wake up beloved. The Zaals are about murder again!” He leapt from the bed wearing only his undershorts.

“What!?!” Constance rose from bed wearing nothing at all. She and her husband had been enjoying a post-coital afternoon nap. “What’s happened?” She saw her husband tossing aside luggage and furniture from their barricade. Constance quickly threw on her nightgown and began pulling on her gloves.

“Oh ... gods ... they’ve got Ms. Pemberton!” Delores clawed at the gap in the door. When Roy moved the desk, the door gave, and she fell into their room.

“Never fear.” Roy may have said the words, but his palms were clammy, and his pulse beat thunderclaps in his ears. He had been waiting for his opportunity to confront the murderous Zaals, but like many wishes, he regretted it now that the moment had arrived. Nevertheless, he hopped over Delores’s prone form and entered the hall.

“They’ve got meeeeeee!” Edith was being dragged backward toward the stairs.

Roy raised his pistol and froze. These ... were not the Zaals. A chill went down his spine. He stared as three shadows retreated down the hall with Edith, one dragging the poor woman, the other two on either side. “Gods ... that thing ... is a nightmare.” He

remembered the black cloud in Ernest's eye. *These things must be working in league with the Zaals.*

"What is it beloved?" Now that her gloves were in place, Constance raced out into the hall. She gasped when she stopped next to her husband and saw the scene. "Shoot, Roy, shoot! What are you waiting for!?"

The arrival of his wife sharpened Roy's fortitude. He aimed and squeezed the trigger. With a hiss, the pistol fired. His bullet was true. It struck the creature hauling Edith in the head. The thing wobbled, made a hissing noise of its own, and exploded in a vile eruption of black goo and human body parts. Roy lowered his pistol, staring in horror.

Edith was covered in viscous, pitch sludge, but she was free. She crawled back toward the other survivors.

Ernest opened his door and peered out, sword in hand. When he saw what was happening, he raced toward the action. His unknotted tie whipped behind him like a miniature cape.

"Dad!" Lillian didn't know what else to say. She watched the terrible scene from behind the Havershams.

"Shoot the others!" Constance urged her husband. But he only stared at the horrific scene. "Roy ... the other two. They're grabbing Ms. Pemberton." Her voice was low and thick with horror. "Shoot." But even as she said it, the remaining creatures roughly grabbed Edith from either end, holding her by feet and shoulders. They seemed unable to coordinate their approach and moved forcefully in opposite directions. Edith screamed. There was the most gruesome, wet tearing sound, and suddenly each creature carried a bifurcated piece of the suddenly silent woman. The creatures quickly retreated toward the stairs.

Ernest ran after them, waving his sword wildly.

It was Lillian's turn to scream.

"Gods ..." Roy raised his pistol, but his hand was shaking too much. His gun hissed several more times, but the shots struck mirrored glass and not the creatures or Ernest. In an instant, those running were all gone around the corner to the stairs.

"It's okay." Constance turned, stepped over to Lillian, and hugged her close. That quieted the poor girl. Lillian whimpered in the much taller woman's arms. Constance looked over her shoulder at her husband. "You should have shot the other two."

Roy nodded his head. He couldn't help but agree.

"We should all have pistols," Constance said.

Roy nodded his head again.

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The dock on floor one seventy six was a bust. The lifeboat was exposed to vacuum, and there was no way for the Zaals to board or bring back its life support. So, after hours of frustration, they gave up and moved on.

Anna and George now approached the second possible escape vessel. Both Zaals were sweaty and winded from the fast-paced climb. "You really can't translate Océane anymore?" Anna had wanted the computer's help with the first ship, but George said he could no longer communicate with the hotel.

"I'm sorry, Mom. I just can't. Not even if I tried all night." George shook his head grimly. His translator, and girlfriend, had abandoned him.

"Well, maybe this vessel will be in good shape, and we won't need Océane's help." Anna gave him a sidelong glance. He was obfuscating about something with regard to the translation. She decided she would press him on it later. Maybe when her bare hands were on his penis, he'd be more forthcoming. She shivered at the memory of their time in the bathroom that morning.

"Let's find out." George eyed the lobby as they entered it. It was sleek and modern, with tall anthropogenic sculptures and glittering lights on the ceiling. Comfortable, high-backed armchairs were randomly dispersed about the floor, adjoined by small tables. "It's strange being in a large space like this with no one else." His voice echoed off distant walls.

"I know what you mean." Anna hushed her voice and moved closer to her son. She put her hand on the pommel of the sword she'd belted to her waist. Women didn't duel, so she'd never been taught to fence or shoot a pistol. Because of that fact, they'd elected to have George be the only one to carry a sidearm on his belt. She glanced at the bulge on his side under his jacket. And they'd agreed to have her carry a short sword, just in case. It was less likely that she'd accidentally hurt George that way.

"Um ... excuse me." A high, melodious woman's voice greeted them out of nowhere. "Technically, there is someone else here." A short, slender woman rose from one of the chairs they'd just passed. They hadn't seen her because the high back had blocked their view. She wore her hair tightly pinned with a small, lacy hat. Her bodice, skirts, and gloves were azure, with delicate maritime embroidery. Her smile was tight and nervous as she moved to greet them. "Although, I must confess, I thought I'd never see another

human soul in my life.” She curtsied to the Zaals. “I’m Mrs. Gwendoline Valentine. How do you do?”

Anna was so shocked that she froze, putting her hand on her son’s chest in a protective, maternal gesture. She felt his hand on her chest in a similarly protective way. She noted that he had quickly drawn his pistol. “She’s not a shadow creature,” Anna whispered. “Don’t point that thing at her.”

“Yeah, sorry.” George lowered the gun. His cheeks which had turned pale when Gwendoline had announced herself, reddened with embarrassment.

“I’m Anna Zaal. And this is my son, George Zaal.” Anna gently removed her son’s hand from her bodice where it was still protectively squeezing her left breast. She curtsied. “Are you by yourself, then?”

George bowed to the stranger stiffly.

Tears welled in Gwendoline’s eyes. “I lost my husband when everyone ...” She openly wept. “I hid myself in a room with computer equipment and ... somehow I survived.” She looked back and forth between the two Zaals, her brown eyes plaintive. “Are you alone?”

“There are other survivors, Mrs. Valentine.” Anna smiled reassuringly and approached the woman with her hands raised in a calming gesture. “There are seven others, and they will be thrilled to meet you. We survived in a very similar way. My deepest condolences for your loss.”

George narrowed his eyes. He knew how Océane’s system worked. There was only one Faraday cage per spire. He was sure of it. He didn’t have a clue where this woman could have hidden that would have protected her.

“Thank the gods ... oh ... thank gods.” Gwendoline ran to Anna and embraced her, holding her tightly. She closed her eyes, weeping.

George cocked his head. “We’re checking this dock because it might have a useable lifeboat.”

“That’s why I’m here, too. Océane told me it might be viable, but I couldn’t figure out how to open the airlock,” Gwendoline said.

Anna ended the hug and held the woman at arm’s length, her hands on Gwendoline’s delicate shoulders. She studied the woman’s sad but lovely face. “You talked to Océane? You speak French?”

“Oui.” Gwendoline nodded. Tears were still running down her pale cheeks.

“That’s good luck. Heavens, I’d forgotten what good luck felt like. George had been able to translate, but he’s lost the ability.” Anna smiled with relief. “You are very welcome to come with us, Mrs. Valentine. We’ll take care of you and bring you with us when we leave.”

“Thank you. That is most kind, Mrs. Zaal.” She slipped her arm in Anna’s arm and turned toward the docks.

Anna went stiff at the intimate gesture from a stranger, but the woman had been through hell, so she didn’t pull away. They filled each other in on what had happened since the skyrmion burst and then turned their attention to the lifeboat.

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Breath ragged, Ernest stopped on the grand stairway to catch his breath. He was on floor fifty-two, and he had lost both of the creatures he had been chasing. They’d simply outrun him. The twin bloody trails from Edith’s two halves would have been easy enough to track, but the chase was over. He was sure where they were going. He didn’t want to get too close to their destination.

It was time to visit an armory. He hadn’t realized the hotel was equipped with firearms. He cursed his stupidity for not checking sooner. The stakes were too high for mistakes. He passed a mirror and stopped. He dropped his sword in shock when he saw his reflection. He stepped closer to the mirror and inspected his eyes.

Ernest would have to make another stop before returning to floor one-zero-three. He looked at the nearby signage. *Where would I find sunglasses in a space hotel?*

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The lifeboat on one-eighty-two hadn’t been any more space-worthy than the one on one-seventy-six. Even with Gwendoline as translator, Océane couldn’t help them open the airlock. The day waned as they poured hours into the task. Eventually, they accepted defeat.

The Zaals decided to wait until morning to explore the executive suite on two-hundred. Along with Mrs. Valentine, they found rooms on floor one hundred seventy-seven. It was a comforting, nineteenth-century-themed floor.

George had a strange feeling about Gwendoline, but he couldn't get her alone to press her with any questions. His mother hovered near him protectively the whole evening. At supper, they explained why they were armed. Gwendoline's eyes widened in disbelief when they described the shadow creatures. Anna hoped the new woman would never see one and remain incredulous. After supper, they retired to their rooms. Gwendoline barricaded herself next to the room the Zaals intended to share. With the shadow creatures about, Anna wished she could offer to share their room with Gwendoline. But, of course, she had made promises to her son she intended to keep and thus needed privacy. She reasoned that a solid barricade would offer good enough protection. Despite that, she decided that she would no longer sleep in a separate room from George. She wasn't letting her son out of her sight until they returned to Earth. She wasn't going to get dragged off by another monster.

"What do you think of our newest survivor?" Anna helped George push the desk in front of their closed door.

"She's ... um ... everything we would hope to find in another survivor. I'm glad she's here." George couldn't share his suspicions.

"Agreed. I feel like we're already becoming fast friends. It was a stroke of luck that we found her." Anna helped him stack furniture and abandoned luggage on the desk. When they were done, she wiped her brow. "Now then. I'd like to freshen up in the bathroom." She removed her sword belt and hung it from one of the bedposts. "I imagine you would, too. We're a mess after that day of climbing. You want to go first, or shall I?" She fetched their pack and removed her toiletries.

"You can go first, Mom." George watched her disappear into the bathroom and close the door. He heard the water go on, and after a time, her pleasant humming came through the door. He sat wearily in a chair, wondering if she'd make good on her promise. His cock pushed mightily at his trousers as he thought about her pale, naked body so near to him. He wondered if her boobs were still pink from the creature's assault. Had that been only that morning? He wondered what Gwendoline's tiny, delicate hands looked like ungloved. He wondered more about Gwendoline. His reverie was interrupted when his mother exited the shower wearing a hotel bathrobe. The garment was plush and not in the least revealing. She also wore her gloves and a towel on her head.

"Your turn, sunshine." Anna smiled. She was already buzzing as the moment of their shared intimacy approached. "Don't be too long." She gave his butt a playful pat through his trousers as he passed her. It was obvious from the other side of his trousers that he was just as excited as she was. *Gods, I would have never known such happiness with him if we hadn't found ourselves in this abomination of a hotel.*

"See you soon." George removed his holster and placed the gun on the nightstand.

"I'll get your bed ready." She smiled and shooed him into the bathroom. When the door closed, she went about arranging the blankets and sheets that they had earlier pilfered from other rooms. She could hear him brushing his teeth, and then the shower turned on. She knew he must be naked on the other side of the door. She thought about his strong, lean muscles. After a minute's struggle, she also allowed herself to think about his bulging, hungry-looking penis. "This will be our last time ... together," she whispered to herself. She was still optimistic that they'd find a ticket home in the executive suite. And then they would be away from the hotel, and any reason for their new intimacy would be over.

With his bed set up on the floor, and the shower still running, Anna ran out of patience. She carefully removed her gloves and the towel from her hair. With the robe still on, she silently opened the bathroom door and sneaked inside. She put a bare hand to her mouth. Now that she was inside the steamy room, she could hear a wet, fapping sound. He hadn't waited for her. He was already pleasuring himself.

"Nossy ... ooohhhh ... shit ... yeah ... suck on it ... Nossy." George pumped his dick with both hands.

Nossy? Anna held her breath. *Who the heck was Nossy?* Anna thought she remembered the name from somewhere. Maybe a girl back home. If so, that was good. He wasn't calling out Delores's name or Edith's. Or ...

"Mom ... your fingers are so ... soft." George had already cum once in the shower and was slowly building to another climax.

There we go. He said my name while pleasuring himself. I've really done a number on the poor guy. But I have my reasons. Anna sorted through her emotions: regret, relief, and pride. The regret was obvious. The relief was because he wasn't calling out for those other younger, attractive women that he'd already seduced. She continued to listen, and the only names were "Mom" and "Nossy." Still no mention of Edith or Delores. The pride was, well ... he *wanted* her. George was such a brave, handsome young man who could obviously have his pick of women. *And he wants me. And ... also whomever Nossy is.* She had been planning to surprise him, but now that she'd eavesdropped on his very private fantasies, she felt she couldn't do that. She decided to slip back out of the bathroom undetected but accidentally knocked the soap dispenser to the floor with her elbow.

George had a sudden moment of terror. Someone was in the bathroom with him. He let go of his cock and flung back the curtain. His mother stood a couple feet away, looking abashed. "Mom! You scared me. Is everything okay?" He didn't give a second thought to being naked in front of her with a raging erection.

"Yes, Georgie. I didn't mean to startle you." She smiled apologetically.

“Wait, is it time?” George’s expression morphed from fear to excitement. “We’re going to ...?”

“Yes. I thought I would do that thing for you now.” Anna smiled and stood with her hand clasped, her robe wrapped tightly around her.

“Well?” George smiled.

“Well?” Anna returned the smile.

“Come on in.” George beckoned her.

“Oh, I don’t know. Maybe we should do this on dry land. I don’t want to ... eeeeeiiii.” She gave a little shriek when he stepped out of the shower, picked her up, and carried her back under the warm water, bathrobe and all. In seconds, she was soaked through. He held her with one arm under her legs and one under her back. She looked up at him and blinked water out of her eyes. His smile was pure and heartbreakingly beautiful. She hadn’t been carried like that since she was a little girl. She reached up and stroked his cheek with her bare fingers. There was just the hint of rough stubble. “Put me down, George.”

“Sure, Mom.” He put her on her feet in a position where his dick poked her belly.

“Why did you bring me in here? I already showered.” She looked down at the hungry-looking demon of an organ. Her husband’s penis was so smooth. Why was George’s ridged with veins? *Blood. It needs more blood than Ernest’s penis. It needs blood to support its massive size. The thing is surging with life.* She grasped his penis with both hands and gently ran her fingertips along its length. The skin was soft and the flesh spongy, but resilient.

“I brought you into the shower because you’re dirty, Mom.” George laughed. He’d never been so bold with any women, much less his mother. “Very dirty.”

She looked up at him with wide eyes. “What did you say?” *Was this dirty talk?* She’d heard about it, but neither she nor Ernest had ever tried. *He said the word “dirty” twice. I’m pretty sure it’s dirty talk.* A slow smile crept over her face. Before he could muster an answer to her first question, she asked another, better one. “Why do you think I’m dirty, sunshine?”

“Because ... Mom ...” George tried to gauge her mood. She *was* smiling, and her hands had started stroking his dick with some urgency. That was good. Did she like what he’d said? He decided to plunge ahead. “You’re dirty because you made me cum with your delicate, bare hands. And you’re going to do it again. Right now. We need to wash that dirty filth right off you.”

“You said, ‘cum.’” Anna’s robe was heavy with water. It was about time to shed it.

“Sorry.”

“No, I liked it.” She paused pleasuring him with her hands and untied her robe. She tossed it out of the shower. The stream of water was mostly hitting George’s back, so she shivered a little as water evaporated from her skin. Goosebumps formed on her arms, belly, and breasts. Her nipples were like diamonds again. They seemed almost perpetually erect lately. “What else do you have to say to me, Georgie?” Her hands went back to work on his penis.

“Your boobs look better. The pink is going away. Do they still hurt?” He could see she was cold, so he moved to the side and let the warm water land on her tits and cascade down her curvaceous body. He closed the curtain, and the space felt even more intimate.

Anna giggled. “One of the things I love about you, Georgie, is that most men would only be thinking with their penises in such situations. But you care about me so much, you ask about my health at a moment like this. To answer your question, they still hurt, but they are feeling better.” Her hands made squelching noises now that they were under running water. It was a delightfully dirty sound.

“It’s because I love you, Mom.” He bent down and kissed her on the cheek. “I love you more than I love sex. I love you more ... than anything, really.” He kissed her closer to her lush, parted lips. “I won’t let anything happen to you. Not ever. I’ll protect you.”

“I’m supposed to protect you,” she whispered. She didn’t need to speak loudly, his face hovered an inch from hers.

“We’ll protect each other then.” George kissed his mother on the lips. When she backed away, he took hold of her shoulders and held her.

“Mmmmmppphhh ... no ... George ... not on the lips.” Anna was relieved when he backed off. His worried eyes searched hers. “I’m not mad, sunshine. It’s just that there are some lines we can’t cross. For our sanity. For my sanity. Understand?” All this time, her hands hadn’t stopped rhythmically tugging at his penis.

“Sure, Mom. Not on the lips.” George leaned down and took her large nipple into his mouth. They’d already established that sucking on her boobs was okay, so he didn’t mind retreating to safer ground. When she shivered and moaned, he knew he’d made the right decision.

“Why does that feel so good?” Anna watched him play and suckle. His eyes were shut tight, with a concentration line running down his forehead. “It really does ... aaaahhhhhh ... feel right. Like you’re ... ooohhh ... back where you ... belong.” Her head fell backward when he sucked in earnest. “Not so much ... teeth ... aaahhhh.” She shivered violently this time. “Yes ... that’s really good ... really good.”

A period of silence fell over them as they lost themselves in their pleasures. George moved from one nipple to the other. Anna pumped his penis with all her might. Soon, they were both moaning.

George's climax approached. Eventually, he released her nipple from his mouth and straightened. "Mom ... Mom ... you're such a bad ... Mom ... such a b ..." He stopped himself, not knowing a safe curse word to use. It was one thing to call her dirty, it was quite another to call his straitlaced mother a bitch. He was pretty sure that wouldn't fly.

"I am a b-word ... George." She looked down at his turgid penis. She desperately wanted it to explode. "I'm a big ... happy ... b-word. Your mother is so ... very ... *bad* ... and she's doing *bad* stuff to you. I'm a bad, bad woman" Okay, her dirty talk needed work. But she was proud of herself for trying. *It's cute that George couldn't bring himself to call me "bad."* Anna giggled to herself. "Are you almost ready to ..." She couldn't bring herself to say "cum," but she hoped George might.

"I'm going to ... aaahhhhhhhh ... cum ... Mom. Where should I ...?" George gritted his teeth, trying to hold off for another few seconds. His dick was pointing right at her belly, and he remembered how much she'd wanted to avoid his cum that morning.

"It's okay ... George. Let it out. If it lands on me, the water will wash it away." The shower was hitting her right shoulder at that moment, but she could quickly adjust when he unloaded. Besides, she was curious what it would feel like. Her husband had never sprayed his stuff on her.

"Cumming ... uuuggghhhhhh ... cumming ..." George's hips jerked, and his body exploded with ecstasy. He watched through a fog of pleasure as he plastered her soft, gently curving belly with white, sticky goo.

"Georgie ... oh ... Georgie! You're spraying me!" Anna pumped his penis hard, drawing out all his sperm. *This might be the last time, so I have to make it memorable.* Despite knowing what to expect, the amount he produced continued to amaze her. Shot after thick, ropery shot left him and landed on her belly. *Unless ... we do it again tomorrow morning before we set out.* That seemed more than likely. The thought pleased her greatly. When he finished, she slowed her hands to a stop and held his penis. "This was good for both of us. I'm glad that we ... oh, gosh!" She'd forgotten that he seemed to always have a few final bursts. She watched the last of his sperm splash onto her belly.

"Wow ... Mom. Uuuuggghhhh ... you really are ... dirty now. You're covered." George watched his cum slowly drip down her belly. He wondered if it was dangerous to let it meander down to her pussy. *Could it get inside and get her pregnant?* He wasn't sure.

"I feel it, Georgie. It's hot on my tummy." Anna let go of her son's cock and lifted her breasts up and to the sides so she could get a good view of the mess they'd made. "Oh ...

gosh ... you really did a number on my belly.” She shifted her position to let the water hit her stomach. After a moment, she grabbed some soap and scrubbed.

When the Zaals got out of the shower, they were both smiling ear to ear. They wrapped themselves in towels, not saying anything for fear of ruining the moment.

Finally, Anna cleared her throat. “Why don’t you finish up in here? I need to make an entry in my diary, so give me a few minutes privacy. I’ve made your bed on the floor. Why don’t you give me ten minutes, and then you can come out and get some sleep? We need our sleep. It’ll be a busy day tomorrow.”

“Sure, Mom. Sounds good.” He smiled and watched her exit the bathroom, his gaze lingering on her towel-wrapped butt. *I may be both the luckiest and unluckiest eighteen-year-old in the solar system.*

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Anna’s Diary August 22, 2197

I look back at my previous entry, Diary, and I can’t believe it’s only been 24 hours. So much has happened! We found both of the docks Océane mentioned. There were lifeboats there, but we were not able to get them in working order. I feel optimistic about the escape craft we will explore tomorrow.

Heavens, there’s so much happening that I can’t believe I didn’t lead with this news: I was almost abducted by a strange, horrifying creature. Only my son’s quick thinking and bravery saved me. He killed the thing with a broken plate! I tremble at the memory, both from fear, but also from gratitude and pride. What a man George has become.

That leads me to another life-changing event (they seem to be stacking up one on top of the next). I touched George’s penis with my bare hands and ... completed his release. Twice! What sort of mother am I, Diary? It is all so bewildering. All the more because of how he makes me feel. I feel more desired and beautiful with his eyes on me, with his mouth on my breast, than I have ever felt before. And it’s not even close. I tell myself that what we’re doing is a benefit to us both. That it’s helping us through this calamitous situation. And I think I’m right. But who knows? I could be going insane. And if so, I’m afraid I would embrace such lunacy.

Ernest’s Diary August 22, 2197

Something is happening. I'm changing. I feel the thing down below and up above. We are falling together. The more I lash at it, the more it calls.

Lillian's Diary August 22, 2197

I am barricaded in my room, in the corner, shaking. Dad has disappeared. He chased those things away, but I don't think he's returned. They may have done to him what they did to poor ... Oh, gods, I can't even bear to think of poor Ms. Pemberton. The horrors in this hotel mount.

I pray that Mom and George return soon. I need them. I never thought I'd say I needed my brother, but I do. I would run into his arms if he were here. It's all too horrible, and I am so alone. I didn't have dinner, and I have no idea what I'll do for breakfast. My stomach rumbles, but I won't leave this room. I would rather starve than see those things again.

George's Diary August 22, 2197

Mom may think this all ends when we return home, but I feel in my bones it will not. We have started something that has its own momentum. I cannot describe the happiness I feel at the touch of her bare fingers. Such bliss dwarfs the terror and fear that this hotel inflicts upon us.

What's happened with my mother has been so wonderful that it has blunted Kapnos's sudden departure. I haven't been able to question the new arrival, Mrs. Valentine. But I wonder. The only thing that gives me pause is that Kapnos can only copy living cells, so she couldn't have dug up Mrs. Valentine from an abandoned hairbrush or something. But the alternative is that Mrs. Valentine is who she says she is, and thus, she is a person with living cells. So ... I don't know what to make of it.

Kapnos's Diary August 22, 2197

Things have changed in the short time since I/we left. Anna hovers over George, watching him like a hawk. What happened at breakfast really spooked her. It spooked me/us too! Despite everything, I/we will find a way to talk with him. I/we will find a way to be with him. Most importantly, as long as we leave soon, I/we now have a way off this cursed hotel.

Chapter 13

Oh ... Gosh ... Georgie

“Goodnight, Mom.” George curled up in his bed on the floor. His mother had done a good job making it comfortable. But he didn’t want to spend the night there.

“Goodnight, sunshine.” Anna let her weight sink into the mattress. She was exhausted. What a crazy day. Certainly, singular in her lifetime. “Get some good sleep, we have a lot to do tomorrow.” She rolled onto her side and put a pillow between her knees. She wore a modest nightgown and panties and felt quite cozy. “I love you, Georgie.”

“I love you too, Mom.” George sighed and closed his eyes. His mind went over everything that had happened, both heavenly and ghastly. He didn’t think he’d ever fall asleep. Before he knew it, he was dreaming about finding a sailboat and setting out for home through a sea of stars. He woke with a start when someone shook his shoulder.

“You have the most adorable snore,” A melodious woman’s voice whispered in his ear.

“Mom?” George blinked in the pleasant darkness of the room. The hotel nightlight made a soft glow, and the window was filled with stars. He could see Earth shining as a bright, blue star almost in the middle. As he left his dreams behind, he gained some focus. A short, blond woman stood over him. “Mrs. Valentine? How did you get in here?”

“It’s me, silly. It’s Nossy.” Kapnos put a finger to her lips. “Let’s not wake your mother. Come with me to the bathroom,” she whispered, taking his hand and pulling him from bed.

“Nossy? I wasn’t sure.” George let her lead him into the bathroom. She wore the same blue bodice, gloves, and skirts as before, but her hair was no longer pinned up. A satchel was slung from her right shoulder and hung on her left hip. When the door was shut behind them, he gave her a long hug. How strange that he was hugging his girlfriend, but she felt so different. This woman was built more like Edith, short and slight. He had to stoop to take her in his arms. He inhaled. She smelled familiar. Maybe Kapnos had a scent no matter who she was. The fragrance reminded him of fresh coconut. He smiled when she sighed contentedly in his ear and squeezed him back with thin arms. He realized he was only wearing his undershorts, and his erection was developing quickly. He laughed at how odd his life was.

“What’s so funny?” Kapnos continued to happily press her cheek into his chest. She never wanted the hug to end.

“My life’s funny.” George separated them, held her frail shoulders, and studied her brown eyes. “I have questions.”

“I bet you do.” Kapnos nodded earnestly.

“Wait, if you’re in here, is the barricade secure?” He looked at the bathroom door.

“It’s secure. I pushed the barricade aside very gently, and then piled it high again.” She adored the concern on his face. He would do anything for his mother. “I can slip into small spaces when the need arises.”

George nodded. “Good to know.” He cocked his head, studying her face. He guessed Gwendolyn Valentine was in her early thirties. “Why did you leave?”

“I couldn’t continue as Delores. What was going to happen when we returned to the one hundred third floor? I found an opportunity to copy someone else. So, I left the note for your mother, and went upstairs to wait for you two.” Kapnos frowned. “Are you mad at me?”

“How did you copy Mrs. Valentine? Is she alive?” He kissed her on the cheek to let her know that his sudden intensity wasn’t anger. She looked visibly relieved, so he kissed her softly on the lips. He pulled back and waited for an answer.

“I won’t hide secrets from you, George.” Kapnos reached into the satchel and pulled out a rectangular plastic box. When she opened it, cooling steam escaped. “This was how I copied Mrs. Valentine.”

George stared at the contents of the box. The container was designed to refrigerate something small. And that thing was an eyeball with a brown iris. Some of the optical nerve was still attached. “Gods, Nossy. What did you do?” He put a hand to his stomach, afraid he might be sick. His nascent erection vanished.

“You did it, actually.” Her smile was tight and grim. “When you killed the creature that attacked your mother, it was full of body parts. It was somehow keeping those parts alive. I went back to the scene shortly after you saved your mother. Océane was kind enough to delay her cleanup for me. Eyes are particularly good for making copies. There was also a blue eye from an elderly man. I thought Mrs. Valentine would make a better new companion for your band of survivors, so I copied her and had Océane locate this case for me. With it, I should be able to harvest new DNA for several weeks.” She closed the box. “Please don’t look so revolted. I didn’t kill her.”

“No, it’s okay. That was quick thinking.” George sat on the toilet lid, trying to compose himself. “What was that creature? Surely, Mrs. Valentine died in the skyrmion burst. How is her eye alive?”

“It takes a while for all the parts of a person to die. Océane says she gave all the dead people to ‘the Newest Guest’ in a now broken deal. I assume it disassembled the people and kept their living parts ... living.” Kapnos shivered.

“Have you ever seen anything like this before? I mean, you must have. You’ve been around forever.” George looked up at her, his stomach settling.

“I haven’t seen anything like this. Not in this solar system or anywhere else.” Kapnos shook her head. “But we’ll leave the Newest Guest far behind. We’re going to escape this place and ... I don’t know, maybe I’ll stay with you for a while back on Earth. Would you like that?” Her infectious smile returned. “How have things been going with your mother? I’m sorry I haven’t been able to guide you through the next steps. But you saw her hands, and sucked on her naked fingers! With my help, we might even get her to touch you with her hands. See, there’s all kinds of things to look forward to. I can tell you all about her erogenous zones, too. If you can get her to bare her breasts, her nipples are a real hot spot for her.”

“I know.” George pushed the Newest Guest and its concomitant horror out of his mind. He would have time to worry about that later. He couldn’t quite muster a grin, but he did feel his shoulders relax. Especially, when Kapnos put the box back in her satchel.

“Well, you’ll want to tell her that ...” Kapnos blinked and stared at him. “Wait ... what?”

“Things have progressed with Mom a ton since we last talked.” A smile finally returned to George’s face.

Kapnos jumped up and down on her toes, squealing at a low volume. “You had sex? How was it? She’s really tight, right? Did you find that spot deep inside her –?”

“Hold on, Nossy.” George pulled her onto his lap and kissed her on the lips again. This time he let their tongues intertwine. Kissing her in a different body was both oddly new and familiar. When the kiss finished, she looked at him with questioning eyes. He sighed. “We didn’t have sex. She’s Anna Zaal, she’s not going to have sex with someone other than Dad. Especially not me.”

“Why especially not you? You’re perfect.” She reached down next to her hip and snaked her gloved fingers into his underwear. His cock was growing for her again.

“Because I’m her son.”

“You have that backward. Especially because you’re her wonderful son. She won’t find deeper intimacy with anyone else, not even your father.” Kapnos pumped his dick steadily as they stared into each other’s eyes. “She made you, and tended you, and shaped you, and now you’re a man of eighteen. She is seeing what she made. And she loves what she sees. And she loves you all the more because she knows every scrape and fall you’ve had. She knows what you’ve overcome. I’ve seen it all before, George. She will give herself to you completely. Both of you will find true happiness in each other’s arms.” She stood up, removed her skirts and panties, and straddled him wearing only her bodice, gloves, and shoes.

“When you put it that way, I believe you.” George looked down at the blond triangle between her pale, slender legs. Her pink pussy lips were wide and swollen, hanging down.

“Speaking of tight pussies, your cock is going to really resize me tonight.” She lowered herself slowly, sighing as his fat cockhead parted her lips and stretched her out. “Such a thin line between pain and ... aaahhhhhh ... pleasure ... with humans.” She kissed him again. They made out while she slowly slid down his shaft. She backed away from the kiss and looked deep into his eyes. “Promise me ... that whatever heaven you find in your mother’s pussy ... uuugghhhhh ... you won’t forget me. You’ll ... ooohhhhhh ... make time ... for me.” Her mouth hung open as her body adjusted to the member now fully inside her.

“Of course ... Nossy.” He took hold of her ass. It was the smallest, tightest ass he’d felt. He stared at her bodice, wondering about her tits. They looked big for her slender body.

Kapnos grunted and undulated slowly on top of him. She followed his gaze. “You’d like to see my boobs? They’re all yours, Georgie.” She tore her bodice down the middle. She wasn’t wearing a bra.

“I’m ... really glad ... you came back ...” George was impressed. Her breasts were indeed large and hung high on her chest. Her nipples were small, which made the dramatic expanse of pale flesh seem even broader than it was. He took one of her nipples into his mouth, and dug his fingers into her ass cheeks.

Kapnos rode him slowly for a good long while, bringing herself to several low-key orgasms. She dared not slam down on him for fear of waking Anna. Eventually, she pulled him off her breast and whispered in his ear, “You’re not going to cum this way, are you?”

“No. But I don’t need to.” He smiled up at her.

“How charitable.” She laughed and lifted herself off his dick. “Speaking of charity, I’m going to teach you a skill you’ll need to take the next step with your mother.” She pulled him off the toilet lid onto the floor and straddled his face. “Time to learn how to eat pussy like a professional. Any questions before we start?”

George shook his head, his eyes wide. Her breasts were in the way, so he couldn’t see Kapnos’s mischievous eyes.

“Okay, then. Let’s get started.” Kapnos spent over an hour giving him detailed instructions. She had intimate knowledge of Anna’s body, so her tips were aimed at what would inspire his mother to greater heights, not necessarily Gwendolyn Valentine. When the lesson was complete, she was satisfied that he knew his way around a woman’s sex. She looked behind her and saw that his cock was still standing

tall. “Sill don’t care if you cum or not?” She climbed off his face, booped his wet nose with her gloved finger, and mounted his dick. “I have a few tricks up my sleeve for quiet copulation.”

“What are you ...?” George’s eyes almost crossed with sudden pleasure. Her pussy rhythmically milked his cock from base to head, while her hips didn’t move at all. “I didn’t know ... women could ... do that.”

“I don’t know of any woman that can.” She smiled triumphantly down at him. “I think this is one of those things that only I can do. Now, cum for me. Give me everything you’ve got.”

“Wow ... uuuggghhhhh ... it even lingers ... just below the head.” George buried his face in her boobs. “That’s perfect ... that’s ... perfect ... Nossy. I’m ... cumming ... ugh ... ugh ... uuuuuggghhhhhhh.” His voice rose in volume, but her tits muffled his grunting.

“That’s right ... give it to me.” Kapnos’s hips rotated in subtle ellipses as she milked him dry. She circled her arms around his back and pulled him to her tightly. As the heat of his seed filled her, her pussy slowed its rhythmic contractions. When he finished, she sat on him for several minutes, still hugging him close. Then she dismounted him, mended her sundered bodice, pulled on her panties, and slipped into her skirts. She slung her satchel back over her shoulder. “Tell me about your plans for tomorrow. I’ll give you some additional things to try with your mother.” She giggled when he looked up at her with his big, goofy grin. His cock was still hard, so she dropped to her knees and stroked it while they discussed what the day might bring.

An hour later, Nossy slipped out of the Zaals’ room. George quietly rebuilt the barricade, and took another shower.

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“Are you sure your father hasn’t returned?” Roy held his pistol in front of him with two hands, pointing it at every play of light in their damaged hall. Océane had cleaned up the bloody trails, but the mirrors Roy had cracked with errant bullets were still damaged, casting the light in odd ways. It was the middle of the night, but that made no difference to the hotel. The same lights glowed, and the restaurants were always open.

“I haven’t seen him.” Lillian’s voice was tremulous. She pulled an empty suitcase on rollers behind her. Delores and Constance also rolled empty luggage. “But he was trying to kill those things with his sword.”

“He was very brave, dear.” Constance kept her sidearm in its holster, belted over her bodice. Unlike her husband, she saw little need to wave it around. With any luck they would go to the coffee shop, fill up the suitcases with food, and wouldn’t have to leave the security of their room until Anna and George returned with good news. Lillian and Delores had moved in after the events the previous day. It was a good arrangement for security. But it was hell on privacy.

“Or he was running to help them.” Roy gave the women a steely glance. “I’ll question him about it when he returns.”

“Let’s just get the food.” Lillian rolled her eyes. Her life was more miserable now than ever, but at least she was still alive. She prayed she would stay that way until her mother and brother returned.

~~

“Mom?” George slipped under the blankets into his mom’s bed. He was naked and felt invigorated from his shower and his time with Kapnos. “Are you awake?” He reached out and held her hip. *Gods I love how wide her hips are. She’s like a sleeping mountain range.* “Are you awake?” He ran his hand down the slope to her waist. *Or rolling hills.*

“Now I am, sunshine.” Anna rolled onto her back and tried to pull herself completely from her dreams. She had been back on Earth, standing under a sunny sky. “What’s wrong?”

“Can I sleep with you tonight?” He moved his hand back to her hip and squeezed, relishing the give of her soft flesh.

“No, I made a bed for you, George.” She sat up and gazed at him. She could readily make out the sincere expression on his handsome face in the dim glow of the nightlight. “We have to have limits. We can’t sleep in the same bed.”

“But this could be our last chance ... ever.” George didn’t move right up against her. He gave her some space. Although, his hand didn’t leave her hip. “With any luck, we’ll leave tomorrow. And you’ll be back in bed with Dad at home. But now ... I just want to know what it’s like to feel you next to me. To hear you breathe in your sleep. To have the heat of you warm me up.”

“Ugh ... gosh ... Georgie.” Anna rumped her eyebrows in a mock expression of disgust. “Why do you have to be so compelling?” She reached out for him under the sheet, found his hard chest, and ran her bare fingers over his smooth skin. Anna shivered. “Okay, you can sleep next to me. But we need our sleep. So, no funny business. And no snoring.” She

smiled at the gratitude on his face. “Goodnight, sunshine.” She rolled onto her side facing away from him, positioned her pillow between her knees, and let out a long breath. When he scooted up behind her, she didn’t complain. When he placed his arm around her and hugged her boobs gently, she sighed. When his hard penis bumped into her thigh, she thought that was his problem and didn’t give it another thought. Soon, she was blissfully asleep again.

George lay in the dark, spooning his mother for a long time before sleep found him. He listened to her soft breathing, smelling the soap in her long, blond hair. Even with his untamed erection, he’d never been so content. Eventually, he drifted off into dreams, his mother in his arms.

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“Stop calling me ... stop calling ... me.” Ernest stumbled down the hall on the forty-seventh floor. The murals were of wildlife on either side. He paused to regard a bear that was almost as tall as the ceiling. He adjusted his sunglasses and looked up at it. His jacket was torn and ruffled. His tie hung unknotted around his neck. His shirt had lost several buttons and was open at the top, revealing pale skin with meandering, dark veins just underneath. “Are you the big dipper or the little one?” He jabbed his sword violently into the wall, skewering the bear’s midriff. “You’re falling. You’re fucking falling.”

The mural did not reply.

Leaving the sword embedded in the wall, Ernest turned and pulled his pistol from its holster. The gun hissed several times as he sprayed bullets at the animals all around him. Some hit their targets, others did not. It had been years since his dueling classes. And other than murdering a man who was set to duel his son, he’d never gotten close to a duel himself. “You fuckers should be put out of your misery,” he screamed at the muraled wildlife all around. “You’re all falling forever. There is nothing pulling us but a lie. This is the end.” The gun hissed several more times as he gut-shot the bear. “You’re dead.” He pulled the sword from the wall. “And so am I.”

“S’il vous plaît monsieur, ne mettez pas de balles dans les murs de l’hôtel,” Océane said.

“Fuck you, computer. You’re dead, too.” Ernest holstered his pistol and stumbled off down the hall, dragging his sword on the carpet, leaving a long, wavering divot in his wake.

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It was such a blessing to wake up in strong, gentle arms. Anna stretched, trying to place herself. She opened her eyes and looked out at the stars. Memories came back to her. She was in a random room in an empty hotel. And the arms belonged to her amazing son. She could hear the soft, even breathing of his sleep. She wiggled her butt happily back into his hard, flat belly. The penis that poked her on the back of her thigh was certainly wide awake. Since she had a moment to herself, she tried to process her feelings. There was excitement and doubt. Fear hovered over everything. But the strength of her gratitude conquered all. She was alive. He had saved her life ... and then he had changed it. They would survive all this because of George.

Anna let him sleep. He deserved it. She snuggled her back into him. His arm lay pleasantly across her boobs, the thin layer of her nightgown separating them. She had shown him her breasts, her hands, her whole forbidden body. What were such prohibitions worth if she broke them with alacrity and found only happiness on the other side? Why had the world tried to hem her in by binding her to Ernest and telling her she could have no other man? Not even the man ...

“Mom? Are you awake?” George stretched and tightened his grip on her boobs, cupping the bottom one with his hand. He found that her ass was pleasantly pushed up against his belly. His dick was digging into the narrow gap between her thighs, just below her nightgown. Its soft fabric felt wonderfully silky against his skin.

“I’m awake, Georgie.” Anna couldn’t help wiggling her butt some more. She found that by raising and lowering her thighs in unison, she could pump his penis between them. She experimented with her movements. “It’s morning time. I’ll get up to brush my teeth, and then I’ll take care of you with my bare hands.” She shivered at her own words. The skin of her hands was becoming familiar to her son and his magnificent penis.

“That sounds good, Mom. I’ll brush my teeth, too.” But George made no effort to leave the bed. Instead, he gripped her tits tighter, pinning her back to his chest. His hips began to piston. It was awkward at first, but soon they found a rhythm of push and grind with her thighs and his hips.

Anna reached behind her and ran her naked fingers along his side. “You came to bed without any clothes on?”

“You didn’t notice ... ugh ... last night?”

“I ... um ... felt your penis poking me ... but I was too sleepy to think about your clothes.” She continued to press her thighs against him. They were coming very close to

simulating sex. “In the future, when we’re sleeping in the same bed, you have to wear pajamas or something.”

“We’ll be sleeping in ... ugh ... ugh ... the same bed again?” George smiled. It took immense effort, but he stopped his hips and pulled his penis from between her thighs.

“I didn’t mean that. I mean ... I don’t know. Everything has been so unexpected. I just ...” Her son moved away from her and gently rolled her onto her back. “George, I need to brush my teeth.”

“I know, Mom.” George took hold of each thigh and slowly spread her legs. She offered some resistance at first, but then let him spread her wide open.

“We are absolutely not having intercourse, George Zaal.” Anna tried to make her voice as stern as possible for a woman with her legs open for her son.

“Don’t be so dirty-minded, Mom. You’re such a dirty, dirty woman.” He lowered himself deeper under the blankets. The strong, tangy scent of her excitement filled the enclosed space. “You’ve been such a bad mommy ... taking care of me. I want to try being bad, too.”

“Stop with the dirty talk, George. I really need to brush my teeth.” She made no effort to leave the bed. Instead, she gripped the fitted sheet tightly on either side of her hips.

“What are you ... ooohhhhhh ...” She felt him between her legs, pulling her panties aside. “I can’t believe you’re ... ohhhhhh ... gosh ... you really are ... ooohhhhhh ... gosh ... Georgie ... you’re not supposed to ... do that to your mother.” She shuddered as he licked up and down her netherlips. His father had to be cajoled and coaxed to put his mouth down there, and he would only do it on special occasions ... like the first night they’d stayed at La Belle Île. She pictured her husband as he had timidly nibbled on her vagina. George wasn’t behaving anything like his father. “Maybe we should stop. Oh ... gods ... what are you ...?”

George slipped a finger inside her, looking for that spot on the roof of her pussy. His mouth moved to her clit. He did just as Kapnos had instructed.

“What’s happening ... to me?” Anna’s legs shook violently. Stars burst before her eyes. Her hips leapt of their own accord. “Oh ... gosh ... Georgie ... ooohhhhhh ... sunshine ... uuuuggghhhhhh ... something’s happening ... I ... eeeeeiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii.” Anna arched her back like she’d been connected to a live wire. Her head pressed back into the mattress. Her eyes rolled back, and she let out an earth-shattering scream.

“Mmmppphhh ... nnnooooommmmmmmmm.” George continued his work, holding on to his shaking mother for dear life. When she started squirting, he removed his finger from her pussy, but continued working her clit with his tongue. His mother was screaming loud enough to be heard out in the hall. Maybe loud enough to be heard

floors away. *Nossy probably has her ear pressed to the wall.* It filled him with confidence to be able to give his mother a moment of pure bliss. When she stopped screaming, he moved away from her pussy in the dark cavern under the blanket. He was covered in wetness, and the sheets were soaked. He rested his cheek on her thigh, which was still quivering.

“Ooohhhh ... my ... oh ... gosh ... ooohhhhhhhh.” Anna felt like jelly. Ecstasy surged through her with mind-bending aftershocks. “What ... was that?”

“You had an orgasm, Mom.” George smiled from ear to ear. He kissed the delicate inside of her trembling thigh.

“I thought ... I knew ... what an orgasm was. I guess I was ... wrong.” Anna took a deep breath and tried to compose herself. Things felt wet between her legs. Abnormally so. She reached down and found that everything was soaked. She stiffened. Had she lost so much control that she’d peed all over her son? He would certainly never go down on her again. “George ... I seem to have ... done something terrible. I relieved ... myself ... all over you. I’m so ... so ... sorry.”

George laughed.

“Don’t laugh.” Anna winced, sat up, and threw back the blankets. She waved the lights on. The soaking was worse than she feared. “Oh ... gods ... I’m sorry.”

“No, don’t be sorry. It isn’t pee, Mom. You just squirted. It’s your cum.” George wiped her juice out of his eyes. “Women do that when they’re really, really happy. It’s a big compliment that you did it for me.”

“What?” Anna had never heard of such a thing. She didn’t know what to say. She searched her mind for the right words. “What?”

“Congrats, Mom. It looks like you just had your first real orgasm and squirted for the first time.” He pushed up her sopping nightgown and kissed her gently curving belly.

“You’re not ... disgusted?” Anna’s muscles began to relax. “This is ... normal?”

“It’s normal.” George nodded.

“How do you know all this?” Anna slowly crawled from bed and stood on shaky legs.

“I’m eighteen.” George shrugged. “Teenage guys are curious.” It sounded plausible. He wasn’t going to tell her that an alien showed him exactly what to do to please her specific pussy.

“Before we took this trip, I would have been horrified to learn about your sexual appetite. It seems to know no bounds.” She walked toward the bathroom, slowly. “I suppose I’m still shocked.” She stopped in the doorway and looked back at him. “You can

... you can make me feel that way anytime? I mean, you don't have to ... it's just ... I don't know what I'm saying."

"Anytime you want, Mom." George smiled at her. He was pleased when she returned the smile with a timid smile of her own.

"Okay, I'm brushing my teeth and showering. We can see about your needs after that." Anna went into the bathroom and closed the door. She needed to collect her thoughts. She felt like the earth had just shifted under her feet ... again.

Chapter 14

They're Building Something

"What's wrong with that family? She dresses herself like the Queen." Roy glanced over at Lillian. The young woman was wearing a glittering tiara, necklace, and gown. The gown was ill-fitting. He was certain she'd pilfered it from some poor soul's luggage along with the jewelry.

"Keep your voice down," Constance whispered. "She's been through a lot." She glanced at Lillian, who was watching a show on the feed.

"She's insane. Her father's roving the hotel with sword in hand like a lunatic." Roy lowered his voice to oblige his wife. "Her brother and mother are off doing gods know what."

"They're trying to rescue us," Constance hissed.

"We're not leaving." Roy shook his head.

"Even now? You want to stay here with those horrible things? They tore poor Ms. Pemberton in two!" Constance raised her voice. Delores looked over at her, and Constance smiled apologetically.

"For all we know, those creatures are all over the system. That's why there hasn't been a rescue." Roy folded his arms. He hated arguing with his wife. She was so much taller and stronger than him. Neither of them would resort to force in their marriage, but he didn't like knowing he'd be the loser. "We're better off clearing the hotel of those things and staying here."

"That's ... um ... well ..." Constance eyed him suspiciously. He was under a ton of stress. She looked around the room. Delores was sullen and withdrawn as usual. Lillian was indeed living in some sort of fantasy. And Roy was not thinking clearly. *Perhaps I should make more decisions going forward.* Constance thought on it. All the hours playing matches under grueling pressure may have trained her for the calamitous event they found themselves in. "That's something to think about."

"It is." Roy nodded. "Don't worry, beloved. I'll take care of us."

"HMMMMMMMM." Constance nodded her head, while coming up with her own plan for survival.

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The hot water cascaded over her body. Anna spread her legs, standing on the balls of her feet. She cleaned her vagina thoroughly. She turned around, bent over, and spread her cheeks. In the span of two days, she had let a man spray his seed all over her midriff, and she'd covered herself with her own stuff. *He'd called it 'cum.' I sprayed myself, my son, and the bed with cum.* She shivered. And George hadn't seemed to mind it at all. Speaking of her son, she heard the bathroom door open and the sink faucet run. "I'm sorry I'm taking so long in here. You must be dying to wash off your face."

"No rush, Mom." George was still naked. He bent over the sink, splashed his face with water, and scrubbed soap onto his skin. "Honestly, I feel even closer to you after making you cum like that."

"Oh ... um ... I'm so glad." Anna finished washing her backside and let go of her butt cheeks. She peeked around the shower curtain at George washing his face in the sink. She gazed at the taut muscles in the back of his legs and butt. He was so lean, masculine, and tall. She shivered again and closed the curtain. She stood still, letting the heat of the water enter and relax her. "So ... um ... I guess it's my turn to make you ... um ..." She still couldn't bring herself to use a vulgarity like *cum*. "You'll be needing your release before we start the day. And I can't have you seducing poor Mrs. Valentine." Her laugh rang hollow and tinny in the shower. "Maybe you should join me in the shower?" *Get ahold of yourself, Anna.* Her knees were trembling. This could be the last time they were ever intimate with each other in such a way. She told herself to calm down and be in the moment.

"Sure, Mom." George dried his face with a towel and stepped into the steamy shower. His heart melted when he saw his mother's nervous body language and her entrancing zaftig form. "Your boobs look better. The pink is gone. Your skin is white. I can even see the veins under your skin." It was true. He could just make out the blue, meandering veins.

Anna instinctively covered her breasts with her arms. "Really? Do they look ... strange to you?"

"I've got veins, too." George laughed and bounced his hard cock with his hand. "And mine are even more pronounced." He reached for her bare hands and held them, savoring her soft dexterity. Slowly, he opened her arms so he could see her boobs again. "Your veins are delicate and pretty. They make me feel like you're sharing with me. That you're ... letting yourself be vulnerable." He looked down at his dick. "Do my veins look strange to you?"

"They look ..." She licked her lips and stared down at his ravenous-looking penis. "They make your thing look hungry and aggressive. Honestly, it makes me weak in the knees

to even think about your body, sunshine.” She gently pulled her hands from his grasp. She lifted her right hand to his lips and slid her index finger into his mouth. She groaned when he rolled his tongue around it. She dropped her left hand to his penis and tentatively ran her fingertips along those raised veins. “It’s wonderful ... truly ... magical.” She squeezed the shaft and pumped him slowly. Not only was her bare hand on her son’s engorged flesh, but her husband’s ring touched George’s skin. That ring was meant to be seen by only her and Ernest. Now, it was helping to give George pleasure. She winced at the thought but didn’t stop.

“Mmmppphhh.” George pulled her finger out of his mouth. “Your hands are amazing.”

“Thank you, Georgie.” She didn’t look up at him, her focus completely drawn to his massive erection.

“But since this is probably our last time, I’d like to do something different.” He turned her to face the shower wall and took in the majesty of her curving hips and ass. He ran his fingers up her spine. “Can we do what we did in the bed? With me between your thighs, I mean.”

“We can’t have intercourse, George.” Even as she said the words, she spread her legs and let him nestle his penis between her shapely thighs. She closed them back together and got up on the balls of her feet so that he wouldn’t have to bend so much. She looked back at his grinning face. “This makes you happy?”

“Yes.” George nodded. He had to bend his knees considerably, but he experimented with making the first awkward lunges comfortable. It took some getting used to at first, but soon he found a position that worked. He held onto her wide hips and listened to the water squish and slap between them.

“Oooohhhh ... George ... you’re so forceful.” Anna stared at her bare hands on the shower tile. She was putty in her son’s grip. This was farther than she’d intended to go. But there was no turning back now. They were really, truly simulating intercourse. “What do you need me to do?” She didn’t feel like she was participating with him so much as he was using her for his pleasure. That thought made her shiver.

“You’re so ... ugh ... ugh ... perfect ... Mom. All I ... need you to do ... is be yourself ... and let me ... pump ... your thighs.” He pressed his hands tighter into her hips, as much to demonstrate to her his desire as to keep his wet fingers from slipping.

“Okay ... okay ... I can be myself.” Anna hadn’t ever had sex in the shower. She hadn’t had sex standing up. So, this was all new to her. *I’m not having sex right now.* That was an important distinction. But a part of her wanted to try and see if she could fit that big thing inside her. Delores was about her size, and the woman had looked so happy with George’s penis inside her. It wasn’t just one part of her, most of her body and mind

wanted George inside her. She resisted, listening to him grunt behind her. “Talk dirty to me, George. Tell me how bad I am.”

“Jeez ... Mom ... you’ve got ... your son’s dick ... ugh ... ugh ... between your thighs.” George wanted to make the moment last, but the talk was set to make him explode. He slammed into her harder, the water splashing wildly between them every time her ass rippled with shockwaves. “You’re either the worst ... mom ... in the system ...”

“Wow ... Georgie ...” Anna squealed with delight. She felt like touching herself while he had his way with her, but she needed to brace herself with both hands to keep from hitting her face against the tile. He was being so wonderfully rough. Ernest had never treated her like this. No man had ever needed her so desperately.

“... or ... you’re the best ... mom ... in the system.” George was getting really close. He saw stars as he stared down at the dramatic flare from her waist out to her hips. He threw caution to the wind. “Either way ... ah ... ah ... ah ... you’re bent over ... taking it from me ... like a bitch.”

“Oooohhhhhhhh ... gosh ... George.” She didn’t reprimand him. Instead, she let another rush of pleasure move through her. “Nobody has ever called –” She was interrupted by his orgasm.

“Uuuuuuggggghhhhhhhhhhhhh.” George leaned back and slammed his hips into her several more times. He held himself pressed against her and exploded between her thighs.

“Ohhhh ... Georgie ... Georgie!” Anna looked down between her dancing breasts. Sperm launched out from between her legs and landed on the shower wall. There was so much, and the force of it was nearly inconceivable given everything she had known about men before a few days ago. Now that he was done slamming into her, she touched herself, rubbing her clit with little circles. “Georgie ... Georgie ...” His orgasm subsided, but she knew he would shoot again after a brief pause. Sure enough, his hips quivered into her butt and three more blasts coated the tile. It was all too much.

“Wow ... Mom ... that was amazing.” As George became aware of his surroundings again, he realized his mother was masturbating in front of him. He angled the showerhead away from them, turned her around, and kneeled in front of her. In no time at all, he had a finger inside her, looking for that magic spot. His lips locked onto her clit.

“Uuuuggghhhh ... again?” Anna spread her legs to accommodate him, thrusting her hips forward and tilted up in a very unladylike pose. “You are ... you really are ... oh ... gosh ... oh ... heavens ... you’re going to ... do this again ... to my ... eeeeeiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii.” She let her mind spiral away in ecstasy. It didn’t take long before pure bliss burned away all thought.

George let her squirt all over his chin and neck again. He removed his finger from her pussy and held her ass tightly so she wouldn't buck away from him. When he sat back, she was still spraying. He closed his eyes just in time, listening to his mother moan and mewl. He didn't know which was better, cumming or making her cum. If only there was some way to kill those two birds with one stone. He wiped her cum from his eyes and stood. His mother's expression was still twisted. Her eyes were rolled back, and her teeth grimaced. She looked a little like she was having a stroke. She made a soft, guttural sound and trembled. She sounded a little like she was having a stroke. George wanted to kiss her on her soft, full lips. But he knew that was verboten. He instead kissed her cheek and cupped her boob with his hand, hefting it and feeling its weight. He had her naked before him: hands, boobs, and pussy. He'd just cum between her thighs. *Nossy was right about this.*

"Oh ... George ... oh my ..." Anna blinked her eyes and returned to the solar system. She looked up at his handsome face. "Gosh ... I covered you again." She wiped the wetness from his cheeks with her hands. She was tempted to taste it, but curiosity didn't get the better of her. She moved her hands to straighten her bodice, but of course she was naked. "Okay ... okay ... you really can make me feel that way ... anytime." The faint hint of plans for the future tried to sneak into her mind. She was suddenly not as keen to have George leave town for college. Maybe that vocational school in Covington was an option. She shook her head to clear it. That would be selfish. Despite their dirty talk, she wasn't a bad mother. "Let's get cleaned up and prepare for the day. I hope Mrs. Valentine slept well." She turned the showerhead back toward them, and they cleaned themselves off.

Anna had to playfully slap away her son's hands a few times, but they dressed without any more funny business. Soon, they were ready. Since they were a little early, they first dropped off their soiled clothes at the nearest laundry facility. Then they woke Gwendolyn. She was happy to see them. Joined back together, the threesome breakfasted on the move and climbed up to floor two hundred.

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"S'il te plaît, Océane, c'est une urgence. C'est moi, l'invité le plus précoce et j'ai besoin d'aide." Kapnos stood with her hands on her hips, staring at the red, flashing screen that floated in front of her.

"Je serai heureux de vous aider. Veuillez entrer le mot de passe de l'hôtelier et vous aurez accès." Océane sounded perfectly reasonable, albeit unhelpful.

Kapnos and the computer went back and forth for a while.

Anna sat in an armchair, a worried expression on her face. She could tell Océane was unwilling to help, and she didn't know how else they would get access to the hotelier's computer. It wasn't just the lifeboat. This terminal was connected to most of the hotel's systems. George might be able to see the hotel's camera feeds. That would tell them how many of those shadows were in the spire's common areas. They might even see what was in the hotel's central ring.

George fooled around with his own floating screen while Kapnos tried to convince the hotel to give them access. He wasn't able to gain any useful information on the wrong side of the firewall, but keeping busy helped his mind focus on getting home and not on his mother. He glanced at his mother's worried face. He smiled. When she saw him, her face softened into a happy grin. Even in the middle of all that hell, they had found something amazing.

"I got it!" Kapnos jumped up and down, clapping her gloved hands. Her boobs, large for her small frame, lurched under her bodice with each leap. "The password is beautifulisland5."

"What? No ... really?" George turned back to the screen and entered the password. It worked! "That's amazing, Noss ... um ... Mrs. Valentine. How did you do it?"

Anna narrowed her eyes and looked between Gwendolyn and her son. Her son was swiping his hands quickly, looking for something on the computer. She wondered what he would do first.

"I offered to tell the hotel my secrets in exchange for access. I assured Océane that she wouldn't get in trouble." Kapnos beamed with pride at a job well done. "That's basically it."

"Your secrets?" Anna cocked her head. "Why would a hotel computer be interested in you? No offense, Mrs. Valentine."

"I've lived an interesting life." Kapnos shrugged and looked at the ceiling. "Je vous raconterai mes histoires quand je serai seul. Je te le promets."

"Je te le rappellerai, mon ami," Océane said.

"Did the hotel computer just say that you were its friend?" Anna straightened her bodice. She checked her reflection in the glass display case nearby. Her hair was perfectly pinned, her hat was in place, and her clothes looked immaculate. Anyone who saw her would not realize what a degenerate she'd been only hours before.

Kapnos smiled politely, but didn't answer.

"Found it." George gave a small whoop of satisfaction. "All the language modules are here. Now I just have to get the English one to work with this version of Océane."

Silence fell over the room. George now had access to most of the hotel, but first he needed to be able to communicate with it.

Kapnos moved closer to Anna. "I must say, Mrs. Zaal, you look revitalized today. Your skin is glowing, and you look so ... vigorous." She spoke softly so as not to disturb George's work. "What's your secret? I haven't had a good night's sleep since *it* happened."

Anna blushed furiously. "You might share your secrets with strange computers, Mrs. Valentine. But I'll hold to mine." She couldn't make eye contact with the woman.

"Very well." Kapnos nodded sagely. "But whatever it is, I would stick to the regimen. You look breathtaking amidst all this." She waved her hand in an all-encompassing gesture at the nightmare hotel surrounding them. "It really is remarkable. If you could bottle your secret, I'd pay a pretty penny for it."

"I doubt that." Anna gritted her teeth in discomfort.

"I have it!" George lifted up a finger. "Océane, do you know who I am?"

"Of course," Océane said. "You are Mr. George Zaal, staying in room 4323. Or, actually, you've stayed in quite a few rooms I see."

Anna jumped to her feet and clapped. "It seems your translation services are no longer required, Mrs. Valentine. Thank you for your service." She curtsied to the newest member of their party. "But I do hope you'll stay on as our friend."

"It was a pleasure to serve." Kapnos returned the curtsy. "I am honored to be and remain your friend."

Both women gave George chaste hugs and congratulations as he worked through the cameras in their spire. He sat while they stood near him. The group found nothing remarkable until they got down to the base of the tower. A malignant growth had mushroomed up the stairwell from the central ring, stopping at the fourth floor. All three humans crowded around the screen and stared in horror.

"Um ... Océane ... what am I looking at?" Anna could see the black form growing and shrinking, like it was pulled by some internal tide. There was a rainbow sheen on the surface of it, like on an oil slick. She couldn't quite make out the objects floating just beneath the thing's opaque surface, but she could guess.

"That is the Newest Guest," Océane said. When asked to provide all the information she could on the Newest Guest, Océane did.

"It communicated with you in binary through the hardlines that connect you to the other two nerve centers?" George tried to get images from the ring or the other spire, but no camera feeds came through. Nothing came through.

“Affirmative. It made a deal with me that –” Océane said.

“Yes, we know about the broken deal.” Anna turned away from the horrifying image on screen. “Where are its shadow men? Like the one that George killed?”

“They are outside,” Océane’s voice dropped. If the AI had intended to sound ominous, she succeeded.

“What are you doing, George?” Anna put a hand on his strong shoulder. He was seated as she stood behind him. She could smell the soap from his perfectly combed hair. The soap that had washed away her cum. What an insane day she was having.

“I’ve launched a repair drone. They have cameras.” The outside of the spire came into view as the drone gained distance from its launch bay. The camera spiraled its way down the spire until it came to the hotel’s central ring.

“Oh ... gods.” Kapnos put a hand to her mouth. “What are they doing?”

“They’re building something.” George kept the drone at a distance. The central ring wasn’t empty. There was a structure in the middle for zero-gravity enthusiasts. On that structure, figures moved in EV suits. It was clear from their joints moving in all the wrong directions that they weren’t human.

“Those shadow creatures need space suits?” Anna tried to make sense of what she was seeing. She moved closer, her boobs pressing into the back of her son’s head. Not long ago, she would have quickly pulled away from such a gesture, but now it felt comforting. She just hoped Gwendolyn didn’t notice.

“It makes sense. The Newest Guest could have breached the hotel’s airlocks, but it must need the air as much as we do.” George thought of something. “Océane, is it using your food or water?”

“It is not drawing from the supplies in this tower. I don’t know about the other stocks,” Océane said.

“I don’t think it wanted the dead bodies to eat. It wanted to ... do whatever it’s doing with the body parts.” George was getting a bad feeling. Or, more accurately, a worse feeling. “Could it be sending messages from the ring or the other spire? Is the comm infrastructure damaged there?”

Kapnos nodded vigorously, following his logic. “The Newest Guest could be using the other Océanes from the other two nerve centers to keep rescuers away. Sending out some sort of quarantine distress call.” Her already healthy desire to leave the hotel shot through the roof. “To give it time to build whatever it’s building on the ring.”

“Océane, can you tell what they’re building?” Anna watched the drone camera move to the other spire.

“The comm infrastructure looks undamaged on the opposite spire,” Océane said. “And to answer your question, Mrs. Zaal, whatever they’re building is outside of my knowledge base.”

“It’s a plasma-based thruster.” George sent the drone back to capture the ongoing construction. “Your reactors use deuterium, right?”

“Yes,” Océane said.

“The Newest Guest will use that for fuel, converting it into plasma. You can’t set up thrusters on the spires, so it makes sense that it would build its thruster in the middle of the ring.” George found that he was sweating. He wiped his brow with the back of his hand. He had been so caught up in his discoveries that he hadn’t even noticed his mother’s comforting weight on his back and head. He leaned back into her bosom, putting his hand on the glove holding his shoulder.

“Um ... where does it want to go?” Kapnos sat down as heavily as her slight body would allow. This was all terrible news.

George looked out the window at the brightest, bluest star. “I assume it wants more body parts. It’s probably going to Earth. Maybe it was headed to Earth and missed and latched on here. Or maybe ...” He grimaced. “Océane, which direction did the Skyrmion burst come from?”

“It came from the inner solar system.” Océane’s chipper, helpful voice had vanished. The AI sounded subdued.

“It’s not an alien. It’s something we created.” George waved away the drone feed and moved on to the matter of the lifeboat. “We have to leave this hotel right away. Is the executive lifeboat operational? I’d like to inspect it personally.”

“It is operational. But I cannot allow access without a retinal scan.” Océane almost sounded sorry.

“Let’s not go through all this again. Remember, I’m sharing my secrets with you.” Kapnos rolled her eyes.

“It’s not a matter of choice for me. I have no control of the locks in the hotel,” Océane said. “The airlock to the executive lifeboat won’t unlock without a retinal scan from the hotelier.”

“Oh ... gods.” Anna stood straight and paced the room. “There must be some other way.”

George suddenly felt exhausted. There were other questions to ask Océane, but they would have to wait. He slumped in his chair, looking from his mother to Kapnos. He thought about the contents in the plastic box tucked into Kapnos’s satchel. “I suppose we’ll have to find the hotelier’s eyeball.”

Kapnos nodded her head thoughtfully.

Anna put her hand to her mouth and stared at her son, horrified.

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“There’s ... an incoming message!” Constance moved quickly toward the green flashing light.

“Wait, it could be a trap.” Roy held his wife’s gloved hand to restrain her.

“That doesn’t make any sense. Who’s trying to trick us?” Constance sighed in exasperation.

“Answer it.” Delores was desperate for good news.

“It’s Mom!” Lillian saw her mother’s name in the sender’s slot. She stepped closer to the blinking green light and waved her hand. Suddenly her mother’s anxious face was in the room with them.

“Lillian, are you okay?” Anna scanned the room. There looked to be a hoard of packaged food in one corner. The place was a mess, with makeshift beds unmade on the floor. The Havershams and Delores were in the room with her daughter.

“I’m okay, Mom.” Lillian nodded. A wide smile curved her lips. It felt like it might split her face. She’d forgotten what it felt like to smile.

“You’ve gotten the comms to work.” Constance dared a grin of her own.

“Only the internal comms. And George got Océane to speak English.” Anna filled them in on all their news. Smiles faded the more the survivors learned about the Newest Guest. When Anna finished her debrief, she looked around the cramped room. “I’m glad you made it back safely, Mrs. Salazar.”

“What?” Delores cocked her head in confusion.

“But where are Ms. Pemberton, Mr. Dmytruk, and my husband?” Anna pressed her lips into a tight line. She could tell from their expressions that she wasn’t going to like the answer.

“Your husband is in league with –” Roy started.

“Quiet, dear.” Constance put her gloved fingers over her husband’s mouth. “Mr. Dmytruk was most likely murdered in his room. We don’t know who did it. But the list

of suspects is short.” She noted the relief on Anna’s face upon learning that her son’s dueling partner was murdered. Constance described the incident in detail.

“I see.” Anna didn’t have the foggiest idea what to make of it. She glanced at George, whose forehead was knitted in thought. He sat just off camera. Anna straightened her bodice. “And Ms. Pemberton?” She listened in horror as Constance described what had happened to Edith. When Constance finished the story, Anna found it difficult to speak. She had been very lucky that there had been just one of those shadow creatures in the restaurant that morning. Anna composed herself. “And my husband?”

Lillian piped up. “We haven’t seen Dad since he ran after those things. I think he’s going to try and kill them all.”

“Oh ... I see.” Things were so much worse than what Anna had thought. They hadn’t seen her husband in any of the common areas. They would have to find him and rescue him, too, it seemed. “We’ll come down to you and find Ernest. Then, we have one thing to retrieve before we can leave on the lifeboat. Expect us in a few hours.” She looked to George who nodded his agreement. “With any luck, we’ll be off this hotel by tomorrow.” She said her goodbyes and ended the call. They would need a massive amount of luck. How on Earth would they ever retrieve the hotelier’s eyeball?

Chapter 15

Oh ... Gods ... It's Going to Get Me

"Mr. and Mrs. Zaal?" Océane said.

"Please don't call us that." Anna's cheeks were already red from their quick descent down the stairway. They turned redder with embarrassment. "It makes it sound like we're married."

"George Zaal, Anna Zaal, and Earliest Guest." Océane tried again.

It was Kapnos's turn to blush. Gwendolyn Valentine's skin was alabaster white, and with her blond hair pinned up, she was sure the others saw the crimson color spread from her cheeks to the back of her neck. "Please don't call me that, Océane. My name is Mrs. Valentine."

"Why would the computer call you that?" Anna looked over at their companion with her eyebrows raised in confusion.

"Please. George Zaal, Anna Zaal, and Mrs. Valentine. I have urgent news." Océane didn't like to cut in, but it really was urgent.

"What is it, Océane?" Anna put a hand on George's shoulder and stopped him. She moved close to him, her body tensing. The computer wouldn't interrupt them for good news.

"I have spotted two of the Newest Guest's drones moving rapidly up the stairwell," Océane said. "They just passed floor one-forty."

"The shadow creatures? Why didn't you give us more of a warning?" George pulled his pistol and dropped his pack to the ground. He straightened his tie and checked their current floor. They were on one hundred forty-four. He fished the spare pistol out of the bottom of the backpack and loaded it. He made eye contact with Kapnos, and she nodded. *Of course she can shoot. She's been around for a thousand years.* He made sure the safety was on and tossed the gun to her.

"My visual detection is rudimentary in Version 3.2. They move in a way that is hard for me to detect." Océane spoke in a matter-of-fact tone.

"What's going on? Why did you give Mrs. Valentine a gun?" Anna looked back and forth between her companions.

"I'm trained with a pistol, Mrs. Zaal." Kapnos hiked her skirts and bent on one knee. She aimed her pistol down the stairway at a point where the switchback went out of view.

“Get behind me, Mom.” George had learned how to shoot in a duel. They hadn’t taught him to drop to a knee. That wasn’t manly. He stood on a stair, his feet evenly spaced, arm extended. He pointed at the same spot as Kapnos.

“I really wish the elevators were working.” Anna climbed several stairs behind them and drew her sword. She was far enough away that she wouldn’t stab George or Gwendolyn by mistake but close enough that she might help if one of the creatures made it past their gunfire. Her heart thundered in her ears. She struggled to relax her muscles. “Whatever happens, I’m proud of you, sunshine.”

“Thanks, Mom.” George took slow, even breaths as he’d been taught. He was pleased to see that his hand wasn’t shaking. “We’re going to be fine. This will all ...” The creatures came into view, using their momentum to run high on the wall. They weren’t where he’d been aiming. They moved fast with their disjointed limbs. He felt like the one he’d seen before had been awkward, but these were swift and sure-footed. He tried to follow their path as they landed on the floor and bolted up the stairs toward them in a zigzag pattern. He exhaled and pulled the trigger. His pistol hissed.

“I think ... they’re ... learning.” Kapnos squeezed the trigger. The creatures zigzagged in a random pattern as they ascended. It made aiming difficult. “Mrs. Haversham didn’t say ... they moved ... like this ... when Mr. Haversham shot one. Oh ... gods ... it’s going to get me. It’s going to ...” Her arms shook as she fired again and again. The creatures steadily closed the distance.

“Unload your pistol. Spray bullets at them.” George did just that. Rather than trying to hit the creatures he sprayed a cloud of bullets in every possible direction the creature could go. It worked. The creature on the left sounded like a leaky airlock seal, before exploding in a splash of body parts and black, viscous goo.

Kapnos dropped her sidearm and fell backward in panic. The creature on the right leapt into the air. It sailed some twelve feet high in the vaulted space and crashed down on Kapnos.

George turned his pistol on the creature, but it didn’t hiss out any more bullets. He was out of ammunition. “Shit ... shit ...”

“Oh ... gods!” Anna could see that Gwendolyn’s arms were pinned. She thought about what had happened to poor Edith. She leapt down the stairs and thrust her sword toward the top of the creature’s head. She could see a floating brain and eyes below the black, opaque surface. She aimed for the brain. She landed on her feet as the sword pierced the creature. With a cry of pain, her ankle gave way, and she tumbled down the stairs past Gwendolyn and the creature, leaving the sword behind.

“Nossy! Mom!” George dove to stop his mother’s fall down the stairs. He caught her with his chest, and they landed with a thud several feet below Kapnos. George could hear

hissing from the creature, and then a wet explosion. He looked up to see Kapnos, covered in goo, scrambling away from what was left of the creature.

“Are you okay ... Mrs. Valentine?” Anna stood and winced when she put weight on her right ankle.

“I think ... I think ...” Kapnos looked down at the mess on her bodice. She quickly tore the clothes off her. She would make new clothes later. She would need to add some mass, but that was fine. She wasn’t ever again using the part of her that was soaked in the Newest Guest’s vile liquids. “I need to wash myself.”

Anna blinked. How had the woman ripped her own clothes like that? Maybe it was superstrength brought on from the situation. She’d heard about things like that. “Do you need me to wash you?” Anna limped toward their new friend.

“No ... no ... I’ll do it.” Kapnos needed to leave behind her skin, too. But she couldn’t very well do that in front of the humans. “Let’s find rooms on this floor. I need some time to clean and ... rest.”

“Yes, of course.” Anna reached for George to support her. She winced again. “And I’ll need to give my ankle a little rest before continuing.” She watched Gwendolyn rush off in her bra and panties, discarding her blackened gloves as she left. When she turned to her son, she saw the hungry look in his eyes. “Avert your eyes, George. The poor woman almost died.”

“Sorry, Mom.” He met her gaze and smiled with relief. “You saved Mrs. Valentine. You’re a hero.”

“I guess it runs in the family.” She found that her hand was shaking when she patted his backside. They gathered their things and followed Gwendolyn. George supported her weight as she leaned on him for a time. Then he picked her up and carried her to the safety of a barricaded room. It wasn’t lost on Anna that when he carried her across the threshold, they were mimicking a newlywed couple.

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“Do you think Mrs. Valentine is okay?” Anna sat on the edge of the bed and put her face in her hands. She was still trembling. “Maybe I should go over and help her.”

“I think she wants to deal with it on her own.” George guessed that Kapnos was going to need to change into her true form to clean up. And he knew she needed absolute privacy for that. He kneeled in front of his mother and carefully removed her shoes and socks.

“How’s the ankle?” He held her calf gently and raised her ankle. He kissed it softly and reverently.

“It hurts. But that ... helps.” Anna pulled up her skirts, showing him lots of leg. More bare skin than was proper. But what did it matter now?

“I can feel you trembling, Mom. Does it hurt that bad?” George gently kissed the inside of her calf, slowly moving his lips up the inside of her leg.

“It’s just shock ... I think. I ... ooohhh ... Georgie. Should we ... do this now?” She lost sight of him as he kissed his way up the inside of her thigh and disappeared under her skirts.

“I was scared, too.” George pulled her panties to the side. He could smell the fruity pungency of her excitement. “I thought I might lose you, Mom.”

“I ... didn’t say ... I was frightened. Just shocked and ... ooooohhhhhhhhhhhh.” Anna arched her spine and fell back onto the bed. She gripped the blanket in her gloved fingers. Her son’s finger was inside her again. And his lips were on her little button.

“Mmmmmppphhhhh.” George said around her clit.

“Uuuugghhhhhh ... I don’t want to ruin ... my clothes.” Anna’s legs were in the air, her toes pointing. Her ankle throbbed. “Undress me ... before ... you make me ... squirt all over.”

George removed himself from her pussy and stood. He loosened her skirts and removed them with an uneven mix of haste and caution for her ankle. While he worked, she removed her gloves and frantically unbuttoned her bodice. He pulled off her panties and spared a long glance at the neatly trimmed triangle of blond hair between her legs. “I’m going to get undressed, too.”

“You’re right. I *was* frightened, sunshine. I still am. I want to forget those creatures. What they almost did to us. To poor Mrs. Valentine.” Anna removed her bodice and went to work on her bra. “I need to be close to you.” She bit her bottom lip, struggling with a decision. She tossed the bra away and unpinned her hair. She flung her hat to the floor and scooted backward onto the center of the bed. She watched her son frantically undress. When his voracious-looking penis came into view, she made up her mind. “Georgie?”

“Yeah, Mom?” George was down to just his socks. He paused and looked over at her. His mind reeled at the beauty of her flowing blond hair, large pale breasts hanging to either side of her chest, and wonderfully curvaceous body.

“What we did in the shower this morning was almost like intercourse.” She paused, judging his expression. He seemed eager. Of course he was. She almost smiled, but she

was scared. Not fear of the Newest Guest and its creatures now. She was worried about what she had become, and what she would become with this decision. When he didn't say anything, she continued. "There are condoms hidden in the bottom of an outside pocket in our pack. Fetch them."

"You hid condoms?" George went over to the pack and placed it on the desk barricading the door.

"I picked some up along the way yesterday. When you weren't looking. I ... thought it best to be prepared. Just in case." She watched his taut, lithe butt as he rummaged through the pack. "No, sunshine. The other pocket. You'll find the condoms at the bottom."

George found them. Two condoms were carefully tucked into a fold in the pocket. He pulled them out reverently, like they were worth a vast fortune. In reality, they were worth more than that to him. He turned back to his mother and held them up, triumphant. "Gods, you're beautiful."

"So are you." Anna struggled to keep breathing. "Do you know how to put one on?"

George shook his head.

"You've slept with two women, and you don't know how to put on a condom? I failed as a mother in this regard. Come here." She beckoned him over, watching his rigid penis sway side to side as he leapt onto the bed and dropped to his knees next to her. His veiny thing hung cantilevered over her breasts. "Give me one."

"Here." George handed her a condom and tossed the other one onto the nightstand.

"Okay." Anna tore the foil packet. Her fingers still trembled, but for entirely new reasons. She pulled the condom out and placed it at the tip of his penis. "Maybe I should have grabbed some bigger condoms." *How is this ever going to fit inside of me?* She remembered how happy Delores had looked with his penis inside her. It *would* fit. Just as her son was learning about sex, she would have to relearn sex. "We have to roll it onto your penis like this." She glanced at the sacred ring on her left hand and tried to banish the guilt that hit her. *This is right. What we're doing is getting us through this nightmare. It's good for both of us.* "HmMMM ... I'm having a hard time. The head of your thing is really wide. I haven't tried to do this on a penis like yours before."

George could plainly see that his mother was nervous. She had been through so much, and now she was plunging further into uncharted waters. "We don't have to do this if you don't want to."

"I want to, sunshine. It's the condom that seems to have lost its nerve." She continued to try and roll it without stretching it enough that it might break. "There we go. You roll it

down the shaft just ... like ... that.” The condom was on. It looked like it wasn’t going to break. She exhaled. “Now get between my legs.”

George did, but not how she meant. He lowered his face to her pussy again and quickly inserted a finger.

“Oh ... George ... oooohhhhhh ... Georgie ... I think I’m wet enough ... we can start ... oohhhhhhhh.” She gripped the blanket and raised her face so she could look down at him greedily sucking on her clitoris. “You are soooooooooo ... giving ... sunshine ... you’ll make some woman ... a very happy wife someday. Uuuuggghhhhhh ... soooooooooo ... very happy ... someday.” Her hips began rocking on their own. The pain in her ankle was completely forgotten as she crossed her legs behind his head.

“Mmmmmmmpppphhh.” George had learned some new tricks about his mother’s pussy that Kapnos hadn’t shown him. He could make her hips buck when he nibbled very gently on her clit. He hoped Kapnos was by now clean and listening to the wall as his mother’s wails grew louder and louder.

Propped up on her elbows, Anna watched her son work her vagina like a skilled maestro playing a beloved violin. Pride and awe swirled in her heart. A tempest of ecstasy churned in her mind. “Oooohhhhhh ... Georgie ... oooohhhhhhhh ... gods ... it’s happening again ... you’re going to ... uuuuuugggghhhhhhhhhh.” She shook violently as her orgasm erupted, eyes rolling back and head dropping to the mattress. Her mind spun like a twisting cloud of dust in an ecstatic nebula. When she came back to herself, her son’s face hovered over hers, and his penis and heavy testicles rested on her gently curving belly. She could see her stuff dripping off his nose. She had made a mess of him again. “I ... better ... help you find ... the right hole.” Her face twitched with the aftershocks of pleasure.

“Yeah, okay.” George lowered his hips and let the head of his dick rest against her pussy. There was no doubt in his mind that they would get off that hotel. They had to. The universe couldn’t extinguish a woman as perfect as his mother.

“I’m going to ... put it in.” Anna reached down and grasped his penis. She brought it to the right place and held it there. “Now push forward ... uuuggghhhhhh ... slowly! Slowly, slowly!” Fiery pain seized her vagina as he stretched her. She slammed her legs down on the bed, which brought more pain from her damaged ankle. Anna grimaced. When she saw the look of concern on his cum-covered face, she tried to give him a reassuring smile. “It’s okay. After everything that’s happened ... in this hotel ... I want to ... be close to you. If this doesn’t work ... uuuggghhhhhh ... at least we’ll know what it’s like to have you ... inside me again. Now ... push just a little more ... uuuurrrrggghhhhhhhh ... rrrrrrggghhhhhhhhhh.”

“Mom?” George stared at this mother. His whole eighteen years of existence, she had always been perfectly composed and proper. Now she was ... *snarling*. His sweet, confident mother was naked under him, writhing with a definite snarl twisting her lips. He didn't think this was pleasure, but continued the steady, slow pressure with his hips. He prayed she'd adjust. Kapnos hadn't warned him that he wouldn't fit. He tried to remember what she'd said when she'd thought he'd already slept with his mom. Kapnos had said something about how tight his mother was. *This was expected*. “Are you adjusting yet?”

“Rrrraaaaooooorrrrrrrrrrr.” Anna tossed her head and stared at her son like she was a caged animal. “Rrrrrrrrrgggghhhhhhhhhhh ... you're ... going to break me ... break me ... break me. How did ... Mrs. Salazar ... do this?”

“It was like this for her at first, too.” George lied. It was a white lie for sure. He tried not to feel bad for stating mistruths at such a vulnerable moment for both of them. His mother was tight, she would adjust. “She said her husband was much smaller than me.”

“Like ... your father ... gods.” Anna found her breathing the way she'd been taught in her pregnancy classes. The last time she'd used that technique was over eighteen years ago, but she found herself falling right back into it. The pain started to dissipate as her muscles relaxed. “Put ... all of it ... in ... and let's see what we're working with.” She continued her specialized breathing and nodded encouragement at him.

“Sure.” George delved deeper into his mother. When he bottomed out, her eyes rolled back, and she convulsed. That looked like pleasure. He smiled. She was adjusting. It was going to work.

“That spot ... uuuggghhhhhhh ... you found ... a spot ... deep inside me ... oooohhhhhhhhh ... George ... the head of your thing ... is pressed against ... pressed ... pressed ... eeeeeeeiiiiiiiiiiiiiii.” Ecstasy swirled through her, mixing with the pain and carrying it away.

“Wow ... Mom ...” George put his hands on her delicate shoulders and lifted himself up so he could take in the beauty of her orgasm. Her heavy breasts rippled and shook on either side of her chest. The muscles in her neck strained. Her face was twisted by what was now clearly pleasure. This was the first orgasm his cock would give her. He tried very hard to memorize all of it. Although, he was sure, it wouldn't be the last. “Are you cumming, Mom?” He wanted to hear her say it.

“Nnnnngggggggggggg,” Anna said.

“Oh, well.” George sighed. He pulled out slowly and pressed back into her again and again. He gazed down at the way the pink of her pussy exposed itself with each backstroke. The seal she made around his dick was perfectly tight. She was stretched for the girth of his cock, but not a smidgeon more. “So beautiful.” Under his fingers, he

could feel the muscles in her shoulders tense and relax with each thrust. The only thing tarnishing a perfect moment was the condom. He couldn't feel much with it on. It didn't matter, his mother was fast approaching her second orgasm. He would rather drive her crazy with pleasure than satisfy his dick.

"Oooohhhhhhhh ... sunshine ... sunshine ... oooohhhhhhhh ... you're filling my vagina with sunshine ... eeeeeeeeeiiiiiiiiiii." Anna gripped her son's strong arms, digging her nails into his flesh. There were no gloves between them. No clothes at all. No social conventions. The only barrier was the condom. "I feel ... so good ... I can't believe ... I can feel ... this good ... I'm going to ... climax ... again."

"Tell me you're ... ugh ... ugh ... going to cum, Mom." He sped up his hips a little. It seemed like her pain was in the past.

"No dirty talk ... right now ... I just ... uuuggghhhhhhhh ... want to be here ... with you ... my ... perfect ... Georgie." Without thinking, Anna pulled him down so that their warm bellies pressed delightfully together. She lifted her head and touched her lips to his. "Kiss ... me."

George didn't need to be asked twice. He planted his lips firmly on hers and explored her mouth with his tongue. It seemed the attack on the stairway had pushed her across several bright lines. And they weren't ever going back. He was sure of that. Her tongue danced with his at first, but then an orgasm overtook her. Her moans and screams were muffled by his mouth as he greedily kissed her, continuing to steadily hump with long, steady strokes.

"Mmmppphhhhhhhh ... mmmpppphhhhhhhhh." Anna's hips bucked into her son's, pushing him to a faster tempo. As she came down from another soaring climax, she didn't know if her vagina could take harder thrusting from the vigorous, teenage penis, but her body seemed to have plans of its own. His tongue was still in her mouth. She twirled and played with it, their tongues learning to dance together for the first time. Her feet bounced in the air with their increasing tempo. Her fingers pressed into his back, pulling his lean chest into her soft breasts.

George broke the kiss. He gazed into her dilated pupils. "I know you said no ... ugh ... ugh ... dirty talk. But ... uuuggghh ... can I say something?"

"Anything ... anything ... sunshine." Anna tried to smile, but she was too overcome by lust.

"I want ... to take you ... like a bitch again." George pulled out of her pussy and sat on his knees. He looked down at her glistening, swollen lips. Her pussy gaped wonderfully, staying open for him. "Will you ... be my bitch ... Mom?"

“Yes ... yes ... of course.” Anna clambered onto her hands and knees. She winced when she banged her ankle on the mattress. She’d forgotten she’d hurt it. She’d forgotten about the attack completely. She’d forgotten about everything else in the solar system but the two of them. When she was in position, she looked back at him over her shoulder. His penis didn’t look so frightful with the condom covering it. She was glad it had held. “Well ... are you going to take me ... um ... like a bitch?” She was able to smile now, and she gave him a wide grin. “You can mount me whenever you’re ... oooooohhhhhhhhh.” And just like that her son was back inside her, stretching and pressing buttons she hadn’t known were there until a short time ago.

“Gods ... you’re perfect.” He tried to absorb the beauty of her narrow waist expanding rapidly out to her hips and ass. The arc of her spine made him shudder. The way her messy, loose hair cascaded over her shoulders made him want to grab a handful. Instead, he took hold of her hips and found a rhythm behind her. He looked down and saw her pussy stretched in a tight seal around the condom. Above that, her cute, pink asshole stared up at him. *My mom is letting me see her asshole. This is really happening.* Even without much feeling on his dick, he felt intense pleasure. The woman of his dreams had given herself to him. *Nossy’s going to be so proud of me. I hope she’s listening.* “Does it feel good, Mom?”

“Ooohhhhhhhh ... you saved us ... sunshine ... so that we could be connected ... uuugghh ... uugghhhh ... uuughhhhh ... connected ... like this. It was ... meant ... to be.” Anna looked back over her shoulder. “I’ve never ... felt closer ... to anyone. How does it feel ... ooohhhhh ... for you?”

“Same ... Mom ...” He saw no need to bring up that the condom was getting in the way.

“I’m going to ... cum for you ... Georgie ... I’m going to ...” She let her head fall forward, her gaze on her hanging breasts jumping underneath her. “Eeeeeeeeeiiiiiiiiiiiiiii.” Anna was lost in a sea of pleasure. She let him ride her like a bitch for a long while. After ten minutes, she dropped her head to the mattress. She bit the sheet as he hammered away behind her. After several more orgasms, she looked over her shoulder again. “Are you ... going to cum ... Georgie? You can let it out. The condom ... ugh ... ugh ... will protect us.”

“It’s okay ... ah ... ah ... I don’t need ... to cum ... Mom.”

A frown turned her lips down for the first time since they arrived at that room. “Can you ... um ... feel everything ... okay?” She could see her own ass bouncing with each stroke. She knew he had staying power, but surely he should have finished by now.

George shook his head.

“Ohhh ... I’ve been so selfish.” Anna pulled herself off his penis. “You’ve been ... so generous ... George. Would you like me ... to finish you ... with my mouth?” She pulled

off the condom and tossed it away. She pumped him with her hands, a familiar feeling now. “Your father likes ... when I use my mouth. Would you like that?” She silently cursed herself for bringing up his father.

George nodded.

“Okay. Lay down, and I’ll take care of everything.” She put him on his back. “Without the condom ... it looks quite formidable again.” She kissed the domed head and cupped one of his heavy balls with her left hand. Now, her husband’s ring was on her son’s hairy, wrinkly flesh. She let that thought float away and opened her lips wide. This wasn’t going to be easy, but George had pleased her with his mouth several times. It was the least she could do to return the favor. She lowered herself and found she couldn’t get much more than the head into her mouth without gagging. *Everything about him is so different from what I’m used to!* She rolled her tongue around it and bobbed her head. Trying to make up for her lack of skill with a large penis by working with gusto.

“Oh ... Mom ... that’s good.” George couldn’t believe his eyes. Kapnos was of course much more accomplished at blowjobs. But the way his mother swallowed his cockhead distorted her pretty face beautifully. “Keep massaging my ... aaahhhhhh ... balls.” The awkward blowjob was so intimate and full of energy at the same time. “I’m ... going to cum ... Mom.”

“Mmmmmpppphhhhhh.” Anna bobbed on the head of his penis. He had swallowed her cum, so she would do the same for him. She hummed with determination. Suddenly, salty heat forcefully filled her mouth. “Gggggggpppphhhhhh.” She tried to swallow, but she didn’t have time before the next eruption was in her mouth. So, instead, she suctioned her lips around his penis and let him fill her mouth.

“Mmmmmppppmmmmmmmm.” She tried to encourage him without words.

“Aaaaaahhhhhhhhhh ... Mom ... aaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhh ... gods ... that’s good.” George’s body spasmed as he launched more and more cum into his mother’s mouth.

“Mmmpppphhhhhhhh.” Anna’s cheeks swelled. She was running out of room. But thankfully, her son’s orgasm finally crested. “Mmmmmmm,” she hummed around his penis. Her cheeks felt like a chipmunk’s. Thank goodness he was finished. *If he’d had any...* And then there was another eruption in her mouth. She’d forgotten how he always spurted more at the end. Coughing, Anna pulled her mouth off his penis, letting his sperm spill down her chin and onto her breasts. She sat back and watched him shoot two more blasts into the air. “Ugh ... gosh ... Georgie.” She said between coughs.

“Gods ... Mom ...” George’s orgasm subsided. He looked over at his mother’s shocked face. White, sticky cum dripped all over her chin and tits. She looked so out of her element that George laughed. His hearty chuckles filling the room.

“What ... what?” Anna didn’t know what was going on, but his laughter was infectious. “What’s ... so funny ... George?” Her high-pitched giggle harmonized with his lower laughter.

“I’m just ... so happy ... Mom.” He grabbed her arm and pulled her close, resting her cum-covered face on his chest. He circled an arm around her.

“I’m happy too, sunshine.” Anna snuggled into him, her body still buzzing from all the orgasms he’d given her. “You’re a miracle.”

“You are, too.” His laughter died down.

They cuddled together for about twenty minutes before Anna got up and limped to the shower. They would need to check on Gwendolyn and continue down the spire. The others were expecting them.

Chapter 16

The Very Top of the Spire

“So, you’ve come to take me to the bottom of the well.” Ernest held his pistol before him, aiming at the nearing shadow creature.

The black monster held out its arm to him in a peaceful gesture. The elbow turned the wrong way. Two brown eyes floated under the surface of its face. A femur drifted in its chest cavity, just on the edge of visibility.

“I’ve stared into the well, and there is no end. It goes on forever.” Ernest lowered his pistol and put it in his holster. He was close to the thing at the center of the hotel. It was only about ten floors down from his current location. There were three of its scouts in front of him. Two moved out from rooms to cut off his retreat. He looked over his shoulder. The things moved with grace. They had been so dumb and clumsy not long ago.

The lead creature beckoned him toward the stairs and turned away from him, demonstrating confidence that he would follow.

“What has it done to me? I feel ... more.” Ernest adjusted his sunglasses over his black eyes. He looked at his torn jacket sleeve and the black veins that branched under his exposed skin.

The creature beckoned him again and kept walking.

A sudden burst of confidence hit Ernest. He felt understanding, connectedness, and resolution. His feet moved as he followed the creature.

The other creatures fell in around him. Walking with their graceful, disjointed gaits.

“There is a bottom to the well. It’s Earth. It was a gravity well I saw. And all we have to do is fall in.” Ernest nodded. “I’ll help you.”

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“Ready to go, Mom?” George swung the backpack onto his shoulders and straightened his tie. He’d already removed the barricade and opened the door, quickly checking the hall. It was empty.

“Ready.” Anna smiled at George. She straightened her bodice, tightened her sword belt, and gave the room one last inspection to see if they had forgotten anything. She gazed at the bed for a long time. That would always be the first place she’d had sex with her amazing son. In her mind, she was no longer telling herself the affair would end when they arrived back on floor one-oh-three. Instead, she was planning for how she might continue without Ernest, or anyone else, finding out. It was a ludicrous notion, but was it any less insane than what had become of their hotel? Satisfied with her appraisal of the room, she turned and limped toward her son.

“You’re limping a lot. Does your ankle hurt that bad?” He frowned at her and offered a hand.

“My ankle hurts.” She stopped and gave him a mischievous look. “You want to hear something wild?”

George nodded, giving her a wary look.

Anna made an exaggerated shocked face, with her mouth wide open. “My vagina hasn’t hurt this much since I popped you out more than eighteen years ago.” She put a hand over her mouth like she couldn’t believe what she’d just said.

“Is that ... bad?” George’s frown persisted. He took her gloved hand and helped her into the hall.

“No! It’s not bad. It does hurt, but it also feels amazing. You stretched me so much that ...” Anna’s words died when the door next to them opened, and Gwendolyn stepped out.

“I thought I heard someone out here.” Kapnos entered the hall. She wore a new, emerald green bodice, with matching gloves and skirts. Just peeking out from the hem of her skirts were new brown shoes. Her satchel hung from one shoulder and over the opposite hip, the strap digging into her bodice between her breasts. Her blond hair was pinned, but she wore no hat. “Good afternoon, Zaals. I feel much refreshed. Did you spend your siesta time well?” She curtsied to mother and son.

“We ... um ... didn’t sleep.” Anna’s cheeks turned deep crimson. She curtsied to the woman awkwardly, wincing in pain.

“Oh?” Kapnos narrowed her eyes with good-natured suspicion. “I hope you kept your ankle elevated. It looks like you’re hurt.”

“Yes, we kept it elevated.” George couldn’t help but smile, even when his mother gave him a disproving look. It was true, her feet were up in the air a good portion of the time they were in that room.

Kapnos raised an eyebrow at George. When he nodded, a broad white crescent spread across her face. She put her hand to her mouth and cleared her throat.

Anna looked between her son and their new friend. She wasn't sure what was going on between them. But there definitely seemed to be something. After what they'd just done, he couldn't possibly have designs on another woman. *Could he?*

"There's an infirmary two floors down. Let's have Océane take a look at your ankle." Kapnos strolled over to them. "I'll take the backpack, Mrs. Zaal, so that you can ride your son."

"Excuse me?" Anna put a hand to her chest in shock. It wasn't feigned this time.

"It's okay, Mom. She means you can ride on my back. I can carry you down two flights of stairs." George removed the backpack and handed it to Kapnos. He turned his back to his mother and lowered himself to one knee. "Climb on."

"This isn't dignified." Anna tested her ankle. Pain surged. She wondered if spreading her legs to climb on him would make her sore vagina worse. Should she ask Océane's autodoc to look at her nethers, too? Did she dare?

"You used to give me piggyback rides when I was little. Now, I'm big, and you're ... not as big as me." He couldn't call her *little*. "It's my turn." He looked over his shoulder and smiled.

"Very well." Anna gave Gwendolyn a frown to let the other woman know that this wasn't palatable. She then climbed on her son's back and went for her first piggyback ride in about thirty-five years.

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"So?" Kapnos sat down next to George in the waiting room.

Inside the exam room, the autodoc was attending to Anna's wounds.

"So?" George shrugged and held back a wide grin.

"Don't 'so'me!" Kapnos leaned in and tickled his belly. "After I shed my skin and renewed myself, I heard Mrs. Anna Zaal going absolutely crazy through the wall. It sounded like more than ..." Kapnos narrowed her eyes. After a moment, her face blossomed with joy. "You did it! You did. She's tight, isn't she? Was it wonderful?"

"Not so loud." George lowered his voice. He watched her push his jacket out of the way and unbuckle his belt. Soon, she was pulling his pants and underwear down his thighs.

"What are you doing?"

“I want you in my mouth while you tell me all about it.” Kapnos said the words like they made perfect sense.

“My mom’s on the other side of the door. We can’t.” George looked at her, flabbergasted.

“The autodoc will take at least another forty-five minutes.” Kapnos smiled at his cock when it came into view. “Not hard for me?” She booped it with one gloved finger. “Oh, there we go.” It started to grow. “You have a nice one, you know.”

“Um ... my mom keeps saying how much bigger I am than ... everyone she’s been with.” George bit his lip as Kapnos tenderly kissed his hardening dick. He didn’t want to say that it seemed she’d only ever been with his father.

“You ... do have ... a large ... one,” Kapnos said between kisses. She looked up at him with bright, brown eyes. “But you’re not a giant. Just right if you ask me.”

“I’ll take it.” George stood up, holding his pants up with a hand. “Let’s go into exam room two. I don’t want to get caught, and I can see there’s no saying no to you.” He shuffled into the room and sat on the exam table.

Kapnos strode in after him, swaying her hips seductively. She closed the door. “Okay, I want to hear all about it. I’m on fire.” She dropped to her knees and took his cock into her mouth. She bobbed her head slowly, taking him into her throat with some gurgling, but no gagging.

George told her everything that had happened while his girlfriend gave him an expert blowjob. He rested a hand on her perfectly pinned hair and watched her face distort and bulge with her efforts. He got to the point of the story where his mother’s cheeks ballooned out like a frightened puffer fish, and he couldn’t hold back any longer. “Ohhhhh ... Nossy ... going to ... cum.” He tried to keep his voice low, and he gripped her hair tighter. He pushed down and buried his cock down her throat, keeping her nose pressed against his pubic hair. He erupted.

“Mmmmmppphhhhhhhhhhh.” Kapnos hoped he wouldn’t try forcing himself down his mother’s throat like that. She was quite certain that Anna wouldn’t be able to take it. But for Kapnos, such things were no more difficult than breathing. She gulped down his salty stuff. She remembered that he had an ejaculatory delay at the end and didn’t lift off too soon. When he *was* finished, she popped her mouth off and purred with delight. “That was ... amazing.” She pulled up his underwear and pants, buckled his belt, and then pushed him back onto the exam table. She crawled up next to him and curled up, pressing into his side. “Once we get off this hotel, we’re going to have so much fun together.”

“We’re already having fun, Nossy.” He squeezed her tightly, feeling the luxurious feel of her bodice’s fabric. “Um ... how did you find clothes to replace the other outfit?”

“I make my own clothes, remember?” She closed her eyes, put her ear to his chest, and listened to his heartbeat.

“Right. And ... um ... are you shorter than you were before the incident on the stairs?” George reached down and squeezed her butt. Everything about her seemed to be smaller. And Gwendolyn was a petite woman to begin with.

“I can’t create mass out of thin air. I had to shed parts of my body that were touched by that black goo. But I didn’t dare hurry off to eat. What if I ran into another of those things?” She absentmindedly played with his tie. “So, I made Mrs. Valentine proportionately smaller accounting for the lost mass.”

“‘Hurry off to eat’? What does that mean?” George sounded a little nervous.

Kapnos giggled. “I eat the same food as you. Just lots more if I have to put on mass. It isn’t a pretty sight seeing me shovel in food like that.”

“You can ... um ... shed your skin?” George squeezed her butt again to let her know he wasn’t getting creeped out.

“It’s not a big deal. And very handy sometimes.” She poked his belly with her finger. “Why are we talking about me? You just boinked your mother, who I happen to know you’ve been in love with for a long time. Let’s talk about that.”

“I never told you I was in love with her.” George hadn’t even really admitted it to himself. Not outright.

“When you hang around humans for a thousand years, you learn to pick up on the signs.” Kapnos sat up.

“Georgie? Mrs. Valentine?” Anna’s voice came faintly through the exam door.

“She must be fixed. That was fast.” George got up. “We’re in here, Mom. Mrs. Valentine was just getting some tests done. You know, because of the goo.” He made sure his zipper was up, and he went out into the waiting room. When his mother showed off her ankle by hopping, he applauded. Of course, his eyes went straight to her bouncing breasts. “You’re all better.”

“Good as new.” Anna smiled. “Now let’s go see your sister.”

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The room smelled musty. Roy hadn’t let Océane clean when the robot arrived. He’d said it might work for *them*. No one was sure if he’d meant the Zaals, or the thing in the ring.

When Constance let Anna, George, and Kapnos into the room, Lillian rushed them. She hugged her mother tightly. After a five-minute vise-like hug, Anna had to pry her daughter's arms off her. Then, Lillian clamped onto her younger brother, giving him a giant bear hug. She even kissed his cheek and said she loved him. George didn't know what to think, so he mumbled that he loved her too.

After the greetings and introductions were over, they sat down and tried to form a plan. No one seemed to know how to find the hotelier's eye. No one knew how to find Ernest. The man hadn't shown up on cameras according to Océane. And they couldn't very well send out a search party to look for him floor by floor. The survivors knew what needed to be done in order to leave, but didn't have a clue how to do it. The conversation devolved into recrimination and argument, mostly between the Havershams and Zaals.

Kapnos raised her hand. "May I make a suggestion?"

The room quieted down.

Kapnos looked around at the assembled group, planning her seductions. She smiled pleasantly at each of them. Some would be tricky. Others would be hardly any trouble at all. "While we wait for a plan to form, we should move somewhere more defensible. The Newest Guest knows we're on floor one-oh-three. Its creatures seem to be learning how to attack us. One almost got me." She glanced at Anna. "Thank you for saving my life."

"You're welcome, Mrs. Valentine." Anna's smile was tight and restrained. Leaving the hotel was starting to feel further and further away.

"I don't know if you know this, but the suites in this hotel have manual deadbolts. The rich value their safety. Isn't that true, Océane?" Kapnos looked up at the ceiling.

"That is true on both accounts, Mrs. Valentine," Océane said.

"And the suites on two-oh-three are designed for one wealthy person or group to book the whole floor. That's at the very top of the spire. There's a door between the stairwell and elevators and the guest area. That door doesn't have a deadbolt, but could be barricaded. And the guest area has some of the hotel's best restaurants, a beach, a swimming lagoon, and other luxuries." Kapnos looked around at each of them. "A deadbolt on each door, and an outer door as well. Plus, everything we need to survive until we hatch our plan to find Mr. Zaal and the necessary retina."

"I'm not sure I want to move farther away from Ernest." Anna frowned.

"I'm not sure I trust Mrs. Valentine." Roy stood and paced the room. "No offense."

"None taken." Kapnos said.

"It makes sense to me." George sat with his back against the wall, his sister's petite frame pressed into his side.

"I'm going wherever Mom and George go." Lillian gripped her brother's arm tightly and leaned her cheek against his shoulder. Her tiara was askew, and her mascara ran down her cheeks from all the weeping she'd done since they'd returned.

"I like the sound of the suites," Delores said. Those were the first words she'd spoken since the meeting began.

"This isn't a *democracy*," Roy spat out the last word.

"Gods, Mr. Haversham. Nobody is saying that." Anna put her hand to her mouth. Dolores and Lillian did the same, scandalized by the word. "We all believe in the Hierocracy, of course. But without a leader ..." Anna glanced at George. If only he was a few years older, maybe in his twenties, he could have stepped into the leadership role. But it was hard to lead as a teenager. "Without a leader, we each need to make our choice. I've thought it over, and I will go with my family to the suites. We can have Océane contact Ernest when she spots him on camera and tell him to meet us there. Will you do that, Océane?"

"Yes, Mrs. Zaal," Océane said.

Constance frowned at her husband. She wouldn't let them get marooned. They needed others to survive. "Let me confer with my husband in private. Why don't you all collect your things and ready yourselves to travel up the spire?"

~~

A few hours later, the entire group of survivors climbed the stairs. Each of them had traded in their suitcase for a pilfered backpack and shoved as much of their belongings as they could inside. Except for Kapnos, who continued to carry only her satchel.

George took up the rear of the group with his mother, sister, and Kapnos. He surreptitiously watched Constance's calves work as she climbed the stairs. The woman had lifted her skirts to climb, and her muscles bulged with each step. It was easy to forget that one of their number was a world-class athlete. This was a good reminder.

"You travel light, Mrs. Valentine." Anna looked over at Gwendolyn who climbed the stairs on the other side of her son. She caught George staring at Constance's bare lower legs. Things had been so easy with fewer people around. She'd have to watch her son closely and keep him distracted.

"After I lost my husband, I couldn't lug my luggage around. So, I just kept my toiletries." Kapnos caught George's gaze on Constance's backside. They needed to get off that hotel. But until they did, Kapnos thought they might at least try and enjoy their remaining

stay. If they were safe from the Newest Guest, why shouldn't they? Developments seemed promising.

"You can't have spare clothes in there, so you must have borrowed that outfit from one of the dead guests after our run-in with the shadow creatures." Anna pressed her lips together. Something was off. What was she missing? "Yet that bodice looks like it was tailored just for you."

Silently, Kapnos cursed her own vanity. She could easily have made the outfit too large. "I got lucky. It was in the second room I checked." She shrugged. "You know your husband best, Mrs. Zaal. Where do you think he is? When will he return?"

"These are singular times, Mrs. Valentine." Anna gave the woman a tight smile. "I think we're all acting at least a little out of character."

"True." A thought occurred to Kapnos. She frowned. "What if we get access to the executive lifeboat before your husband returns?"

"We're not leaving without him." Anna shook her head. "If that happens, I'll find him and bring him back here."

"Um ... what if the creatures already took him?" Kapnos's frown deepened. This could be a problem. "It is odd that he hasn't popped up on the cameras."

"We're not leaving without him." Anna climbed up ahead of them, signaling that the conversation was over.

They spent the rest of the day slowly climbing the spire. They made it to the suites without meeting any of the Newest Guest's creatures or suffering any other setbacks. They were all awed by the luxury of their new surroundings. Their first order of business was barricading the main doors to the stairs. After that, they claimed rooms and explored. There were ten rooms, so there were plenty of choices.

The Zaals picked three adjoining rooms on one side of the lagoon.

The Havershams chose a room on the other side.

Kapnos moved in next to the Zaals.

Delores chose a room in the middle, with no adjoining neighbors. She knew the Havershams would go back to humping like bunnies now that they had their privacy, and she couldn't bear the thought of listening to them again.

~~

“It looks like people are happy to be here.” Anna stood in her doorway, looking out at the splashing in the lagoon. The water was perfectly clear with a sandy bottom. There were swim-up bars and beach areas to lounge. Everyone had brought their swimsuits, since they weren’t much to pack, and they all needed the modesty they offered. Anna’s shoulders were bunched tightly as she watched the frivolity. Gwendolyn and Lillian seemed to be hitting it off. They were laughing, chasing, and wrestling in the water.

Sitting behind her on the edge of the bed, George watched his mother’s body language with a frown. “You don’t share in their joy?”

Anna closed the door. The sounds of merriment instantly died away. The suites had better soundproofing than other rooms at the hotel. She turned the deadbolt. “I’m worried about your father.” She turned and gazed at her son with hungry eyes. “I’m a mess right now. I feel like I’ve abandoned him coming up to the top of the tower while he’s still down below. And ...” She bit her bottom lip. Her blue eyes, stormy and questioning, searched his deep brown ones.

“What is it, Mom?” George stood, but wasn’t sure what to do. So, he simply adjusted his tie.

“And I’m going to try and forget him when I fall into your arms in a moment.” Anna let out a long, shaky breath. She looked around the enormous room. Since they were on the top of the tower, the vaulted ceiling was one large window. Stars slowly moved over their heads as the tower spun. “I’m a bad wife. A terrible wife. Your father wouldn’t understand what we’re doing.” She pulled off her gloves slowly.

“But I understand it. And you understand it.” George’s dick surged in his pants. “It’s making us stronger. We still have a tough journey ahead of us. And without each other, I don’t know if we’d make it. But the two of us together ...” He walked toward her and put his arms around her, cradling the wonderful arc in the small of her back. “... are unstoppable.”

“We are ... aren’t we?” Anna looked up at her handsome son, parting her lips. She angled her face a little to the side, inviting his kiss.

“Gods ... you’re beautiful, Mom.”

Anna almost said something petty and jealous about his staring at Constance’s backside earlier but caught herself. “Kiss me, Georgie. We’ve got time while everyone’s swimming.”

“Of course.” George let his hands sink down to her ass. He kneaded her round cheeks through her skirts, pulling her toward him. His dick pressed against her belly. She was so wonderfully curvy and soft everywhere. He leaned down and planted his lips on hers. He felt her hands reach under his jacket, and slide up his back. Her bare fingers dug into

his hard back through his shirt. Her eager tongue darted into his mouth the second he parted his lips. They made out under the stars for a while, their hands roaming each other's bodies. Eventually, they broke apart and frantically undressed themselves.

"Would you ... um ... like to be inside me again?" Anna paused pulling her panties down, watching his reaction.

"I've never felt closer to anyone than when we did it this afternoon." George removed his underwear. His dick flopped out into the open. Still holding his underwear, he gave her a salute. "Ready, willing, and able, ma'am."

"That was going to be my next question." She stared at his hungry-looking member. "But I see you can just keep going and going. Even when we were young, I don't remember your father going more than once in a day." She blushed. "I'm sorry, I shouldn't talk about him when we're ... about to do it."

"I actually ... like hearing about how Dad and I are different." George unbuttoned his shirt.

"I'll keep that in mind." She gave him an appraising look. Her hands went behind her back and unclasped her bra. "Does it feel extra naughty doing this stuff while everyone is playing in the water right outside?"

"Can you imagine if Lillian saw us right now?" George tossed away his shirt and removed his socks. His mother was naked now, and he had to steady himself. Her zaftig beauty nearly knocked him off his feet. He jumped onto the bed and rolled onto his back, the spire of his dick stretching proudly into the air. "You want to put the condom on?"

"About that." Anna moved to the bed and crawled next to her son. She sat cross-legged and leaned forward earnestly. She smiled at his awed expression as he stared at her dangling boobs. "I didn't have time to find more condoms today. So, we have just the one. And I don't know if we'll find any in the suites. And I've been thinking about how you had a difficult time feeling me." She shrugged nonchalantly, like what she was about to say wasn't a big deal. "I think we should save the last condom. In case we need it ... for an emergency or something." *This is ludicrous. The emergency is my son putting his big, unprotected penis inside me tonight! Keep it together, Anna.* She shook her head to clear it. "If we go ahead without it, you have to promise me ... I mean really promise me ... that you'll pull out well before you ... erupt. I'll finish you with my mouth again. Do we have a deal?"

"It's a deal." George couldn't hide his wide grin. "Come here." He reached over and lifted her into the air not for the first time that day. But this time he had her straddle his face.

“Again ... you don’t have to do this every time we ... oooooohhhhhhhhhhhh ... sunshine.” She ran her fingers through his hair and grasped two handfuls. Her back arched as pleasure surged through her. “Uuuuggghhhhhh ... and there’s your finger inside me... in that perfect place ... ooohhhhhhhhhhhhhh ... Georgie ... uuughhh ... you are truly ... ooohhhhhh ... a gift ... from the gods ... eeeeeiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii.” And just like that she was screaming and squirting on him again. It was a good thing that they now had solid soundproofing, because otherwise it would have been obvious to all the other survivors what mother and son were doing alone in Anna’s suite.

George removed his hand from her pussy as she squirted. He reached it behind her and wiggled his wet finger into her buttock. To the best of his recollection, Kapnos hadn’t said anything about his mother’s ass. But it was something he wanted to try, and if his mother didn’t like it, he guessed she’d be in a forgiving mood.

“Aaaaaaggghhhhhhhhhhhh.” Anna’s hips jerked when she felt the new intrusion. To say that a finger back there was novel and unexpected would have been an understatement. Her son continued his work on her clitoris, while gently wriggling his finger into her anus. “Um ... Georgie ... what ... uuuggghhhh ... are you doing?”

George disengaged his mouth from her vagina and looked up at her. He couldn’t see her face, only the glorious undersides of her boobs. “I read once ... that women like this. Do you like it, Mom?”

“Uuuggghhhh ... honestly ... I’m not sure.” It did feel good. Much better than she would have expected. But she didn’t want to admit it. “We could ... try it ... for a few more minutes ... before having sex.”

“Sure, Mom.” He smiled up at her underboobs and went back to work on her clit. When he nibbled, he got her hips to jerk, driving his finger deeper into her ass. It was wonderful.

Her son was going to make her climax with a finger where no finger had gone before. Anna closed her eyes and undulated her hips, pressing her vagina into his mouth. She did like it. She loved it. He had surprised her with a new ecstasy yet again. She wondered what other surprises he had in store for that night. She couldn’t wait to find out.

“Ooohhhhhh ... Georgie ... Georgie ... it’s going to be another big one ... I ... it’s going ... ooohhhhhhhhhhhhhh ... it’s ... eeeeeeeeeiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii.” Blissfully, all her problems drifted away. It was only her and George, staying in a ten-thousand-yen-a-night suite, while the rest of their party played in the lagoon outside.

Chapter 17

Whispering Together Like Bosom Buddies

“That was ... fun.” Lillian lay on her side in the sand, drinking a pink hibiscus colada cocktail. She smiled at her new friend. The drink was delicious, and she’d just had a blast rough-housing and playing games with Gwendolyn. “I’d forgotten what fun was like.” She knew she was grinning like an idiot, but she felt safe in the warm radiance of this beautiful woman’s attention. She turned her head and watched Delores return to her room. Lillian shook her head. That poor woman was nothing more than a ghost. Gwendolyn was a widow too, but she seemed to still enjoy life. She returned her focus to her new friend. “I’m glad my mother and brother found you, Mrs. Valentine. I can tell we’ll become fast friends.” She took a long sip from her straw, savoring the lingering taste of pineapple and coconut.

“I’m glad as well. I thought I was alone, but to find myself among such regal people ...” Kapnos sipped her blue cocktail and leaned closer to Lillian. They were quite close together on the warm sand. Their suits covered everything but their feet and heads. Their wet hair was loose and dark with the lagoon’s water. “I think you’re a wonderfully pretty woman, Lillian,” she whispered. “You look like a princess.”

Lillian blushed deeply. The vivacious widow could not have offered her a sweeter compliment. She looked over at her mother’s closed door. “What do you think my mom and brother are doing in there?” She took another sip from her drink. Somehow, she found the glass empty. That was her third. When the robot waiter came over with another, she happily took a fourth.

“I’m sure they’re planning our salvation.” Kapnos nodded earnestly. “Your family is incredible. I owe both your mother and brother my life. You must be so proud of them.”

Lillian frowned. “Honestly, Mrs. Valentine, I haven’t always been happy with George. He was a thorn in my side. Always so bratty ... you know how younger brothers are. But you’re right, I’m proud of him now. He’s been amazing.”

“Have you told him that?” Kapnos raised an eyebrow.

“I haven’t had the chance.” Lillian found herself feeling suddenly defensive. Bypassing the straw, she took a long drink from her cocktail. “I’ve only just realized it. You know, with everything he’s done at the hotel. Also, the ... um ... attack where I saw poor Ms. Pemberton’s death ... well ... it gave me perspective.”

“I see.” Kapnos put her gloved hand on Lillian’s gloved hand and squeezed. “Let’s go get changed and eat something. I’m famished.” She rose and pulled Lillian to her feet. She

had one of the robot servants fetch her clothes and bring them to Lillian's room. Then, the two women went to get changed.

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"They're holding hands, Constance. Whispering together like bosom buddies." Roy watched Lillian and Gwendolyn from across the lagoon as they strolled into Lillian's room and closed the door. "There is no way they just met. This is some sort of ... some sort of ..."

"Plot?" Constance sighed and sipped her blue lagoon cocktail. She let her legs float at the surface of the water, her bare toes bobbing just above the surface. She was alone with her husband now, as everyone else had retired to their rooms. She looked over at him and made her most stern face. "Mommy has had enough of your talk about the Zaals. I would be just as likely to believe that Mrs. Zaal and her son were engaged in forbidden coitus as they were actively hatching nefarious schemes. And we all know that you are the only man brave enough to make advances on your mommy." She smiled at him.

"But, I –" Roy started.

"Do you want to be inside Mommy or not?" She stood, the water dripping off her long, slender form. Without waiting for him to answer, she lifted him in her arms. With no one else to see, she was free to play their little game. "I know you're vexed, darling. Let Mommy make you feel better."

Roy looked up into her grinning face. He let her carry him out of the lagoon toward their room. "Yes, Mommy. Make me feel better." All the conspiracies and dastardly plans could wait. They were relatively safe at the moment. And it would be nice to have a room to themselves again.

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"Oooohhhhhhhhhh ... Georgie ... you're getting my breast slick ... with my own wetness." Anna writhed on her back under her son. His tongue played delightfully with her nipple, sending sparks of electricity through her body, and building on her post-orgasmic buzz. His heavy penis and testicles rested on her thigh. One of her bare hands held his head to her breast. The other dug fingernails into his back. "Oooohhhhhh ... how are you so good ... at that?" He was aggressive, but he didn't hurt her. Using just the right amount of tongue and teeth on her rigid flesh.

George released her nipple and smiled up at her. "Can I really go in without a condom?"

"You don't have to keep asking. I trust you to finish outside." Her warm smile met his. "And I am more than ready for you."

"Okay." George's pulse thundered in his ears as he moved between his mother's wide-open legs and placed the head of his penis on her sloppy pussy. She had cum so much that her triangle of hair was sopping, and she glistened all the way out to her thighs. Her clit was more obvious now, and her lips looked even larger than normal. George decided he'd have to ask Kapnos about that. He slapped her pussy with his cockhead. He could barely hear the wet smacking sound he made over the thundering in his ears. "Wait ... you said you were sore before. Does it still hurt? Should I do something ... different?"

"It is so sweet how much you care for me. Most men would have simply thrust in and satisfied their wants. But you ..." She laughed. "I think you mother me as much as I mother you." She pressed her bare finger against the bemused curve on his lip. Her pretty, high giggle bounced off the walls around them. "I had the autodoc fix my vagina when it worked on my ankle. I'm not sore anymore. But ... I'm still a bit stretched out. So, hopefully, you won't hurt me when you enter like last time." She reached down to her vagina and pulled her lips apart.

George leaned back. "Your pussy looks so pretty like that." He could see her pink interior rapidly disappearing into a dark cavern. He really had stretched her out their first time.

"I suppose I shouldn't let you say things like 'pussy' or 'bitch.' But it does excite me!" Anna laughed again. "Maybe while we're doing it, you could give me some more dirty talk?"

"I could do it now, Mom." George cocked an eyebrow like he was thinking of being bad.

"Wait until you drive me out of my mind again. Then do it. It has ... an intoxicating effect. Right now, I want to feel your sweetness." She continued to hold her vagina open for him. "There will be no barriers between us now. No gloves. No clothes. No condom. Just you and me, Georgie, joining together."

"I love you so much, Mom." George placed himself at her gaping entrance and pushed his hips forward.

"Oooooohhhhhhhhhh ... I love you ... too ... sunshine." Anna's hands left her vagina as he dove deeper into her and circled around him. She found her fingers pressed into the flexing muscles of his butt. "How does it feel ... with nothing ... between us?"

"Gods ... Mom ... it's like ... coming home ... after being away ... for a long time." George bottomed out. "You're warm ... wet ... and tight." He looked down at her face. She was grimacing, but he judged that it was more pleasure than pain. "Does it hurt? Do you

want me to stay here for a little while?” Like last time, he placed his hands on her delicate shoulders so he could see the cords straining in her neck, her dainty clavicle, and the wonderful slope of her breasts resting to the sides.

“It hurts.” Anna nodded. “But it’s not like ... ooohhhhhhhh ... last time. It feels ... amazing. You’re hitting ... a spot deep ... inside me. It’s making me feel ... warm ... tingly ... and fuzzy.”

“Does Dad ever hit that spot?” George pulled back and slowly slid back in. He decided to take it easy until she adjusted more.

Anna shook her head, biting her bottom lip.

“I like that I ... uuggghhh ... can do things ... Dad can’t.” His hips found a nice, easy rhythm. The thundering in his ears had died down enough that he could easily hear his dick squelching in his mother’s pussy.

“You ... are a gift ... from the gods ... Georgie.” Pleasure swirled in her mind. The pain receded further. He was resizing her. *Maybe the next time we do it, he’ll just slip right in without any resistance.* “You are ... uuuggghhhhhh ... the greatest gift ... your father ... has given ... meeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee.” Saying those words, in combination with his penis bouncing against that hidden spot deep inside her, sent Anna over the edge. She arched her back and orgasmed under her son. “Eeeeeiiiiiiiiiiiiiii.”

“Wow ... Mom ... you look ... gorgeous cumming like that.” George increased the tempo of his hips. He continued to pin her shoulders with his hands. He liked looking down on her from up high. Also, this way, he could glance between her legs and see his cock sawing in and out of her. It was already covered in her white froth. Like last time, her pussy made a vacuum seal on his dick, exposing the pink insides every time he pulled back.

Anna heard her son, but all she could say back to him was, “Nnnnnngggggggggg.” She tossed her head from side to side. He was moving faster, and ecstasy blossomed from her vagina and belly. Her fingers dug into his butt. She knew she must be leaving marks, but it didn’t matter. Only his mother was allowed to see his bare ass.

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Dolores lost herself in some melodrama she found on the feed. With soundproofing and no neighbors, she was blissfully alone. She tried not to think of what her beloved Carlos would make of all the insanity that had befallen her. She tried not to think at all. She lay in bed and drifted off to sleep as the show played in the background.

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“Mommy ... Mommy ... ride me!” Roy watched his wife’s round, firm ass bounce as she rode him in reverse. He forgot everything but the bliss of delving into his wife’s pussy.

“Cum for Mommy ... go on ... my little man.” Constance said the words, but her heart wasn’t in it. Honestly, she hoped he’d cum soon just so it could be over. She wasn’t sure what was wrong with their relationship, but their lovemaking suddenly felt stale. Sex was usually a refuge from rocky moments in their marriage. Maybe all the nightmares had simply suppressed her sex drive? Maybe it was something else? She bounced on her husband’s dick at a faster pace, using her natural athletic grace. “Cum for Mommy.” She was relieved when he shuddered under her and emptied himself. Her hips slowed to a stop. Maybe now they could get some sleep.

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“Oh, it’s just us girls. No need to be shy.” Kapnos finished removing her bathing suit. She was completely naked and carefully watched Lillian’s wide eyes rove her body. Clearly the girl was curious. Kapnos had picked up on that when she’d changed in front of her as her mother. Goodness, that seemed like a millennium ago.

“Wow, Mrs. Valentine. Your body is slim like mine, but your boobs are ... big. I bet your husband loved them.” Lillian realized that she’d just talked about a very sensitive subject. “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to bring him up.”

“It’s okay. He would have been thrilled that we were friends.” Kapnos smiled and moved toward the girl. She took the drink from her, it wouldn’t do to have Lillian throwing up again, and pulled her from the chair. “Let’s get you out of this wet suit.” Kapnos began undressing the young woman. Happily, she met no resistance. When Lillian was naked, Kapnos clapped her hands. “We could be twins. Almost exactly the same body.” They did possess the same petite figure, but for one feature.

“Except for our boobs.” Lillian frowned.

“Don’t fret, sweetie.” Kapnos gently massaged her shoulder. “My breasts didn’t fill in until I was older than your nineteen years.”

“I’m twenty,” Lillian said.

“Of course, twenty. Regardless, I think you look beautiful the way you are.” Kapnos moved her lips near Lillian’s ear. “They’re two perfect handfuls.”

“Handfuls?” Lillian was so confused. She was drunk and having flashbacks to the time her brother got her to dance naked for him by the pool. *This feels so similar. Almost the exact same vibe.* Her belly did cartwheels as she felt the older woman’s hot breath on her shoulder and neck.

“See?” Kapnos cupped Lillian’s breasts and gently held them. “Handfuls.” She saw the look of acceptance and longing on Lillian’s face. The poor girl was starved for attention and affection. One sibling was getting most of Anna Zaal’s attention, so Kapnos would have to take care of the other.

“Is this ... right?” Lillian whispered. “You touching me like that?”

“It’s fine, dear. It’s just us girls here.” Kapnos let go of her breasts and lifted Lillian’s left hand. Without her gloves, her engagement ring was exposed. “Besides, I’m married, and you’re engaged. We’re properly bound to our men, so it doesn’t matter if we take a little time to appreciate each other. No one will get the wrong idea.” Kapnos lifted Lillian’s bare hand to her lips and kissed the ring. “Oh, that reminds me. I have something for you.”

“Oh?” Lillian was beyond flustered. She couldn’t make sense of the jumble of thoughts and emotions that tumbled together in her mind.

“It’s a wonderful ruby ring. An antique from long ago when women didn’t wear gloves and showed off their rings.” Kapnos bent over her satchel and retrieved the ring. She made sure to offer Lillian a prolonged view of her ass. She then straightened and returned to Lillian. Kapnos smiled, seeing the greed in Lillian’s eyes as her gaze darted between the ring in Kapnos’s hand and Kapnos’s swaying tits. “Here, try it on. Maybe you could also show me that tiara and necklace you mentioned. I bet they would all look lovely on you.”

“It’s beautiful.” Lillian took the ring and turned it over in her hand. The ruby shone, and many small diamonds sparkled on the band. “This is for me? It must be worth a fortune.”

“You deserve it.” Kapnos smiled. She moved close enough that her breast pressed against Lillian’s arm.

“Um ...” Lillian met Gwendolyn’s soft brown eyes. “I hope I don’t offend you by saying this, but I’m not a lesbian. I love Francis. When I return to Earth, we’re going to be married.”

“Oh, I’m not a lesbian either.” Kapnos’s soft laugh tinkled, offering gentle reassurance. “We’re just girls being girls. Now, go get the other jewelry.” She gave Lillian’s small, round butt a friendly pat.

“Okay.” Lillian put the ring on her right hand. She then went to fetch her tiara and necklace. She felt silly wearing them naked. “Should I put my clothes on?”

“Don’t be silly. The great thing about having no men here is that we can be ourselves together. I bet the necklace looks perfect with your wonderful handfals.” Kapnos gave Lillian a wink. She watched the girl put on the tiara and necklace. Kapnos whistled appreciatively. “Now give me a regal walk.”

“Okay.” Lillian walked across the room in her bare feet, with her back straight. She took great joy in the awe she found in the other woman’s eyes. She stopped in front of Gwendolyn. “What do you think, Mrs. Valentine?”

“I think you truly are a princess.” Kapnos dropped to one knee in front of Lillian and bowed her head. “I swear fealty to my princess.”

“Oh!” Lillian hadn’t expected that. A rush of pleasure hit her. She didn’t remember the last time she’d been so happy. Maybe when Francis proposed also on one knee.

“I have a humble request, my princess.” Kapnos looked up at Lillian. It was in the bag. The others would surely be more difficult than this. But Kapnos enjoyed every seduction, whether it was easy or difficult.

“What is it?” Lillian held her breath.

“Let me please you.” Kapnos leaned forward and kissed Lillian’s thigh. She then kissed the other one. When there was no complaint, she kissed her way up the inner thigh, and made her way to the young woman’s pussy. She could smell Lillian’s excitement even before she could taste it. The girl was truly ready. “I’m going ... to serve ... my princess ... well,” Kapnos said between kisses. She spread Lillian’s legs a little with her hands and licked her way along her wonderfully tasty gash.

“Oh ... my ... gods.” Lillian watched the woman pleasure her with her tongue. Gwendolyn was still on her knee, as if paying tribute to her majesty. “Yes ... serve your princess ... ooohhhhhhhhh.” Lillian wound fingers into the widow’s luxurious blond hair. It was as if she was bringing to fruition a fantasy she’d never known about but had always harbored. It was perfect. When Gwendolyn began to work on Lillian’s clit, the moment became more than perfect.

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“Yes, I’ll do as you say.” Ernest got to his knees in front of the undulating black mass that clogged the stairwell on the fourth floor. He was closer than Rose had been when the creature had reached out and crushed her. But he didn’t fear for his life. He knew he was more valuable as Ernest than as part of the collective. “Yes, I can hear you.”

The thought of becoming part of a collective made part of Ernest rebel. What would happen to his wife and children? Would he be expected to serve them up to this living god? He prayed that they were enjoying life wherever they were in the tower. Their time was certainly short.

“Yes, I understand.” Ernest quashed his internal resistance. He stayed on his knees, with his head bowed, and received his instructions.

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“Oooohhhhhhhh ... Georgie ... I can tell you’re close.” Anna felt her son’s body trembling on top of her. She’d already had several mind-bending orgasms. It seemed to her that she should help him find his release before he drove her to another one. “Get ... off ... uuuggghhhh ... and I’ll finish you.”

“Okay ... Mom.” George gave her pussy a few last pumps and pulled out. He rose to his feet on the bed between her legs, using two hands on his slick cock. He planned to spray her from up high.

“I ... want to use ... my mouth again.” Anna’s body was shaky, but she scrambled to her knees in front of him. She pushed his hands away and took his penis into her small, bare hands. Her husband’s ring caught her attention, pressing into George’s turgid flesh. She thought maybe she should remove it rather than desecrate her vows in such a graphic way. But removing it seemed like a different form of degrading the promises she’d made to Ernest. Unable to decide what to do, she pumped the penis before her and let those thoughts float out of her mind. “It’s as big as my face, Georgie.” She gave him one of her playful, shocked expressions and placed his balls on her chin. The penis did indeed run the length of her face, the head touching her hair.

“That looks ... amazing ... Mom.” George stared at his once prim and proper mother with his heavy dick resting on her nose. He laughed when she went cross-eyed looking at it. She had never looked more beautiful, or more debased, than at that moment, kneeling before him with his cock on her face. “Does Dad’s penis cover your face ... the same way?”

“I never tried with him.” Anna took hold of the penis and positioned the head in front of her lips. “Now, let’s make you ...” She looked up at him. “Let’s make you cum, sunshine.

And then we can get some sleep.” She watched his face. He’d noticed that she’d used a dirty word, and he’d obviously liked it.

“I’m not ready.” George changed his mind. He dropped down to his knees and turned his mother around. “Tell me what position you want.”

Anna arched her back and looked over her shoulder. “Not inside, Georgie. You can’t finish inside.”

“Of course, Mom.” George moved up to her ass and brushed his cockhead against her sloppy pussy. “Now ... tell me how you want to take my dick.”

“Um ...” Anna lowered her head and looked at her dangling boobs. They looked so vulnerable hanging toward the sheet below. “I want you to be my stud ... and I’ll be your bitch. Oooohhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.” And just like that, her son was inside her again, having his way with her from behind. “But only ... ugh ... ugh ... for pretend ... Georgie ... you can’t really be ... my stud.”

“I know ... ah ... ah ... Mom.” George gripped the wonderful flesh on her hips. He looked down at her pink asshole. It was staring up at him again. “Mom ... I can see your butthole ... perfectly. It’s so ... pretty.”

“Oooohhhhhh ... gods.” The image of her son exposing and witnessing her most private places spurred on another orgasm. Anna dropped to her elbows, took fistfuls of the sheet, and let out a long scream. A few minutes ago, she had thought that her ecstasy was done for the evening. Now she was enveloped in yet another magical climax.

“I ... love ... to hear ... your sweet voice ... turn into a shriek.” George didn’t lie. His mother’s firm, gentle voice was woven into the fabric of his existence. Now, he was twisting it, impelling her to say dirty things, and to cry out in the most animalistic way. What more could he want? He stared down at her rippling ass and answered his own question. He removed his right hand from her hip, covered his thumb in froth from her pussy, and buried it in her ass.

Just as Anna was coming down from the heights of her orgasm, she felt the forceful intrusion. Her eyes went wide, then they rolled back, and another climax followed on the heels of the last.

George humped his mother from behind for a long while. Eventually, her strength gave out, and she fell to her belly. In that way, they both discovered a new position as he smashed into her butt with her legs together and her body prone. His body urged him to seed her. There was no protection. She was open and ready. It felt right. But George clung to his promise and pulled out at the last minute.

“Oooohhhhhhhhhhh ... all over me ... all over ...” Anna writhed as she felt the heat of her son’s sperm splatter her butt, back, and neck. She was sure it was in her hair, too.

Despite the fact that they'd already done it earlier in the day, there was still so much. After several blasts, she could feel it pooling in the small of her back. With his penis out of her, she didn't climax again, but she did bathe in the delight of letting her body be a canvas for his creation. When he finished and slumped onto the bed next to her, she didn't have the energy to look over at him. She was so totally relaxed and spent. Her body buzzed with residual pleasure. "We should ... shower ... and then you should go back to your room." Her words were garbled by speaking into the sheet.

"Yeah ... Mom." George put a hand on her cum-soaked ass and looked up at the stars through the ceiling. He slowly caught his breath. There was so much unpleasantness he'd have to deal with. But his mother made it all bearable. After a long time, he spoke. "I was thinking, Mom ... Mom?"

Her only answer was a soft, delicate snore.

George leaned in closer to her and listened to her sleep.

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"Oooooohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh." Lillian felt like jelly. Her legs wobbled and gave way. She fell on her butt, with Gwendolyn still kneeling before her. The woman's face was obscenely shiny with Lillian's juices. "Wow ... wow ... Mrs. Valentine. You ... made me cum ... with your mouth."

"I'm sure your beloved Francis does that for you all the time." Kapnos smacked her lips.

Lillian shook her head. Her tiara hung at an odd angle, threatening to fall from her hair.

"Was that ... the first time anyone did that for you?" Kapnos crawled toward the young woman in a predatory fashion, her shoulder blades rotating, and her tits gently swaying under her.

Lillian nodded her head.

"I don't understand. You're a princess. You deserve to be with someone who will do that for you." Kapnos kissed one of Lillian's toes. Then slowly worked her way up Lillian's shin with little kisses.

"I'm not a lesbian," Lillian blurted.

Kapnos paused with her lips on Lillian's knee. "Neither am I, Ms. Zaal. That would be absurd. But that doesn't mean I can't show you a few things. We can still bring each other joy. You like being close to me, don't you?" She kissed her way up Lillian's thigh. She heard Lillian gasp and hold her breath when Kapnos arrived at her pussy, but the

older woman kept kissing her way up Lillian's body. When she arrived at Lillian's nipple, she latched on. Kapnos moved her thigh between Lillian's legs and began undulating her hips.

"Oooooooooohhhhhhhhhh ... Mrs. Valentine ... Mrs. Valentine ... the way you're moving ... it's like ... sex." Lillian clutched at the woman's petite body as Gwendolyn writhed on top of her. The leg that rubbed against her pussy was more stimulating than she would have expected and pleasure surged from the attention those pretty lips and tongue were paying to her breast. "Oooooooooohhhhhhhhhh ... wow ... you're going to make me ... cum again." Her expression was equal parts ecstasy and surprise.

Kapnos pulled off her nipple for a moment. "Of course ... my princess. I'll take good care of you. We're going to ... keep each other company ... until we go home."

"Oooooohhhhhhhhhh ... okay ... okaaaayyyyyyyyyyy ... that sounds ... gooooooooooooooooood." When that hungry mouth returned to her nipple, Lillian shuddered and came again.

Chapter 18

Because You're in One of the Unclaimed Rooms

Anna's Diary August 23, 2197

I woke up sticky and scented heavily of sex. George had already showered and left. Heavens, what sort of dam have we broken! Even as I showered off his sperm, I touched myself. I've never felt so beholden to my body's needs before. Even as I write this, I must actively resist the impulse to rush from my room, find George, and spread my legs for him. My mind still buzzes from the echoes of our tumbles. Benevolent gods, what is happening to me? I want nothing more than to spend my time with sweet Georgie inside me. I even learned a new position today. What other new joys are in store?

Of course, Dear Diary, I am not completely without my wits. I know I must focus on other things. Poor Lillian seems to be cracking under the pressure, wearing strangers' jewelry and saying odd things. I have two children: grown, yes, but both in need of their mother. There are also the significant matters of retrieving my lost husband and finding a human eye. I don't know how we will do either. But both must be done.

I promise you, I will not drown in the sea of hormones that draws me like an incoming tide. I will find a measured way to navigate these new waters. My time with George is more precious than ever. But I will not forget other matters. It seems comfortable up here at the top of the tower, but I am well aware of the nightmares below.

Ernest's Diary August 23, 2197

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Lillian's Diary August 23, 2197

I woke tacky and reeking of sex. This has happened before, but today was so different than with Francis. The scent wasn't the same, there was no manly odor of sweat or sperm. I'm NOT a lesbian, Diary. But ... I already miss Mrs. Valentine. She understands me like few other people. I feel seen and wanted when I'm with her. And ... she seems to understand my body better than I do. I've already learned so much. And that knowledge will aid me in my marriage to Francis. Mrs. Valentine is good for me *and* Francis. I truly believe that. I'll be a more complete wife for having known her. It's all for the best, Diary.

Mrs. Valentine urged me to tell George my new feelings about him. And to apologize for past mistakes. I will do that tomorrow. Now, I need to shower and go back to sleep.

George's Diary August 23, 2197

I am so wired right now. Mom and I are closer than I'd ever dreamed. This feeling is exactly what I always wanted. Although, I must admit, I am surprised by everything ... by how much I want her body as well as her mind ... and by how much she seems to want me. I may not have known ahead of time, Diary, that the zenith of my life would come while I sprayed cum on her back and listened to her shriek. But now that it's here, it all fits together perfectly. It's like Mom and I could be no other way. And there's no going back. Nothing will pull me away from her. Not Dad, not the Newest Guest, not Roy Haversham and whatever he's got up his butt.

Don't worry. I'm not riveted to a singular purpose, Diary. My girlfriend, Nossy, made this all happen. She gave me confidence when it was waning. She showed me what was possible through her experience. And she selflessly gives me time to spend with Mom. I will always take care of her, too. And, I swear, I will save my father from whatever has befallen him. I will get us all off this abomination of a hotel. And ... I will find a way to stop the Newest Guest from approaching Earth.

Kapnos's Diary August 23, 2197

What a day! I/we almost died. Me/us ... dead ... can you imagine? But I/we didn't die. I/we will repay Anna Zaal directly for her gallantry when I/we get the chance. For now, I/we am helping the Zaals by pulling poor Lillian back to a better place. A place filled with happy orgasms. I/we will continue my work with her, but my/our attention wanders as it always does. I/we love George. And his sister is wonderfully naïve and pretty. Why can't I/we be happy with two? It's not in my/our nature.

I/we think Roy will be next. He might be difficult. He seems dedicated to his wife, and his mind is preoccupied with chasing ghosts and vapors. After that, Constance will be more difficult still. And then, Anna. That task seems impossible now. I/we could have done it as George. But that ship has sailed now that he's come out victorious on his own. We'll see. I/we have always loved a challenge. But in the past, I/we could simply disappear when failure struck. My/our options are more limited now. For the moment, I/we will head to the restaurant while no one is about. I/we do have some mass to restore.

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The stars moved slowly over the lagoon as the hotel spun. George was up early, floating in the water, watching the stars pass. It was tranquil, and he was so happy with parts of his life that the horrors farther down the tower seemed light years away. He sighed, listening to the water gently ripple around him. He was in his modest swimsuit, but he wondered what it would be like if he and his mother had the place to themselves. He smiled as he thought about chasing her curvaceous naked form through the lagoon and what would happen when he caught her.

“You’re up early, Mr. Zaal.” Constance walked over the warm sand with her bare feet. She wore her swimsuit, everything covered but her head and feet. “I’m not interrupting, am I?” She walked into the warm water and settled on an underwater bench about ten feet away from George.

“Good morning, Mrs. Haversham.” George had already been smiling, thinking about his mother, so he turned his grin on the woman. “How did you sleep?”

“Fitfully, I’m afraid.” Constance sighed. She examined the teenager. “You look bright and eager today. Well rested? Ready to save the day?”

“No, and yes.” George chuckled. “This is an odd place to be.”

“I’ll say.” Constance shuddered. “In all my nightmares, my mind never conceived of anything so horrible as the Newest Guest.”

“I don’t mean ... just that. Not just the hotel.” George wanted to open up about the best thing that had happened in his life. He realized that his crowning achievement would have to be secret from everyone but Kapnos. He frowned. That was unfortunate. “I just mean that this is an odd place for me to be in my life. I’m only eighteen, but I’m ... sort of ... the one everyone expects to save us.”

“Not my husband.” Constance matched his frown.

“No, not him, I guess.” He raised an eyebrow. “But you trust me, Mrs. Haversham?”

“It is an odd place to be.” Constance nodded. “To put your faith in a teenager. But Roy and I aren’t exactly on the same page. You’ve proven yourself so far. I trust you.” She slid down further into the water until it touched her chin. “But you should know that I believe that your father killed Mr. Dmytruk. I won’t go over the grisly evidence now, but my husband is most likely correct about that one thing.”

“That ... would be very out of character for my father.” George thought about it. “And it would be an affront to my honor. He would have deprived me of a duel. I can’t believe he’d do that.”

“What you say may be true. But this place has changed all of us,” she said.

“How has it changed you?” George was eager to change the subject from his father. He was also genuinely curious. He hadn’t talked much with Constance, and it seemed she was opening up to him.

“For one thing, I’m rethinking my touring schedule. I was running myself ragged going from tournament to tournament. This was the first vacation I’d had in years.”

“You don’t enjoy tennis?” George cocked his head.

“I love tennis, but it’s also something I have poured everything into. My career isn’t like playing varsity at your high school. It is ... a demanding mistress.” A cold smile touched Constance’s lips.

“You remembered that I play tennis.” George smiled. “This is another oddity in my life. I’m sitting here with Constance Haversham, shooting the breeze.” His bright, airy laugh echoed around the lagoon. When a robot waiter approached, he waived it off.

“Get me off this hotel, Mr. Zaal, and I’ll even sign a racket for you.” She joined in his laughter.

A loud thump reverberated from the outer doors, silencing both of them.

“Was that ... the doors?” George turned his head and looked over at the barricade. The thump sounded again. He shot out of the water onto the beach, trying to clear his thoughts. Suddenly, Constance stood next to him. She looked like a tiger ready to spring.

“What do we do?” Constance’s heart thumped in her chest. She worked on her breathing to slow it down.

“Wake up everyone. Make sure they’ve got weapons. I’ll talk to Océane and see what’s happening at the doors.” George ran off toward the barricade, his feet digging into the sand.

“Right.” Constance ran to the nearest door, Anna’s, and started pounding her fists on it. “Wake up ... get out here ... bring weapons.” Then she remembered that the rooms had good soundproofing. She looked for a doorbell, found it, and leaned on it. Then she ran to the next room and did the same.

“Océane, what’s making that noise?” George arrived at the large, carbon-fiber double doors. They were intricately detailed with tropical themes and opened up in the middle. Just as he put his hand on the barricade of heavy furniture, the whole thing shook again.

“Mr. Zaal and several drones are assaulting the door with cleaning equipment.” Océane’s voice sounded subdued.

“Okay, the drones are ... wait ... what? I’m Mr. Zaal.” George didn’t know what else to do, so he put his back to a desk in the barricade and pushed. Fortunately, the doors hadn’t budged yet.

“Guest Ernest Zaal is assisting the drones in their assault,” Océane said.

“That’s ... not possible.” George’s mind spun. First, Constance claiming credible evidence of a murder and now this? “Um ... um ... can you be sure? Wait, how come you didn’t warn us they were coming? You were supposed to alert us the moment they entered a public area.”

“I have been fending off cyberattacks for several hours. It appears that malicious code may have breached my firewall. Some systems may be compromised. I am performing antivirus protocols now. But my systems are dated in this version,” Océane said.

“Shit ... shit ...” George’s whole body vibrated with the next blow to the door. He saw his mother run out of her room in her nightgown and gloves, carrying a sword. Her unpinned hair flowed behind her. Next, Kapnos raced out wearing her full outfit of bodice, skirts, and gloves. “Let me think ... let me think ...” George shut his eyes tight. “Partition the cameras and any other related systems. Don’t clean them now. Isolate them.”

“You don’t have authorization to alter my response to a cyber –”

“Just do it! If you don’t, it can spread. Put your firewall around it, or you might cease to exist.” George felt the doors give a little with the next thump. His heels slid on the decking. “Remember our deal. The Earliest Guest will tell you more secrets if you do this!”

“Partitioning now,” Océane said.

“What do we do, George?” Anna arrived huffing and puffing. Her face was pale, and her eyes round with fear.

“Push on the barricade. If it gives more, we’ll have to fight.” He felt some relief when his mother put her back to the desk next to him. As the seconds passed, others joined them, all gritting their teeth as they pushed against the assault. Soon, all the survivors were there.

“We shouldn’t have come up here. This was a bad idea.” Despite his complaints, Roy pushed with the rest of them. His pistol in its holster at his side.

“Kindly ... shut up ... darling,” Constance hissed.

“We need to drive them away.” Anna’s brain reeled. She’d gone from a deep, restful sleep to a massive surge of adrenaline. She couldn’t think straight. She trembled as another boom sounded on the door. She looked over her shoulder and there was a crack open

now, only a fraction of an inch, but she felt like she could see shadows moving on the other side.

“Océane ... what are your fire suppression capabilities on this floor?” George shouted.

“I am capable of venting the air from a fire. A door will seal the stairway and no one will be able to move in or out of this floor,” the computer said.

“Do it. The fire is in the hall outside.” George didn’t like cutting off the shadow creatures’ escape. But it was the best tool they had.

“You are not authorized to vent the air. I may only do so in an emergency situation.” Océane’s voice was as calm as ever.

“For heaven’s sake, Océane. This is an emergency!” Constance yelled.

“It’s me, Océane. The Earliest Guest.” Kapnos trembled with fear. “You trusted us before. Trust us with this. You need to vent the air until we tell you to resume normal airflow. This is an emergency.” She paused. There was no response. “And I’ll tell you more secrets if you do it.”

“Complying,” Océane said.

A loud hissing filled the lagoon as their environment squeezed through the crack in the door.

“You’re going to kill us, too.” Roy stopped pushing and stepped away from the barricade. He pulled his pistol and pointed it at George. He was already getting light-headed. “Tell the computer to turn the air back on.”

“Stop it, Roy!” Constance looked shocked.

“Not yet.” George didn’t move, his back still on the desk. The thumping on the door had stopped. “They need air as much as we do. They’ll either pass out, die, or run back to the stairs.”

“Don’t you point that thing at my son.” Anna leapt in front of George, shielding him with her body. Spots danced before her eyes. They were running out of oxygen. Ominously, the hissing stopped. There was no more air.

George gasped. “Okay ... Océane ... normal ... airflow ... please.” It only took a few seconds before his lungs stopped burning.

Roy lowered his pistol.

Anna relaxed back into her son, feeling his familiar body pressing against hers. She looked to her left and saw Gwendolyn and Lillian hugging and weeping. She looked the other way and watched Delores slump to the ground. Constance glared at her husband.

The banging against the door didn't return. "Are they gone? Océane, can you see in the hall?"

"I no longer have access to my surveillance systems," Océane said.

"We've either scared them off or killed them." George shuddered. Was his father lying dead right on the other side of the gaudy double-doors? He prayed he hadn't killed him. But the shadow creatures on the other hand, George prayed they were all goo and body parts on the hallway floor.

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With weapons drawn, the survivors removed the barricade and checked the hall. There was no sign of their attackers. They found no remains: neither shadow creature nor human. When Anna was told that her husband was among those assaulting the door, she refused to believe that he was anything but a hostage. George hoped she was right. Maybe Océane had misread the situation. Since the computer had sealed off video storage along with several other sections, the humans couldn't review footage of the attack.

Océane thought that the virus was contained. But her firewall was still under attack. George wanted to help, but there was nothing he could do about a sophisticated cyberattack that an advanced AI could not. Even in her current version, Océane had more knowledge about attacks and was much faster in responding to them.

The Newest Guest had spoken to Océane in binary. And now it was attacking with ones and zeros. That begged the question, what in the heck was it? Was it a life form? A robot? No one had any answers. George was nervous that since it had cracked the firewall once, it might again. But they didn't know what to do about it. Roy thought they should purge the air from the rest of the hotel. But that would have destroyed the hotel's air recycling ability and killed Ernest and any other survivors.

The survivors tried to recover from the morning's fright and go back to brainstorming answers to the puzzles that vexed them.

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“Having a spat with your wife?” Kapnos entered the room and closed the door behind her without flipping the deadbolt. She wore Delores’s body. It was the least threatening woman to Roy that Kapnos could copy.

“Mrs. Salazar?” Roy looked up, startled. He was wearing his suit, his tie undone, lying on his back, watching the feed. He paused the program. “What? Why did you say that?”

“Because you’re in one of the unclaimed rooms.” Kapnos walked toward him slowly, swaying her hips. “You have a forlorn expression on your face. And you’re watching one of your wife’s matches. One where she lost, if I’m not mistaken.”

“I didn’t know you even realized who my wife was.” Roy sat up. “In fact, I don’t think you’ve ever said more than a sentence to us.”

“I’m talking now. I’m lonely and need some company.” She sat near him on the edge of the bed, making sure to give him an adequate profile so he might observe the way her boobs pushed at her bodice. Her smile was warm and beguiling. She could see his cheeks turn red. “She isn’t being fair to you.”

“Who?” Roy pulled at his collar. It suddenly felt tight.

“Your wife, of course.” Kapnos nodded with compassion. “You’re doing your best, but she undermines you. I’ve seen it time after time.”

“No ... she doesn’t. It’s just ...” Roy’s eyes darted from Delores’s mesmerizing smile to the slope of her tits. Why hadn’t he noticed how stacked she was before? Probably because she’d always been slouching and sulking.

“A woman is built to receive. A man is built to give.” Kapnos inched closer to him. “I always let Carlos ... give. And he gave very well, let me tell you. But now that he’s gone, I ...” Her eyelids fluttered. “I wish Constance would open herself up to receive from you more. I think she sometimes forgets her place as your wife.” She moved closer and put her hand on his thigh. “What can I do to help you with your marriage?”

“Oh ... I ... um ... Constance and I have an unusual ... um ...” Roy stared at the woman. When did she become so damn pretty? Suddenly, she was beaming with life. “It’ll blow over with Constance. She just doesn’t understand the situation we’re in. That’s all.”

“But I do, Mr. Haversham.” Kapnos moved closer. “Show me what sort of situation we’re in.” She closed the distance between their faces and kissed him. Her body thrummed when he kissed her back. So, he wasn’t a tough nut to crack after all. Men were always so much easier than their women. She should have known.

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“The food here is really good.” Lillian sat with her mother and brother in the seafood restaurant overlooking the lagoon. The place was decorated with a Japanese theme from ancient times, long before Tokyo became the capital of the Pacific Rim. Lillian wasn’t focused on the restaurant or her family, she was scanning the lagoon.

“I guess we should try to enjoy being here. We’ll be leaving soon enough.” George spoke as he thoughtfully munched some sashimi. His sister was right; it almost tasted like real fish. They kept talking about how soon they’d be leaving. But the hurdles between where they were and boarding that executive lifeboat were multiplying.

“What are you looking for, princess?” Anna noticed her daughter blush when she used the nickname the family had for her.

“Just wondering where Mrs. Valentine went off to. She disappeared right after ... the thing that happened this morning.” Lillian frowned.

George narrowed his eyes. Why was his sister looking for Kapnos specifically? He’d have to ask his girlfriend when they found her.

“She’s probably napping. We all need to collect ourselves after what happened.” Anna forced a tight smile onto her face. “Once again, George. You were very smart and brave. You saved us.”

“It was nothing.” George waved his hand dismissively.

“Yes.” Lillian looked at her brother. He seemed a changed man since their arrival on the hotel. She barely recognized him. He looked so confident and mature. This was the perfect opportunity to tell him she was proud of him. Gwendolyn had been adamant that she needed to share those feelings with him. Lillian bit her lip. “That was crazy.” Even after everything, she couldn’t bring herself to say the words. She prayed Gwendolyn wouldn’t be disappointed in her.

“Hello, Zaals.” Constance walked up along the boardwalk that ran around and through the lagoons. “Have you seen my husband?”

“He’s not in your room?” Anna cocked her head.

“He is not.” Constance gave her head a brief shake.

“Well, there’s no one in the water.” Anna looked to her son for help.

“He’s here somewhere, Mrs. Haversham. He helped me rebuild our barricade.” George shrugged.

“Yes, he is.” Constance frowned. She gave them a shallow curtsy. “Good day, Zaals.” She continued on down the boardwalk.

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“Gods ... yes ... Mr. Haversham. You give ... and I ... receive.” Kapnos was naked on all fours, her curves on full display for the man plowing her from behind. She watched him over her shoulder, shouting encouragement that he seemed to be eating up. “I feel ... ugh ... ugh ... like a wife again ... with a man ... who knows how to handle me.”

“Who’s your ... uuughhhh ... daddy?” Roy slapped her round ass cheek.

“You’re my ... daddy ... Mr. Haversham.” Kapnos saw the door handle turn. She had left it unlocked for a reason. “Tell me ... you love my ... pussy.” She watched the door open. Constance was a little early, which was too bad. Kapnos hadn’t cum yet, and she was hoping to get at least one climax in.

“Your pussy is ... fucking tight ... and ... wet ... and I love it.” Roy’s hips slammed into her backside.

“Roy? What the ...?” Constance stood in the doorway with a hand on her mouth and her face ashen. “Mrs. Salazar?”

“Oh, Constance.” Roy pulled out of the widow and covered his penis with his hands as if that might hide his dirty deed. “We were just ...”

“Mrs. Haversham. I’m so sorry.” Kapnos leapt off the bed and gathered her clothes in her arms. Still naked, she curtsied to Constance. “He seduced me ... Mrs. Haversham. I was lonely and ... he took advantage.” Tears ran down her face. “I am so ashamed. Please ... never speak of this again.”

“Wait ... it wasn’t like that.” Roy grabbed a pillow and placed it over his softening penis. He watched Delores’s bare butt shake as she ran toward the door.

“Oh, really.” Constance stepped aside to let the widow pass. Once she was gone, she stepped into the room and closed the door. It smelled heavily of sex. “Roy, darling, we need to talk.”

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“What’s that about?” Lillian stood and craned her neck. Something was happening on the other side of the lagoon, but the trees and bars obscured her view. She saw someone running and then a bright flash of blue light.

The Zaals all covered their eyes. When they uncovered them, Gwendolyn was walking toward them rapidly over the boardwalk from the other side of the lagoon.

“Oh ... heavens. There’s scandal about.” Kapnos said. She wore Gwendolyn Valentine’s form again. “Mr. Haversham was mid-coitus with Mrs. Salazar when Mrs. Haversham walked in on them.”

George sniffed the air when Kapnos stopped near their table. He could smell sex. “Mrs. Valentine, it seems you’ve witnessed something distressing.”

“I have at that.” Kapnos agreed and nodded her head. “Perhaps you’ll assist me in making sure the Havershams don’t come to violence, Mr. Zaal. While Mrs. and Ms. Zaal give poor Mrs. Salazar some feminine comfort. I saw her run to her room.”

“I can see her room from here. She didn’t return,” Lillian said.

“She did. Perhaps that strange light blinded you at the moment of her return, princess?” Kapnos smiled sweetly at Lillian.

Lillian blushed and mumbled something unintelligible.

George rubbed his chin and regarded his sister. She was acting so strange.

“Mrs. Valentine is right. Poor Mrs. Salazar will need our comfort.” Anna stood, took her daughter’s hand, and pulled her from the table. Anna turned to George. “Be careful. Mr. Haversham is ... armed.” There were many adjectives to describe that tempestuous man, but his pistol seemed the most relevant piece of the puzzle.

“I’ll be careful, Mom.” George kissed his mother on the cheek. And gave her a surreptitious pat on the behind as she left. She glared at him over her shoulder as her shoes slapped against the boardwalk. Her expression said *not in public!* And she was right, of course. George would have to control himself better around his mother. At least no one had seen the friendly rear end pat.

Kapnos smirked at the exchange between mother and son. “Come along.” She walked out in front of George, taking the outer boardwalk, which was the long way to get where they were going, but had the advantage of being in the opposite direction the other Zaals had taken. “I must fill you in on some things.”

“What did you do, Nossy?” George whispered, jogging to catch up. “Did you sleep with Roy Haversham?”

“Oh ... you really are smart.” She raised her eyebrows, impressed with his quick deduction. “You certainly are boyfriend material.” She smiled and pinched his cheek with her gloved fingers.

“Why?” George was so confused.

“I’ll explain everything in a moment.” She stopped walking and held his arm so he would stop, too. They were near the barricade, on the opposite side of the lagoon from Delores’s room. “Let’s just wait for your sister and mother to enter Mrs. Salazar’s room. That will certainly be a confusing conversation.”

George took a deep breath and let it out slowly. He heard his mother say her greetings when Delores opened her door. Delores greeted her back. Their voices echoed around the lagoon and then were cut off when Anna and Lillian entered the room and the door closed. “Okay ... spill it. What’s going on?”

“I can see you’re angry. You’ll be happy once you understand.” She gave him a reassuring smile and went into her reasons and actions concerning the Havershams.

Chapter 19

Would be Forever Grateful to be Used for Revenge

“You had sex with him ... *because* he pointed his pistol at me?” George stood inches from Kapnos, who appeared as Gwendolyn. They were near the barricade. They spoke in hushed tones.

“Yes.” Kapnos nodded adamantly. “He’s too dangerous. I needed to get rid of him. But I’m not a killer, George. I have sex. That’s what I do. So I seduced him, which was pathetically easy, and made sure his wife found us.” She would have seduced him anyway, but George didn’t need to know that.

“How does this ‘get rid of him’? He’s going to be even more dangerous and unstable.” George studied her face. “Are you ... trying not to laugh? This is deadly serious.”

“It’s not Mr. Haversham I find amusing. It’s your lack of faith in my understanding of the human psyche.” The smile she’d been suppressing broke out into a brilliant white crescent.

“How do you have such a strong grasp on the human psyche? You’re not human.” George frowned.

“Oh, Georgie dear. That is true. But ...” She gave him a dainty kiss on the cheek. “I have been intimate with humans for a thousand years. And while each one believes themselves to be unique, they do tend to repeat themselves and respond to the same stimulus in similar ways. I know humans inside and out.”

Roy’s door opened, and he stormed out. “If you really feel that way, Constance, then you’re better off without me.” He walked too far, tipped at the edge of the lagoon, tried to catch his balance, and fell in with a splash.

Constance walked out of the room with her arms folded and a frosty expression on her face. She did not rush to help her husband. “Don’t compound your foolishness, Roy. If you want a break, we can try it when we get back to Earth. There’s nowhere for you to go.”

“Oh?” Roy climbed out of the water. His suit was dripping wet. He walked along the boardwalk to the room he had been sharing with his wife.

“Have some faith in me, Georgie. It’s already happening. Just watch,” Kapnos whispered in George’s ear.

“Don’t be ridiculous, Roy.” Constance walked over to her room and stood in the doorway. She silently watched her husband. When he came out, still dripping, with his

backpack slung over one shoulder, she stepped aside for him. “We’ll all need therapy after this. This is just one more issue. You can’t leave.”

“Oh? Mommy won’t let me?” Roy glanced darkly at his wife.

Constance blushed deeply.

“You, Mr. Zaal, help me dismantle the barricade. I’m leaving.” Roy began moving furniture away from the double doors.

George shook his head. He leaned close to Kapnos so Roy wouldn’t hear. “He’ll die if he leaves. The creatures will get him,” he whispered.

“It’s unfortunate for him. But better for all of us,” Kapnos whispered back. “It’s not like *we* killed him.”

“It’s pretty close.” George didn’t know what to do, so he stuffed his hands in his pockets.

“Roy ... please. Don’t be a baby.” Constance winced when she said it. It was so clearly a poor choice of words.

“Baby?” Roy pushed the desk out of the way. The door on the right was free. He put his hand on the butt of his pistol and opened the door, checking the hallway outside. He turned to his wife, his hand still on his pistol, although it hadn’t left his holster.

George pulled his pistol free and let it hang by his leg. He felt Kapnos move behind him.

“You’ll never find that stupid eye. You’re never leaving. And even if you were, the rest of the solar system is probably infected with those things.” Roy’s voice rose. “I will enjoy the rest of my days far away from you.” He spat on the ground. “You can have your precious Zaals for all I care.” He turned and slipped out into the exterior hall.

“Roy!” Constance didn’t run after him. She turned to George and Kapnos. “What are you waiting for? Put the barricade back up. Those things could come back at any time.” She burst into tears, ran back to her room, and slammed the door.

“I am sorry for poor Mrs. Haversham, but it’s for the best. She’ll see that soon enough. She’ll be much more approachable now.” Kapnos went over to the desk and pushed. “Give me a hand.”

“Are you ... thinking about sex with Mrs. Haversham?” George went over to the desk and helped her get it back in place. “Her marriage just crumbled ... thanks to you.”

“Yes. And Mr. Haversham wasn’t good for her.” Kapnos moved the heavy pieces of furniture slowly. “He wasn’t good for any of us. Not at all.” She put her hands on her hips and faced George. “I mean to live, George Zaal. I mean for us to have a future.”

“I get that. But ... this isn’t fair to Mr. Haversham. And ... why did you have to use sex?” George tried not to picture his girlfriend with the horrible Roy Haversham.

Kapnos raised her hand and bobbed on the balls of her feet like she was trying to get the teacher’s attention in class. “Horny alien here, in case you hadn’t noticed.” She dropped her hand and looked at George’s pistol that was back in its holster. “Chimpanzees are murderous apes that look to solve problems with violence. Bonobos are horny apes that solve their problems with sex. They both share ninety-nine percent of your DNA. But, I think, humans are more chimp than bonobo. I would have been happier if it was the opposite. You can finish the barricade by yourself. I’ve got *things* to do.” Kapnos stormed off.

George felt queasy. He didn’t like any of it. He wished desperately he could tell his mother and get her sage advice. But he’d promised not to out Kapnos. He grumbled to himself and reassembled the barricade.

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“You look nervous, Mom.” George removed his holster and hung it from a chair. They were alone in his mother’s room.

“Well, I am. I’m worried about Mr. Haversham. And the attack on the front door this morning. And all the impossible tasks laid out before us.” Anna rubbed her neck and looked over at her son. “Mr. Haversham isn’t going to make it, is he?”

“I don’t think so.” George shook his head. “The Newest Guest seems to be learning. Its creatures are more dangerous than they used to be. I imagine that trend will continue.”

“Is it bad that I feel no grief for that man? He pointed his pistol at you.” Anna grimaced. “I wanted to tear his windpipe from his throat.”

“There’s a lot of that going around.” George loosened the knot of his tie.

“And he threatened you right while you were in the middle of saving us all again.” Anna took a deep breath. “I feel for Mrs. Haversham. But not for that man.” She stood and shook out the tension from her shoulders. “I’m sorry. I’m wasting our precious alone time worrying about things that can’t be fixed.”

“It’s okay, Mom. Whatever you want.” He gave her a reassuring smile.

“I want you, Georgie.” Anna wiggled her whole body, trying to release the tension. She stopped and returned his smile. “I want to reward my handsome man for the latest time he saved my life.” She straightened her bodice and began removing her gloves. “So,

what's to be your reward?" Gloves off, she held up her bare hands for him to see, moving them in a way she hoped was seductive. She watched his face closely and thought it was working. Her eyes glanced down to the front of his trousers, and she knew it was working. "So, imagine you're a young man of eighteen, and you love your mother in a way few other sons do. And she loves you that way, too. What reward would you claim?" She danced for him, twirling about and making a show of her pale hands.

"Actually, I have it on good authority that it isn't so rare for a son to feel about his mother the way I feel about you." George pulled down his trousers and underwear. His dick sprung into the air.

"Oh, really?" Anna stopped twirling and unbuttoned her bodice. "Well, if you have it on good authority, I'm sure mothers are falling into their sons' arms all over Earth and Luna."

"There's fifteen billion people. I'm sure it's happening all the time." George took off his jacket and tie. He unbuttoned his shirt.

"Well, I suppose it only has to be a tiny fraction of a percent to be a decent number." Anna laughed and removed her bodice. She went to work on her skirts. "At least I've got good company."

"Would it matter if we were the only ones?" His heartbeat quickened as more of his mother's alabaster skin came into view. She was breathtaking in her bra and panties. His cock was already hard. Seeing her, it became harder still.

"It would not matter. I know this is right. In my bones, I feel it. It's what we both need to help us survive La Belle Île." She shimmied her panties down her legs. "Who knew that I was raising a stud to breed bitches?" She giggled, and dropped her voice low. "Who knew that I would someday be his bitch?" With her bra still on, she ran to George and jumped into his arms, wrapping her legs around his middle. She planted her lips on his and gave him a deep kiss.

George kissed his mother back fiercely. His hands grabbed handfuls of her butt to keep her from falling. Despite her height, she wasn't a light woman. He was glad of the time he'd spent in the gym, staying in shape for tennis. Her wonderfully pliant curves pressed hard into his body. Her tongue playfully toyed with his. They made out for several minutes while he held her in the air. He could feel her wetness on his lower abdomen as she rocked her hips into him and ground her pussy on his stomach.

When she broke the kiss, Anna was grinning like a schoolgirl. She pecked him on the tip of his nose. "Go on then. You have your mother's approval to take her in a manly fashion." She giggled and squealed as he carried her about the room. His fingers pressed into her butt in the most ardent and delicious way.

“You used to carry me around.” George laughed as he ran around the room with his mother, his cock bounding below her pussy. “Now I get to return the favor.” The way the weight of her tits pressed into his chest with the gravity of each step was sublime. Her laughing face was inches from his. It made him want to shout for joy.

“Put me down ... put me down ...” Anna’s chiming laugh echoed around the room. She shrieked when he tossed her onto the bed and then laughed harder. She rolled onto her belly and looked over her shoulder. “I’d like to do our new position again. Would you like that, too?”

“Oh, gods, you’re beautiful.” George stood for a moment, taking in the undulating hills and valleys of her body. Her ass was heart-shaped and perfectly presented, as she was on her belly with her legs together. He crawled on the bed, kissing and biting her calves, then the backs of her thighs, and then her ass.

“Oohhhhh ... you’re biting me, sunshine.” Anna opened her eyes wide. “No one has ever ... oohhhh ... not so hard.” She gripped the blanket tightly in her hands. “Georgie ... I love it ... I love it Georgie ... I can tell from your bites ... how much you want me. It feels ... spectacular. I ... no ... no ... George. I don’t want you to eat me from back there. Your face will be right in my ... butt.” She didn’t want to say butthole.

“Sorry, Mom. I’m going to do it.” He spread her ass cheeks with his hands and lowered his mouth to her pussy.

“Oohhhhhh ... gods ... so dirty ... it’s too dirty. Your nose ... is pressing on my ...” Anna could indeed feel his nose pressing on her butthole. She had never imagined such a thing. “This ... uuuggghhhhhh ... doesn’t disgust you?” She reminded herself that he had stuck his thumb in her butthole, so he obviously didn’t have the same approach to butts that Ernest had had in her marriage.

“Nnnnoommmmm ... nah ... mmmmmppphhhhh ... Mom ... I ... nnnnaaaammnnnn ... love it,” George said between licks and slurps.

“Ohhhhh ... you’re not ... even touching my ... clitoris ... and ... you’re going to make meeeeeeeeeeeeeeee.” Anna buried her face into the blanket, kicked her feet into the mattress, and orgasmed for her son. Each time they coupled she learned a new ecstasy. She was supposed to be rewarding him, but somehow he’d taken the initiative and given to her instead.

While his mother was still convulsing from her orgasm, George moved up her body, placed his cock at her slick entrance, and slid in. “I know ... your pussy has adjusted to me ... but it still feels ... incredibly tight.” He placed his hands on the beguiling small of her back and found a rhythm with his hips. He saw his mom turn her face sideways. Tears pooled in her eye. “Mom ... are you ... ugh ... ugh ... crying?” He slowed his pace.

"I'm ... just so happy ... sunshine. So happy ... we found this ... slice of heaven to share." Anna didn't have to do anything in that position except hold on, so she gripped the blanket more tightly and let her son ride her.

"Me ... too ... Mom." George pounded into her. She didn't complain about it hurting at all, so he loosened the throttle. He slammed into her so hard her hips lifted into the air at the apex of each thrust. "I'm your ... ugh ... ugh ... ugh ... stud ... Mom."

"I'm ... ah ... ah ... ah ... your bitch ... Georgie!" Anna could feel another orgasm fast approaching. Her son's penis seemed to zero in on a spot deep inside that unlocked a river of pleasure. It was like he was a key made just for her lock. It was all so wonderful that Anna said something that truly surprised her. "I'm ... uuuggghhhh ... safe today ... you can ... put your stuff inside me."

"Mom?" George slowed his hips. He must have misheard her. "What?"

"I want ... it ... George. I need ... uuuggghhhh ... it." She trembled her way through her climax.

George waited for her to stop cumming to ask his next question. He was in awe of the situation he found himself in, but he didn't want to mess things up. His mother was obviously beside herself. He didn't want her to resent him for anything later. "We have ... that other condom. I could ... ugh ... ugh ...?"

"The condom ... would defeat ... the purpose ... ooohhh ... of what I want." She gazed back at him. He looked so strong and vigorous thrusting his hips up against her shaking backside. "I want ... to go about the rest ... ugh ... ugh ... of my day ... with your seed ... in my womb. I want ... to feel that closeness with you. To ... ooohhhhhhhh ... speak with ... the others ... while your stuff is still ... inside me ... our ... miraculous ... secret. Please ... say yes ... and fill me."

"Yes ... Mom." George nodded his head and picked up the pace again. Her words spurred his climax closer at an accelerated pace. He thought of her talking to Mrs. Salazar ... or Kapnos ... with his cum still inside her. The thought drove him wild. He searched her stormy blue eyes and could see her need. *My mother wants me to cum in her!* It wasn't to make babies, but still ... it was indeed a miracle. "You're ... going to make me ... cum ... Mom."

"Yes ... yes ... yes ... sunshine ... I want it ... fill me ... sperm ... sperm ... sperm ..." Anna's mind reeled. She'd asked for it, and it was almost here. A massive orgasm seized her, and she went rigid just as she felt the heat of his seed inside her.

"Mom ... Mom ... aaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhh." George's hips fell out of rhythm. His orgasm went on and on. He was certain he'd never cum so much in his life. It was lucky it was her safe day, because he'd have knocked her up otherwise. Finally, his hips came to a

rest on her ass. Then, a few seconds later, they spasmed once more as he shot three final blasts deep into her womb.

“Nnnnnnngggggggggggg.” Anna’s eyes rolled back, and her back arched, pushing up into her son as he collapsed on top of her. This was more than a slice of heaven. She’d found paradise itself.

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The sound of splashing and laughing in the lagoon was oddly comforting to Constance. Her whole life was unraveling, but others were still finding joy in the hell-pit of a hotel they found themselves in. She stepped off the boardwalk onto the beach, curling her toes around the soft warmth of the sand. She was wearing her swimming suit, and carrying her holstered pistol in a gloved hand.

Constance stopped at a bar for a cocktail, and continued on, sipping it with her free hand. She found that Lillian and Gwendolyn were the source of the noise. They were roughhousing in the water. “Greetings, ladies.” Constance gave them a curtsy, put down her gun on the beach, and walked into the water. She found an underwater bench and tried bravely to curve her lips into a smile. Both of the women had flushed cheeks and looked like girls caught with their gloves in the cookie jar.

“Good day, Mrs. Haversham.” Lillian nodded her head since she was in the water and couldn’t do a full curtsy.

“You look like you’re bearing things well, dear.” Kapnos gave Lillian a quick pinch on the butt and swam over to Constance. “What can we do to help?” She patted Constance’s knee under the water and sat on the bench at a respectful distance.

“What I desire, you cannot give me.” Constance sighed and sipped her blue drink.

“And what is that?” Kapnos smiled sweetly. “Maybe we can help?”

“Revenge, Mrs. Valentine.” Constance took a deep breath, pushing down her feelings of rage. “If this hotel were full of guests, I would go to a bar and pick up a tall, handsome man. I would take him back to my room. And afterward, I would tell Roy all about it.” She glanced at Gwendolyn. “Your lipstick is smudged, dear.”

“Oh, thank you.” Kapnos turned away. She took some lagoon water and scrubbed around her lips.

“There is a man here, Mrs. Haversham.” The wheels spun in Lillian’s head. Maybe she could help make up for past troubles with her brother by giving him this. “He is tall and

handsome. He admires you greatly and would be forever grateful to be used for revenge." Lillian kept her hands underwater since Gwendolyn had pulled off her gloves earlier, and she didn't know where they were.

"I'm not going to sleep with a teenager." Constance barked a quick laugh. "Not even for revenge."

"He's eighteen, Mrs. Haversham." Lillian persisted. Her time with Gwendolyn had given her some confidence. "A man grown. And like I said, you would blow his mind. You get your revenge, and he gets the memory of a lifetime."

"Your commitment to your brother's sex life is admirable." Kapnos turned back to them, her lipstick washed off.

"Although perhaps a bit unseemly." Constance felt something float against her leg. She reached down and plucked a glove from the water. It matched Lillian's suit. She raised an eyebrow and looked at the girl. "Lose something?"

"I ... um ... I ... well ..." Lillian stammered.

"Since it was just us ladies, Lillian removed her gloves to show me a wonderful antique ring she had." Kapnos scooted closer to Constance and beckoned Lillian over. "Come over here, Ms. Zaal, and show off your ring."

Lillian hesitated a moment and then swam over to them. The water depth was to her clavicle in front of the bench, so she stood on the sandy bottom and raised her hand out of the water. The ruby and diamonds glittered in the warm light of the lagoon.

"Isn't it lovely?" Kapnos moved closer to Constance. Their thighs were now touching. "Doesn't she have the most delicate and dexterous looking hand?"

"Unseemly." Constance finished off her drink. "Put your naked hand away, young lady."

"There are no men about. What's the harm?" Kapnos purred.

"Women sleep with women, too. Or so I'm told. We wouldn't want to spark such desire." Constance turned her face to the pretty widow. They were close enough that Gwendolyn's sweet breath entered her nostrils. "I dare say, it's not my place to judge if they do. So long as they're all consenting adults. But it makes a woman's hand unseemly under such circumstances for sure." Constance moved away from Gwendolyn and turned her steely gaze on Lillian. "You're older than your brother, correct?"

"Yes. I'm engaged to be married, remember?" Lillian dropped her hand underwater.

"I remember. Just wanted to make sure." Constance swam past them and climbed onto the beach. She picked up her pistol and looked back at them. "If I ever meet your fiancé, I won't tell him what happened here. Your secret is safe with me. I wouldn't want him

going out for revenge.” She gave them a curtsy and headed back to the bar for another drink. Once it was retrieved, she walked back to her room.

Once they heard Constance’s door close, Lillian swam into Gwendolyn’s arms. “Does she ... know about us? I mean ... how could she possibly?”

“She’s clever.” Kapnos shrugged. She kissed Lillian on the lips, briefly let their tongues play, and pulled back. “That was sporting of you to help your brother out. But if Mrs. Haversham were to tell her husband of her revenge act with George, things would go poorly. The purpose of the act is that Mr. Haversham should know, your poor brother would find himself in another duel.”

“Oh ... I hadn’t thought of that.” Lillian watched her companion with wide eyes. “I was just trying to reward him ... for saving our lives. You know, like you said earlier. Can you imagine his face upon seeing Constance Haversham naked?”

“He would have a wide smile indeed.” Kapnos lifted Lillian’s hand out of the water. “Much the same as my face right now as I gaze upon your gorgeous bare hand.” She kissed the back of Lillian’s hand. “Now, where were we?” Kapnos sucked two of Lillian’s fingers into her mouth and made love to them with her tongue. She very much enjoyed the look of shock and bliss upon the young woman’s visage.

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Anna was still on her belly, her son sat next to her. She felt his hands gently exploring the round curve of her butt. She grimaced when she thought about what she’d asked for. *George is more responsible than me. At least he mentioned the condom.* She kept her face partway buried in the blanket and her body prone. Part of it was that she was still buzzing from her orgasms, part was that she didn’t want to face him.

“Hey, Mom?” George sat cross-legged by his mother’s hip. He dragged his fingers across her ass, pressing just hard enough to form magical depressions in her supple flesh.

“Hmmm?” Anna said.

“Can you spread your legs? I’d like to see my cum.” He gave her ass a pat and watched it shake. The sight stirred his flaccid penis.

“We have to talk, sunshine.” Anna sighed. She was going to have to face him. She pushed herself up and sat cross-legged, their knees touching. She could see his gaze drop to her vagina, looking for whatever was leaking out. He’d put so much inside her, she was sure he’d see a wet spot on the blanket in no time at all unless she redirected his attention.

“Eyes up here.” She pointed to her eyes. She watched him struggle as he moved his gaze

up her body, pausing on her hanging boobs, but eventually meeting her eyes. "I hadn't planned to ask you for that."

"For what, Mom?" George's dick slowly rose in his lap.

"Even though it's my safe day, it's not ... necessarily safe." It was Anna's turn to have her gaze drift as she spied his penis rising majestically. "I ... um ... this is important ..." She tried not to let his voracious-looking penis knock her off track. "A woman never ... um ... knows if she is truly safe." Without thinking, her hand reached out and stroked him. She marveled at the feeling of his skin. They were so far beyond her showing her naked hands to him, and yet every time she touched him it was a reminder of the broken taboo, especially when feeling that powerful, veiny thing.

"So, you could get pregnant?" This was news to George. Despite his mother's pumping hand, his body filled with tension. It would be difficult to hide a baby from his father. Not to mention what it would do to his life and hers. "I ... should have insisted on the condom."

"You're so sweet." Anna kissed her son on the lips. Kissing on the lips had been a bright line not long ago, too. Now, she kissed him freely. They'd plowed their way through each and every line. There was nothing left. Even at that moment, his little swimmers were busy looking for her egg. She prayed it wasn't there to be found. The lines had fallen. He'd even stuck his finger in her butt. In a few days, she'd experienced more sex than in all her years of marriage: both in terms of variety and joy. She held his shoulders, broke the kiss, and studied his deep, brown eyes. "You know ... if we had sex again, it might help push some of your stuff out of me. Want to try?"

"Sure, Mom." The worried furrow in George's brow dissipated. "Maybe you should be on top so that gravity can help."

"Good thinking." Anna's heart hammered in her chest. The mere thought of sex with her son seemed to send her body into a tizzy. Sweat broke out on her forehead. Her palms became clammy as she pushed him onto his back and mounted him. Her chest heaved with anticipation while reaching between her legs and guiding his penis inside her. There was a loud, squelching sound. "You hear that, sunshine? That's the sound of your stuff getting pushed out of me. Let's get the rest out." She wasn't thinking clearly. *Maybe I should sit on the toilet and let it drain? No ... no ... this is best.* Pleasure surged through her. She bounced on him, her hands falling back to his thighs. She arched her back backward, looked up at the ceiling, and rode him as hard as she could.

"Oh ... my ... gods." George grunted as she pushed his hips into the mattress again and again. "You're ... ugh ... ugh ... a goddess." His mother's belly was pushed out, her tits bouncing to the sides as her shoulders leaned back. The triangle of hair between her legs was dark and tangled from all the body fluids that had dried in it. His cock looked huge

splitting her engorged lips. He could see her button clearly. When he rubbed it with his thumb, her body seized with pleasure. She let out a strangled cry and came on him.

“Eeeeeiiiiiiiiiii.” Anna’s mind surged with overriding pleasure. When her orgasm subsided, her hips went back to bouncing. She rode her son for more than a half-hour. By the time he gave her a warning, her lungs burned, and her muscles ached. But still, she rode on.

“Mom ... I said ... I’m going to cum ... soon. You ... uuuggghhhhhh ... have to get off.” George was perplexed. She continued to bounce on top of him as if she hadn’t heard. “Mom?”

“Ugh ... ugh ... ugh ...” Anna gritted her teeth and put a slight twisting motion into her hips. She didn’t have the heart to tell him to put his stuff inside her again. It would be admitting defeat. At the same time, she needed it. She needed to feel his heat inside her womb. And they’d already done it once. Adding another load didn’t increase the risk that much more. “Ugh ... ugh ... ugh ...”

“Mom ... I’m ...” George had two options. Cum in her again, or try to throw her off. When she started doing some sort of magical twisting move with her hips, he gave up trying to figure out what was right. “You’re going to ... uggghhhhhh ... make me ... cum ... Mom ... aaaaaahhhhhhhhhh.” He clutched the blankets on either side, his hips bucking up into her.

“Yessssssss ... eeeeeiiiiiiiiiiiiiii.” Anna fell forward, bouncing haphazardly on him. They came together. When they were done, she lay on top of him in a sweaty heap, trying to catch her breath. *What have I just done? What’s happening to me?* She listened to his thudding heartbeat and didn’t have any answers. Without solutions, she prayed to the gods that it truly was a safe day.

Chapter 20

What Have You Done to George!?!

“Hhhhhmmmmmm.” Anna awoke on her belly. She could feel the sheet under her pelvis was soaked. She and her son had copulated like a pair of crazed rabbits all day. How many times had he finished inside her? Five ... it was five times. She really hoped it was her safe day. She was mostly sure. “George?” She groaned and rolled onto her side. Her body buzzed from her toes to her scalp. *What will become of me?* She knew she needed to collect her wits. She couldn’t afford to be washed away in a sea of ecstasy. People were depending on her. She blinked her eyes. “Georgie? What are you doing?” Her son sat naked on the edge of the bed, an interface screen open in the air in front of him. He was swiping his way through numbers Anna didn’t recognize. Other than the screen, the room was dark.

“Océane is having trouble with her firewall. The attacks are getting more sophisticated. I’m seeing if I can help.” George felt his mother’s warm, bare hand run along his spine. He sighed with delight at her touch.

“Can you help?” Anna sat up and scooted closer to him, reading over his shoulder.

“I don’t think so.” George shook his head. “This is all beyond me.”

“Well, you probably can’t code better than an AI. Or work as fast. But maybe you can think outside the box. Try shifting the paradigm.” Anna kissed his shoulder and got up. Her whole body ached in the most wonderful way. There was wetness on her inner thighs as gravity pulled her son’s seed out of her. “What time is it?”

“It’s late.” George moved numbers around the screen.

“We can’t think on an empty stomach. I’m famished. You must be, too.” Anna walked to the bathroom. She glanced over her shoulder and saw that George’s eyes were fixed on her butt. That made her smile. “Let’s shower, dress, and get something to eat. Sound good?”

“Sure, Mom.” George nodded and looked back at the screen. “I’ll shower after you. There’s one more thing I want to try.”

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“Oh, Mr. Zaal. You keep saying and doing the right things. Before this happened, I would never ... I mean, I was always faithful to Carlos. And you’re a teenager. But ...” Delores slowly unbuttoned her bodice. Her hands were shamefully bare, and her fingers were still wet with the teenager’s saliva.

“Mr. Salazar would want you to be happy. Especially in the middle of all this darkness.” Kapnos, who wore George’s body at the moment, gave the widow a warm, reassuring smile. He stroked his cock, sitting naked on the edge of the bed. “My body makes you happy, doesn’t it?”

Delores made a little squeaking noise and nodded. George was a beautiful man. She removed her bodice. Slowly, almost playfully, she removed her bra. “Does my body make you happy, Mr. Zaal?” She pushed out her chest. “Carlos always adored my breasts.” She knew she shouldn’t talk about her beloved, dead husband. But it was difficult not to. Since hell had been unleashed, her mind constantly wandered back to him, even when she was trying to distract herself from such thoughts.

“Your husband had excellent taste. Your breasts are exquisite.” Kapnos saw Delores smile and repress a laugh. “What’s so funny?” He kept pumping his cock.

“You don’t talk like you’re eighteen.” Delores began removing her skirts. She was so nervous that her fingers trembled. Her vagina was wet for the first time in what felt like ages. She worked hard to avoid thinking of her husband. That didn’t work, so she focused on the idea that he would be happy that she might find some pleasure in her bleak existence.

“I don’t talk like I’m eighteen?” He laughed. “I have an old soul.” Kapnos stood. In this body, he towered over Delores. That was an enjoyable perspective. It made him feel more assertive. “I’m going to walk around you to take in your beauty. Is that okay?”

Delores nodded. She lowered her panties and stepped out of them. Then she clasped her hands before her and stood still, keeping her spine straight. *No slouching!* She wanted to look pretty for him. *I feel like a model.* The only thing she didn’t do was smile. But she hoped her face was alluring in repose.

Kapnos whistled appreciatively as he slowly walked around her.

“Do I please you?” Delores could hear the wet fapping of his penis behind her. The youth was so brazen about pleasuring himself. Carlos had always been shy about that. She realized that she didn’t need to ask the question. Clearly, George was happy with her, which is why he couldn’t stop touching himself.

“You are wonderfully zaftig. I’m very lucky you chose to share yourself with me.” Kapnos ran his fingers down her spine and continued to walk around her.

"I ... um ... think *you* talked us into this." Delores giggled. *Oh, my gods. I'd forgotten what it was like to laugh.* "Not that I'm complaining. I'm excited."

"Yes, I can tell." Kapnos finished his circle and knelt before her. He ran his fingers along her pussy and held them up so she could see the wetness. "May I have a taste?" He looked up at her with a devilish smile.

Delores nodded. She made another squeaking sound, but couldn't bring herself to speak an actual affirmative. "Oooohhhhhhhh." She threw her head back when the teenager began working her vagina with his tongue and fingers. Carlos hadn't been so skilled. She'd never been with anyone that had such a talent for pressing her buttons. She spread her legs and gripped his hair with her fingers to keep from falling over. "Mr. ... Zaal ... ooooohhhhhhhh ... Zaal ... Mr. ... aaaahhhhhhhhh ... Zaaaaaaaallllllllll!" He'd only just started, but she was already orgasming.

"Mmmppppmmmmmmmm." Kapnos removed his fingers when Delores squirted, but continued to work with his tongue, driving her to back-to-back climaxes. The woman nearly fainted, falling to the floor. He was ready and caught her in his strong arms. He carried the limp, blubbering Delores to her bed, placed her on her back, and spread her legs.

"How ... how ... did you ...?" Delores looked up into George's handsome face. It looked like he'd just gone for a dip in the lagoon. "Why ... are you so ... wet?"

"You squirted all over me, Mrs. Salazar." Kapnos moved his dick into place and pressed his hips forward. "This may smart at first. But you'll adjust in no time. I promise." He slowly slid into her.

"Eeeeeiiiiiiiiiiiiiii." Delores flopped on the blanket like a fish out of water. "Too ... big ... tooooooooo ... uuuggghhhhhhhhh." Her legs lifted into the air and rotated like she was trying to pedal a strange, invisible bicycle. "Ooohhhhhhhh ... gods ... that's too ... deeeeeeeeeeeppppp." She spasmed.

"I'm going to hump you now. It will only hurt a few moments more." Kapnos had been in her shoes. He had received the very same cock with the same pussy, so he knew exactly what to do. Of course, he couldn't tell *her* that.

"Splitting ... me ... uuuggghhhhhhhhh." Delores didn't ask him to stop. Until today, she'd barely spoken with the teenager. But he had such confidence and said such sweet things. She trusted him. She trusted that the pain would fade. And he was right. Deep in her belly, where the head of his penis plundered, joy pulsed like a beacon. It grew and grew. The pain ebbed. Soon, her whole body burned with ecstasy and passion. *Had sex always been this good, and I've forgotten? Or ... is this something new?*

“Do you ... ugh ... ugh ... feel it now?” Kapnos thrust forcefully into Delores’s pussy, giving an extra push at the bottom of each stroke to drive the woman’s ass into the mattress. “Is the pain ... ugh ... gone?”

“Ooohhhhhhhh ... it’s good ... it’s ... uuuggghhhh ... gooooooohhhhh.” Delores’s melancholy disappeared entirely. She wrapped her legs around his butt, dug her fingernails into his back, and kissed the teenager with a swirling tongue.

“Mmmpppphhhhhhhh.” She was fixing to have another large orgasm. The escape from the tatters of her life was complete. Her universe was nothing but bliss. That wonderful penis penetrated her vagina and the gloom that had hung over her. She was so incredibly grateful. And ... it suddenly occurred to her ... *I’m hooked. Once won’t be enough.* Then nothing occurred to her. She broke the kiss, and her mind sailed away over a sea of ecstasy.

“Your ... countenance ... is changed ... ugh ... ugh ... ugh ... Mrs. Salazar. I see ... happiness.” Kapnos pulled her legs from behind him, and then pushed her left over until it joined her right. She was now jackknifed on her side. He grabbed her waist and increased his tempo.

Descending from her high, Delores got used to the new position. She quickly decided it was wonderful, even though it didn’t provide the same stimulation to her clitoris. That was fine, the pleasure his penis imparted deep inside her was divine. “Yes ... yes ... Mr. Zaal ... at least ... aaahhhhhhhh ... in this moment ... I am happy. We should have ... done this ... days ago.”

“I ... agree.” Kapnos humped her to several more orgasms. Then, he pulled her on top of him. She was perspiring and breathing heavily, but she rode him like a true equestrian champion. Her whole body shook violently with the force of her galloping bounces. Kapnos took it all in. It was lovely, and certainly worth the risk he’d taken slipping into Delores’s room and bed. “I’m going ... to cum ... soon. Where ... should I ... finish?”

“Uggghhhhhh ... I don’t care ... I don’t care.” If it was possible, she rode him even harder. The thought of his hot, young seed inside her drove her insane.

“If ... you don’t decide ... I’ll put it all ... in your womb.” He gritted his teeth.

“I don’t ... eh ... eh ... eh ... care.” She dug her nails into his hard chest. When he cried out, and she felt the heat of him deep inside, a mighty climax seized her. She threw back her head and stared at the stars above her. She could have sworn she was looking directly into the palace of the gods.

Later, after Kapnos had dressed, he checked in on Delores. She was naked on top of the blanket, stretched out and supine. Her eyes were closed, and she breathed evenly. On her lips was the sweetest smile.

Kapnos thought about changing back into Gwendolyn before leaving the room. It would have been possible with her sleeping. But he didn't want to risk her waking and catching him in the act. There was also the problem of what to do with the shed mass. George was much bigger than Gwendolyn.

So, Kapnos kissed the sleeping woman on the cheek and stole out of the room.

~~

There was no one in the lagoon when Anna and George went for their late supper. They dined at the Japanese restaurant, sitting right next to the water. The pleasures of food made for the wealthy were considerable, but it paled next to the bliss they'd experienced in Anna's room that day.

In case they were overheard, they didn't talk about what they'd been doing together. Although, Anna did spend a long time considering the semen swimming inside her while she took her supper in such a public place. Her clothes were perfect. Her hair and hat were pinned just right. She'd applied her makeup just so. But in her womb, things were not so picture-perfect. *I'm carrying my son's seed around with me this evening!* A sense of joy and pride swelled inside her at the thought. Maybe it *was* picture-perfect in her womb, too.

"Why are you smiling, Mom?" George distractedly pushed his tuna roll around his plate. "I don't think I can help Océane. And I don't know how long the hotel can hold up. If the firewall is breached again, the Newest Guest could mess with our environmental controls. Or use the fire suppression technique we used against Dad."

Anna's smile disappeared. "Your father was a hostage, George."

"That's not my point, Mom. We have to figure out how to stop the Newest Guest." George watched her pluck a section of roll with her chopsticks and daintily plop it in her mouth. She chewed thoughtfully.

"We just have to think outside the box. Like you and me, George. We thought outside the box with our ..." Anna heard a door open. The lagoon was darkened for night, so she squinted at the sound. Someone was exiting Delores's room. It looked like a man. Anna went rigid with fright. There were no men other than George in the suites. "Georgie ... Georgie ... there's a man here!" She reached a gloved hand across the table and gripped his hand tightly.

"What?" George turned to look.

The man must have heard them, he turned to look at them. When Anna could make out his face, her blood ran cold. She withdrew her hand from George's abruptly. The man walking the boardwalk across the water was ... her son. There was a flash of blue light. Anna covered her eyes. She heard hurried steps from across the lagoon, and then a door closed. When she blinked away the spots dancing before her eyes, the other George was gone. She pushed her chair back and stood, her face draining of blood. "Who are you? Where is George?"

"I'm not sure what you think you saw, Mom. But it's me, George. You're tired. You must have thought you saw something ..." He grimaced. George hated lying to his mother. But he'd promised Kapnos. What had the alien been doing in Delores's room as him? Why couldn't she be more discrete? "Let's get you to bed, Mom." George stood and stepped around the table. He froze when his mother recoiled from him.

"Has this ... all been some sort of sick trick ... by the Newest Guest?" Anna's mind spun. "Whose sperm is in me right now? What have you done to George!?!?" Her voice raised and her hands trembled. When he reached for her again, Anna turned and ran. She flew over the boardwalk back to her room, not daring to look back. Once inside her room, she slammed the door and flipped the deadbolt. Shaking, she put her back against the door. When the doorbell rang, she didn't answer it. She retreated to her bed and crawled under the covers, fully clothed. Her whole body trembled. Had everything been a lie? Was anything real?

Outside his mother's room, George leaned his head against the wall. "Gods damned." Now he had another crisis to deal with. He didn't know how to prioritize any of them. He rang the doorbell again but knew she wasn't going to answer.

~~

There were too many creatures. Roy was on the one hundred fifty-seventh floor when they found him. He shot three of them, culminating in explosions of black, viscous goo and body parts. Then he decided to retreat. He raced back up the stairs, but the creatures followed. Worse, they steadily gained on him. He wasn't going to make it back to the top of the tower.

On the one hundred sixty-first floor, he decided to make his stand. At the stairs' cutback, he kneeled and leveled his pistol. "Take that, fuckers." He dropped two more, but they kept coming. They moved quickly and ran in erratic patterns. "Okay, not the place for a last stand." Roy changed his mind and ran down the hall, shooting wildly behind him. His pistol stopped hissing when it ran out of ammunition.

There was a gym on his right. He dodged inside. Quickly, he tore off his jacket and used it to jam the door handle. Then, he started piling weights behind the door. It only took the creatures thirty seconds to start pounding on the door. Roy was a frantic, sweaty mess as he piled weights and equipment for his barricade. Fortunately, by the time they'd unjammed the handle, he had half the weights in the small gym piled against the door. Despite their pounding, the door didn't budge.

"This is all ... Constance's fault." Roy finished the barricade. He pulled the buttons off his jacket and stuck them in the pistol's cartridge. The device would turn them into bullets. Next, he looked around. There was no other way into the gym. And ... no way out. He checked his backpack. Not much food. There was a bathroom, so he'd have water. He slumped to the floor with his back to the wall as the pounding on the door continued. He was fucked. That much was clear. If his dear wife had wanted a divorce, she would be free of him soon enough. Although, he doubted she'd live long enough to enjoy single life.

~~

"I didn't expect anyone else to be up." Constance slipped into the lagoon water near George and settled herself on the bench. The dim nighttime lights made George look dour. She studied him. No, it wasn't the lighting. His expression was indeed glum. "Trouble sleeping?"

"My mom is mad at me." George sighed and let his feet bob in the water. "And Nossy is ..."

"Nossy is whom?" Constance raised an eyebrow.

"Mrs. Valentine is mad at me, too." George shrugged.

"I didn't know you were close with Mrs. Valentine." Constance studied him closely. His sister was right. *He is tall and handsome. And he has a nice body. But, of course, Roy would kill the poor lad if I bedded him.*

"I have found that extreme stress really bonds people." George gave an even bigger shrug. "And I'm not sure any of that matters, because I'm pretty sure Océane won't hold out against the cyberattack from the Newest Guest. When the hotel is under that thing's control, we're ... toast."

Constance's shoulder stiffened. "How long do we have?"

"I have no idea." George shook his head slowly.

“Do ... do you think my husband is okay? Is there a way to check on him?” Constance felt her worries begin to cascade. Despite all his troubles, George seemed to be keeping himself on an even keel. She admired that. Roy would be acting out in some way. Constance swam over to George and sat next to him on the bench. She put a gloved hand on his shoulder. “Please tell me the truth.”

“I think the outlook for your husband is grim. There’s no way to check on him.” George put his hand on hers and squeezed.

“He’s a fool.” Constance took a deep breath and looked into George’s deep brown eyes. She needed to stop talking about Roy. “You and your mother are obviously incredibly close. It seems like you two could talk out whatever is bothering her. Why haven’t you?”

“She doesn’t know if I’m really me.” George let his troubles slide away as he gazed on Constance’s beauty. She was wearing no makeup, and her hair was down. He’d never really seen her looking so vulnerable. Her green eyes were soft and inviting. “And I can’t tell her the truth.”

“What about your sister? Can you talk to your sister?” Constance hadn’t been with anyone other than Roy in years. What would it be like to bed a teenager? If they were all going to die, she need not worry about telling her husband. She could have one last fling before the end.

“I suppose. She’s sleeping, though. And ... also ... she doesn’t like me very much.” George’s dick stiffened when her other hand squeezed his thigh under the water. He couldn’t help himself. This beautiful, famous woman was coming on to him. Despite the entropy all around him, the primate in him responded with desire. Maybe he was more bonobo than chimp. He’d have to tell Kapnos.

“I think your sister does like you. She suggested to me that we should sleep together.” Constance moved her hand to his inner thigh. “I think maybe she was right.”

“She what!?!” George’s eyes went wide. “There must have been some strange context.”

“There was context. Your loving sister thought you would enjoy having sex with me.” She purred in his ear.

“Oh gods ... I can’t believe I’m going to do this.” George took a deep breath. “Mrs. Haversham, you’re gorgeous, a champion, and you have the most amazing backhand. But I can’t have sex with you. Not now. Not while my mom and Mrs. Valentine are mad at me.”

A flash of surprise crossed Constance’s face, followed quickly by confusion. “I don’t understand. You want to sleep with me, but you’re not going to?”

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Haversham." Gently, but firmly, George removed her gloved hand from his swimsuit-covered thigh. He smiled apologetically. "It would be amazing, but I can't."

"I haven't ever stepped out on Roy. Do you know how special this offer is?" Constance moved away from him, separating herself by a couple feet. "You say our situation is dire. What's one tumble before the end?"

"I can't do that to them." George sighed. He beckoned the waiter over. "Could I please have a lemonade?" The waiter nodded and strode off to the bar.

"You can't do that to the widow you just met and your mother?" Constance shook her head and smiled. She wanted him more than ever. What a strange mystery he was. "I really thought you'd say yes without question." She cocked her head at him. "I'm surprised it's Mrs. Valentine you're hung up on. I thought she was ... um ... with your sister."

George let out a long sigh. "You know, that doesn't surprise me."

"So, if the good widow is indeed seeing your sister, as I can tell she must be from the resigned expression on your face, would you like to rethink our possible tumble?" Constance smiled bravely. This rejection was such a small thing, but it was more kindling on the bonfire that was her life.

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Haversham. Believe me, this is difficult." George's dick threatened to burst from his suit. He hated the refusal, but it was the right thing to do.

"So ... it's your mother, then?" Constance narrowed her eyes. *Could it be?* She thought over how Anna and George had behaved around each other since she'd met them.

"Let's talk about something else." George tried to clear his head. "If things get bad, I think we should overload one of the hotel's reactors. We have control over one of the three fusion reactors. I'm confident that with that one reactor, Océane could create an event that would destroy the hotel."

"A chain reaction?" Constance sucked in her breath. Things really were dire.

"Fusion reactors don't run on a chain reaction. But we could overload the reactor, and it would release a large amount of energy and radiation. It would destroy the hotel."

George rubbed his chin. "But we'd have to convince Océane it was the right thing to do. The hotel has safety measures in place, of course. Thoughts?"

"On ...?"

"On how to convince Océane," George said.

They went back and forth late into the night, talking over the intractable problems they faced. They didn't come up with any brilliant solutions. But Constance promised to continue to think on it. Eventually, they parted and went to their separate beds.

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Anna's Diary August 24, 2197

I may be going insane. If it wasn't for the horror I've already witnessed, I would have simply disbelieved my eyes. But I saw two Georges. And now I don't know what is real anymore. What's worse, Lillian is in her room none the wiser. What horrors live in the suites with us? Dare I go to Lillian to warn her? Is Lillian also some strange copy of herself? I will try to sleep and find some clarity by morning.

Just when I think I've found peace inside this nightmare, I see that it's all nightmare.

Ernest's Diary August 24, 2197

It is good that the engine will thrust soon. I will do my part for the collective.

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Lillian's Diary August 24, 2197

Dear diary, is it possible that I might be in love with a woman? I was so alone, and now I'm filled with hope. I go to sleep tonight wishing I was in my lover's arms. I wonder if I should tell Francis when I see him.

Gwendolyn did say the strangest thing tonight. She said I might find some comfort in my brother's arms and bed. The thought should have made me vomit, but I actually considered it! Of course, it would be impossible, because I'm sure the thought would indeed make George vomit. And I couldn't do that to Francis. It's one thing to bed a woman. I couldn't possibly cheat on Francis with a man. But still ... I am seeing George in all new light. My mind reels at all these new thoughts and sensations.

George's Diary August 24, 2197

As of right now, my problems are myriad. I can swear here, so let me just say, holy fuckballs.

I must stop a cyberattack despite being inadequate to keep up with the AI or whatever the Newest Guest is. I must find an eyeball in a haystack. I must continue to defend our perch at the top of the tower. I must rein in my girlfriend before she humps us all into a civil war. I must convince my mother that I am me, and somehow explain the doppelganger, without outing Nossy. I must also destroy the Newest Guest, preferably without destroying us. All of this, and I have to rescue my father, too. Oh, and I should probably save Roy Haversham. Not that he deserves it. And avoid sleeping with his wife. Did I forget anything?

Holy ... fuckatron ... fuckballs. And without my mother by my side, my confidence is a phantom. Not a single one of my tasks seems remotely possible. I will compose myself and pretend my mother was right here. What would she say? She would tell me to break each task down into small pieces and do one thing at a time. That's easier said than done. I need Mom back by my side. I want to hear her say it directly. Forget all my other problems, I'm dealing with Mom and Nossy first thing.

Kapnos's Diary August 24, 2197

I/we still have the taste of Lillian and Delores on my tongue. At different times earlier this evening, I/we left them both sound asleep, dreaming easy. I/we wish I/we could do the same.

George doesn't understand me/us. And I/we have a hard time when humans are angry with me/us. I/we have been avoiding him all night. It was a mistake showing myself/ourselves as him, but I/we couldn't very well change in front of Delores. I/we thought the lagoon would be empty. This is the problem with too few people and so little time. The situation breeds mistakes that I/we can't easily hide from. And this is why ... hold on. Someone is leaning on my doorbell. Maybe they will go away. No ... they continue. I/we will check and see who it is.

Chapter 21

She Knows?

“That’s what I’m telling you, Nossy. I don’t care if you’re a thousand years old, you’re making mistakes.” George was having a hard time keeping his voice down.

“I’m older than a thousand years. I’ve been in this solar system for about that long.” Kapnos, in Gwendolyn’s body again, stood with her arms folded. Her hair was neatly pinned without a hat. Her bodice and skirts were new, with a swirling blue pattern. She frowned at her boyfriend.

“Regardless.” George adjusted his tie in exasperation. He pulled it loose and reknotted it while thinking. “Look ... my mom thinks I’m the devil right now. Océane has agreed to play her a message that should get her to open the door. But I have to explain what’s happening. I have to explain *you!*”

“I grant you, this situation isn’t ideal. I’m sorry about the mistake. I didn’t think you would be in the lagoon.” Kapnos pressed her lips into a tight line. She reached out with gloved hands and tightened his tie, adjusting it just so. “Your mom will get over her fright. She’ll think she must have seen me wrong. You’re tired. It’s late. Go get some sleep.”

“What will happen when my mom asks Delores who left her room?” He pushed her hands away and adjusted his tie again.

“You can’t tell your mother about me. She won’t understand.” Kapnos shook her head with authority.

“Enough of this.” George reached out and lifted the small woman into the air. He threw her over his shoulder. “I think my mom will surprise you.” He carried her out of the room, grabbing her ass tightly as she meekly struggled. He was glad she wasn’t putting up a real fight. He didn’t know what he would do then. “Océane, send Mom the message.”

“Yes, Mr. Zaal,” Océane said.

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An insistent chime woke Anna from her nightmares. She sat up with a start and clutched her chest. “What is that sound?” There was a moment of disorientation. She

thought she was home on Earth. But she would never be sleeping in her clothes at home. They were damp with sweat. When she blinked her eyes and saw the message screen floating over her bed, all the horrific recollections hit her.

The message was from George. But he wasn't her George. Things were so wrong. "Dismiss message."

"Playing message," Océane said.

George's face appeared above her. He had a deep furrow on his forehead, and his eyes were ringed with red. The message played.

"Remember when I crashed my bike? I was maybe ten." George rubbed the back of his neck. "I was a couple blocks away, but you came running and carried me to the neighborhood autodoc. I wasn't small, so I'm still not sure how you got me there. Anyway, I was in so much pain that I don't remember anything until the autodoc started working. I got some focus then. Do you remember what I said when I looked up at you?"

"Are you an angel ... or Mom?" Anna said. This was a story she often retold for laughs. But now, it wrenched her heart.

"Are you an angel ... or Mom'," George said in his message. "Then I said, 'Never mind ... you can be both.' It's me, Mom. And you *are* my angel. You always have been. Open the door, and I'll explain what you saw last night." The message ended.

Anna's heart swelled. It was him. Of course it was. She'd been so stupid to think that something could fake the bond she had with her son. She got out of bed, threw back the deadbolt, and opened the door. He was standing right there. "It's really you, sunshine?"

"Yea, it's me, Mom." There was obvious relief on George's face.

"Um ... what's going on?" Anna looked at the weakly kicking woman draped over his shoulder.

"Mrs. Valentine is the person you saw." George looked around the empty lagoon. "May I come in?"

"You can't tell her ... George." Kapnos kept her voice down. She didn't want to attract any more attention. The last thing she wanted was to have to tell Delores and Constance, too.

"Um ..." Anna looked into his eyes. She stepped closer to him, careful to avoid Gwendolyn's kicking feet. She stroked his cheek with gloved fingers. "It is you." She nodded and stepped to the side. "Come in. I'm sure this will make for an interesting explanation."

“Yeah, it’s interesting.” George stepped into the room and put Kapnos down on a chair. To his satisfaction, she didn’t try to flee. The changeling looked back and forth between mother and son, her eyes wide and her nostrils flaring. His mother looked terrible. Her clothes were stained, her skin was pallid, and her hair was falling out of its pin. “Sit down, Mom.” When she was seated on the edge of the bed, he continued. “I wanted to tell you about this a while ago, but Nossy made me swear to secrecy.” He took a deep breath and told his mother all about sleeping with Nossy when she copied Edith and Delores. About the real Gwendolyn’s eyeball. About Kapnos’s history. He shared everything with her. When he finished talking, there was silence. His mother held her gloved hand to her mouth, staring at Kapnos. Kapnos herself had curled up in the armchair, hugging her knees to her chest. She wasn’t looking at either Zaal. “Well?” George said.

“I *knew* something was going on. I heard you say Nossy several times. And certain things didn’t add up. For instance, Delores has always said she didn’t accompany us up the tower. And yesterday, she told your sister and I that she didn’t sleep with Mr. Haversham. I thought she was just telling brazen lies because of ...” She waved her hands at the hotel around them. “... everything. But she was so insistent. Now, I see it was because she was telling the truth!”

“Yeah, she was.” George sighed with relief. His mother was taking it well.

“Wait ... wait ...” Anna stood up. “You had sex ... with an alien? Oh, my gosh. You had sex with an alien! What were you thinking, Georgie?” She stepped over to him and whacked him gently on the shoulder. So many odd things made sense now. Even if aliens did exist, and her son had bedded one, at least the puzzle pieces were falling into place.

“I’m not the only one.” George exhaled. He could see his mother’s relief as her shoulders dropped back to their normal position. He knew she wasn’t really angry.

“But I mean ... she’s ... from outer space!” Anna hit him gently one more time.

“I’m from my own planet, Mrs. Zaal. Not space.” Kapnos looked up at Anna, trying to gauge how badly this would go. “I don’t catch your illnesses. I didn’t give your son space rabies or anything. You’re safe. He didn’t pass anything from me to you.”

Anna processed Kapnos’s words. “George ... she knows?” She turned to her son, fresh shock on her face. “About us?”

“It’s okay, Mom.” George put his hands on her upper arms and held her. “It’s because of her that we’ve done ... what we’ve done. She told me that many mothers and sons she’s met have done it, and offered me encouragement. She knows how much I love you.” He saw his mother’s blue eyes roll and her body went limp. Her constitution was rock solid,

but apparently this was the straw that broke the camel's back. George caught her and pulled her against him, hugging her head to his chest. "It's okay, Mom."

Anna blinked her eyes, breathing in her son's masculine scent. His embrace offered the comfort she needed.

"I'll keep your secret better than your son kept mine." Kapnos glared at George. He rolled his eyes at her.

"Any secrets broken are your fault." George held his mother tight. "Mom, are you feeling okay?"

"I think ... I need a moment." Anna's hands moved around her son and gripped his jacket tightly.

"Take all the time you need." George sighed. "I'm sorry for my part in this. I didn't know what the right thing to do was."

"I understand." But Anna didn't really. She couldn't wrap her mind around what she'd just learned. She *did* need a moment to collect herself. She needed to let her mind drift ... in ecstasy. "Thank you, George, for crafting that message to get me to open the door. You know me so well. Thank you for telling the truth, however insane it might be."

"You're welcome." George held her tightly.

Anna looked over at Kapnos. "What do you I call you? Nossy?"

"I would be honored if you called me Nossy in private. One doesn't throw someone they call 'Nossy' out an airlock." Kapnos relaxed. The woman wasn't going to burn her at the stake. "May I call you, Anna?"

"Well, you seem to be in our confidence. So, yes." Still hugging her son, Anna gave Kapnos a tight smile. "I suppose I owe you quite a lot. But I'm a private person and well ... anyway ... um ... " Anna thought about what she wanted to say. "I ask that you pause your ... intimate activities. I worry that there may be disharmony among us if people find out they were lied to about ... something so ... well ... intimate."

Kapnos frowned. "I ... can't end my intimacies with the others. But ... how about if I remain Gwendolyn Valentine? I'm the only Mrs. Valentine the others know, so that's not really a mistruth."

"Good enough." Anna nodded. Although she didn't know how Kapnos would bed Delores as a woman. It wasn't her problem. And if it brought Delores happiness, all the better she supposed. She very much doubted Constance would have had anything to do with Kapnos in any guise she took. "We're agreed then." It was strange making accords with millennia-old beings.

“We are agreed.” Kapnos nodded.

“Now, if you’ll excuse me. I would like to have some alone time with my son.” Anna’s cheeks turned crimson. “We need to ... reunite after the night’s upheaval.”

“Yes, of course.” Kapnos stood and curtsied.

George and Anna parted. He bowed and she curtsied.

“I am sorry for causing you discomfort. That was never my purpose.” Kapnos was feeling magnanimous now that Anna had accepted her. “I’ll be on my way.” She headed for the door.

“Goodbye, Nossy. See you soon.” George gave her a friendly wave.

“Yes, goodbye, Nossy.” Anna waved.

“Goodbye, Zaals.” Kapnos returned their waves.

The second she was gone, mother and son were in each other’s arms, their tongues dancing together.

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“Mmmmmmmmm.” Lillian woke and stretched under the covers. Someone was rubbing her back and it felt lovely. “Mrs. Valentine?”

“Yes, dear. It’s me.” Kapnos swirled with emotions. She still wasn’t sure what Anna would do with her knowledge. And she didn’t like a human telling her what to do. But she was relieved with how things had gone so far. She thought about her options as she massaged Lillian’s delicate back, working ever lower and lower. She removed the covers and kneaded the twenty-year-old’s firm butt. She was pleased to discover that Lillian was still naked and carried the scent of sex from the night before. “How is my princess this morning?”

“Is it really morning?” Lillian rotated her butt slowly as the lovely widow paid her the most loving attention. “I feel ... enchanted.” Lillian sucked in her breath when the woman spread her legs and ate her out from behind. “Oooohhhhhhhh ... your face is in my butt ... Mrs. Valentine. You really do love me ... you do. You ... don’t mind my butt ... at all.”

Kapnos moved her mouth away from Lillian’s vagina. “Not only do I not mind it, I think it’s regal and spectacular.”

“You what?” Lillian tried to look over her shoulder, but could only see the top of Gwendolyn’s head as the woman dove her tongue right into Lillian’s asshole. “Oh ... my ... gods ... what are you ... uuuuggghhhhhhhh ... that’s my ass ... oooohhhhhh ... shit ... I can’t believe ... you’re tonguing me ... there ... oooohhhhhhhhhh.” Lillian writhed in pleasure. Gwendolyn would do anything for her it seemed. She really did treat her like a princess. Suddenly, the tongue was gone, as were the hands that had been gripping her butt cheeks. “Why ... did you stop?” Lillian turned around. She saw that Gwendolyn had a screen open in the air in front of her. “What’s this?”

“Would you like to see some pornography?” Kapnos undressed and sat on the bed naked. The screen, blank for the moment, rotated to face her.

“Lesbian pornography?” Lillian had started to crawl toward her lover, but stopped. “I’m not a lesbian, Mrs. Valentine. We’re just ...” She didn’t know how to explain it anymore.

“It’s not lesbian. It’s a mother and her son.” Kapnos smiled sweetly. “Don’t worry, the son is of age. He’s eighteen and quite handsome.”

“I ... um ... well ... um ...” Lillian was no prude. She’d seen pornography before with Francis. She’d even slept with the boyfriend that preceded him. But incest? “It’s not real. The mother and son ... they aren’t really related. It’s acting, right?”

“It’s very real.” Kapnos pulled Lillian into her lap and deftly played with Lillian’s nipples. “Remember how I told you that you needed to reward your brother for saving our lives? Many mothers and sisters are happy to join with their men when they’ve done something worthwhile. It’s quite common.”

“Those women and men are depraved.” Lillian couldn’t believe what she was hearing. It disgusted her. But she couldn’t deny the excitement she felt. Little bolts of ecstatic lightning shot from her nipples as Gwendolyn manipulated them. Her pussy gushed. Were they really going to watch a mother and son copulate? Was this actually common? “They’re trollops!”

“I imagine some are indeed depraved. But most are normal, straitlaced people who want to show their love and appreciation in the deepest way possible.” Kapnos kissed the young woman. After a moment, she pulled back and smiled. “Who is the most prim and decorous woman you know?”

“My mother.” Lillian didn’t need to think about that question.

“You see. Even the most composed woman can show her love this way.” Kapnos’s smile widened.

“See ... what? What are you talking about?” Lillian’s eyebrows furrowed with anger. She brushed Gwendolyn’s hands away from her breasts. “Don’t besmirch my mother.”

“I would never.” Kapnos swiped the feed onto the screen. She’d left a micro-camera in Anna’s room, and it recorded what was going on in Anna’s bed.

“Georgie ... Georgie ... I’m sorry ... I got spooked ... ugh ... ugh ... ugh ... when I feel you inside me ... there is no doubt ... what’s right. I should have known ... you were you ... regardless.” Anna rode her son. She faced him, with her feet planted on the mattress and her knees pointing to the sides. Her breasts would have been swaying wildly, but for her son’s supportive hands.

“It’s okay ... Mom ... we’re good. I understand ... your confusion. The important thing ... is that we’re together ... now ... ugh ... ugh ... ugh ...” George held his mother’s tits and rolled her large nipples with his fingers.

One could have flown a fleeing lifeboat into Lillian’s mouth, her jaw was hanging so far down. Her eyes were also open wide, and her eyebrows were raised in shock. “This ... isn’t real. You’ve created this. Océane must have created this.”

“I have the veracity tester going. You can check yourself.” Kapnos watched her closely. She didn’t want the young woman to go screaming from the room. But it didn’t look like that was going to happen. Lillian moved closer to the screen and sat cross-legged on the bed in front of it.

“Mom looks ... so happy.” Lillian listened to them grunt and moan. They were talking about some sort of changeling. It was hard to follow the conversation, broken up as it was by cries of pleasure and her mother’s hips pounding down into her brother’s.

“What about your brother?” Kapnos moved the camera so that Lillian could see George’s face better.

“Oh, my. He looks happy, too.” Lillian absentmindedly rolled her nipple with her fingers while she studied the video. “I haven’t seen him that happy since Saturnalia Morning a decade ago.” Her other hand snaked down to her pussy and found her button. If she had been gushing before, the floodgates had really opened now. There was a spreading stain on the bedspread in between her legs. “Why?”

“Well, I imagine he’s happy because he loves your mother, and she’s giving herself to him without reservations. He is getting the ultimate reward for his good deeds.” Kapnos moved behind Lillian and gently massaged her back.

“No ... I mean ... why are you showing me this? I ... shouldn’t know this is happening.” Lillian massaged her clit faster. She’d never seen anything so stimulating. Her mother’s bouncing curves. Her brother’s hard body. The bliss on their faces. Their animalistic grunts and moans. The wild slapping of their skin. “I ... shouldn’t know this is ... happening. My father ... I’ll have to tell him and ... it will destroy him.” Despite that thought, she continued to speed her body toward a massive orgasm. She could see from

the way her mother's body was convulsing on top of her brother, and from her ecstatic screams, that Anna Zaal was already cumming.

"When we rescue your father, your mother and brother will be the best arbiters about what to tell him." Kapnos reached around Lillian and helped her work her pussy. "You don't want to get in the middle of something like that. Your mother knows what she's doing." Kapnos brushed Lillian's hair back and leaned her lips next to Lillian's ear. "I'm showing you this so that you will know what's possible. When you finally apologize to sweet Georgie, our savior, I want you to give him this gift, too. Families do it all the time. And now you know." Kapnos turned off the video. "Océane, delete the permanent file."

"Nooooooooo." Lillian shook her head. "I want to ... uuggghhhhhh ... see it again." Her whole body trembled. She was on the brink of something massive.

"If you want to see that again, you'll have to give your brother his reward." Kapnos nibbled on Lillian's ear. "The princess must tend to the prince."

"Oooohhhhhh ... noooooooooo ... I'm ..." Lillian thrashed in Gwendolyn's arms as her orgasm came crashing down on her. The widow wasn't done. Lillian was pleased for several more hours by Gwendolyn, all the while the other woman urged her to reward her brother and reassured her that it was the most natural thing. By the end of their lovemaking, Lillian's bliss-fractured mind thoroughly believed it.

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"Well ... we did it again." Anna lay on her back, splaying her limbs loosely around her. Her pulse was still quick but slowing. Her chest rose and fell more and more evenly. "You put it all inside of me ... again." She turned her head and smiled at her son, who lay on his side, regarding her. "I asked you to fill me up, didn't I?" Her memory of their lovemaking was a bit hazy. It was hard to pierce through the cloud of ecstasy that hung over her time with George.

"You demanded it, really." George ran his fingertips along the long slope of her breast as it hung to the side of her chest. He could see goosebumps rise as his fingers moved over her alabaster flesh. The web of blue veins underneath stirred a primal desire to protect her. She was so delicate. A woman of flesh and blood up against whatever the New Guest was. George took a deep breath and tried to forget evil for the moment. "If yesterday was safe, then today should be safe, too. Right?" He wasn't sure how all that worked.

“It should be.” Anna nodded. She tried to wipe the smile off her face. They were talking about gravid possibilities: creating a life. She shouldn’t be smiling. But she found her happiness would not abate, nor would it allow her face to reform into a serious expression. “We have one condom left. I still think we should save it. What if you meet the woman of your dreams here?” She giggled.

“I’ve already met her, and no condom is needed it seems.” George played with her large nipple and watched it pucker.

She pushed his face playfully. “I’ve created a monster. You know you’ll have to start pulling out soon. We can’t press our luck.”

“Honestly, Mom. You’re driving the ship on that one. I’m just doing whatever you say.” George leaned over and gave the side of her tit a little kiss, followed by a gentle bite.

“Yes ... I am.” Anna bit her lip. Her smile finally faded. “I’ll try to be more pragmatic during ... our congress.” She suddenly realized that she hadn’t chastised him when he’d called her the woman of his dreams. She was his mother. He would need to find his own woman someday. She couldn’t let herself forget that. However wonderful their time was, she wasn’t a selfish mother. She would help him find the perfect woman. Definitely not an alien. But those were all problems for a future version of herself. “Your fingers feel wonderful. You’re getting me revved up again. Would you like to suck on my breasts, sunshine? Because, I would like that very much.”

“Sure, Mom.” George bit and sucked his way up the side of her tit. He pressed with his teeth a little harder and applied more suction.

“Ow ... too rough ... Georgie.” Anna’s eyes widened in surprise.

He paused and met her gaze. “Sorry, Mom. But I needed to leave a little mark. You’re mine. I soaked your womb. Now, I’ve branded your flesh. Just a little.”

“Oh ... gosh ...” Anna’s belly did flips and cartwheels. “No one has ever talked to me that way. I ... um ...” She stared into his eyes. He was obviously waiting for her permission to continue biting her. “I *am* yours. But only here. Only on La Belle île. You’re my stud, and I’m your bitch here. And you can ... mark me here. If you want to ... ow ... ooohhhh ... I’m yours ... ow ... ohhhh.” She let him bite her breast several more times. He sucked her tender skin into his mouth. “Okay ... okay ... enough. Let me see.”

“Wow ... Mom ... look.” George backed his face away from her boob, held it with his hands, and lifted it for her to see. There were red bite marks and the beginning of hickeys all over her breast. He could even see imprints of each individual tooth.

“Oh goodness, that will bruise.” Anna stared with wide eyes. “When we find your father, he’ll see these. I’ll have obvious bruises.”

George's face fell. He hadn't thought about that. "I'm sorry, I—"

"Gosh ... Georgie ..." Anna interrupted her son by pushing him onto his back and pouncing on his penis. It was hard and ready despite all the work it had already accomplished. She sucked it into her mouth and twirled her tongue around the wide head. Her vagina was just as ready as his penis. His marking her had inflamed her mind dramatically. Even if she hadn't been leaking his sperm, she would have been incredibly wet. "Mmmmmmmppphhhh." She grabbed the shaft with her hands and pumped. She still couldn't get much more than the head past her lips without gagging. "Ggggaaacckkkkk ... gggaaacckkkkkk." She was so impassioned, she went ahead and shoved more in anyway.

"Mom ... oh ... gods ... Mom ... that's good." George watched his mother blow him like a woman possessed.

When Anna released his penis, she was gasping. She turned toward him and held up her bitten breast for him to see. "Did you mark ... your changeling girlfriend ... like this?"

"No, Mom." George shook his head.

"Nossy is ... special. I have no doubt. And I haven't ... forbidden you from ... seeing her." Anna got on her hands and knees and turned away from him. "But even so ... you're here with me. Even when I ... pushed you away ... you found a way to bring us back together." She looked over her shoulder with an impatient eye roll. "What are waiting for? Mount me, Georgie. Stud and bitch, remember?"

"Gods, Mom. I love you so much. My heart is bursting." George got behind her and lined up his cock.

"I know the feeling. You are ... ooooohhhhhhhhhhhh ... you are ... uuuuuggghhhhhhh ..." Anna lost her train of thought as he slid into her and thrust. "... you are ... you are ... so deep ... in my belly." The squelching sounds were loud in the room as his long, thick penis displaced his seed. "What would ... it be like ... to make a life ... in the thicket of all this death?"

"What ... ugh ... ugh ... Mom?" George held her hips and humped away. His focus was on her rippling ass and the pink hole of her anus.

Anna realized her overstimulated mind had veered into a minefield. Despite the burgeoning pleasure at the thought of what her egg and his sperm could do together, she steered her mind back to safer ground. "I said, mark me ... sunshine," she lied. "Mark my back ... so you can see your mark when you're behind me." She straightened her arms and arched her spine, trying to hold still for him. Her jaw was clenched tight, both from the pleasure of his thrusts and the expected pain of his bite.

“Great ... ugh ... idea.” With his right hand, George released her hip and took a fist full of her thick, blond hair to hold her steady. Her hair had fallen out of its pin completely and was luxurious to hold. When he tightened his grip, his mother started squealing. “You okay ... Mom?”

“Oh ... gosh ... that feels good! You have me ... Georgie.” Anna stiffened. Her rear end still absorbed some of the shock of each thrust, but her body bounced in a more jarring way. All her joints went stiff. It was unexpected and delightful to have her head, and subsequently her body, controlled by her son. “Now ... bite me.”

George complied. With her head pulled back and held firm, he slowed his hips a little, leaned forward, and bit her left shoulder. He wasn't as gentle as he'd been before. The series of babbling moans and ecstatic exclamations that escaped his mother's lips told him that he had done well. He moved his mouth a little lower and bit her again. Then, he straightened, sped up his hips, and admired his work. Her pale skin was enflamed in two ovals. She would bruise there, too. He didn't release her hair even though he was done marking her. “You're mine ... Mom.”

“Oooohhhhh ... uuuuggghhhhhh ... I'm yours ... I'm yours ... uuugggghhhhhh.” Her body was still rigid and under his control. Her eyes rolled back and her mouth hung open. A magnificent cascade of orgasms surged through her, lasting several minutes. When she came down on the other side of them, she found her hair had been released. Her face flopped to the blanket, and she kept her butt high in the air. “Seed me ... seed me ... make me yours ... completely yours ... uuuuggghhhhhhhhhh ... your bitch ... my stud.” She kept babbling until she heard his deep grunt and felt his heat inside her. Then her bliss spilled over into one last orgasm, and all she could do was scream.

Chapter 22

Why Aren't You Wearing Gloves?"

After many hours, the thumping on the door stopped. Roy, who sat with his back to the wall, looked over at the pile of weights and equipment that made up his barricade. "Hello?" He waited. "Hello!" he shouted. There was no response. "I'm not an idiot," he said to the door. He wanted to believe that was true, so he didn't remove the barricade and stick his head into the hall to see if the coast was clear. It was a trap. He was sure of that.

About an hour later, he felt a jolt. It seemed that the very frame of the tower started creaking. "What are they doing now?" The floor vibrated. He didn't know what mayhem they had in mind, so he checked to make sure his pistol's cartridge was full of small, loose metal. He also had a pocketful of the stuff if he ran out. He ran his fingers through the loose metallic bits he'd collected as the hotel's trembling intensified. The structure groaned around him. There was another lurch. He was tossed several feet from the wall. To his dismay, he could see the lighter parts of his barricade had also moved.

Roy stood to walk over and fix the barricade but was knocked down by an invisible force. It had pulled him toward the opposite wall again. He scrambled to the dispersing barricade. He grabbed the door handle just as a massive force pulled him off his feet. He hung horizontally in the air, his feet pointing to the far wall. With great effort, he managed to get his other hand on the handle. With a loud crash, his barricade hit the wall. He looked around. Everything in the room was pressed up against the far wall.

"Gods ... help me." He gritted his teeth. He didn't understand what was happening. Whatever it was, he was sure it was some new attack designed to get him.

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"I've been thinking ..." George lay naked on the bed next to his mother. He was on his back. She was also naked, and on her belly, unmoved from where he'd last taken her.

"When have you had any time to think?" Anna had never been more relaxed. Her mind kept drifting to the thought of George's little swimmers working so valiantly to fertilize her. They were in her womb at that very moment. She prayed they would find their quest impossible. But she wondered what her life would be like if there was an egg waiting for them. "We've been doing it all day. You've barely given me time to catch my breath. When did you find time to think?"

“I was thinking about Océane whenever we took breaks.” George’s soft penis was still wet from their last frolic. He regarded it as it rested on his hip, then turned his attention to his mother’s ass. He ran his fingers over the hickey that was forming on her left butt cheek. He had marked her there, too, in the run-up to their last hump session.

“Should I be jealous of the hotel’s AI?” She turned her face toward him and smiled. She found that he was staring at her butt. That filled her with a happy warmth. She felt like a queen to be desired by such a special man.

“I’m a teenager, Mom.” He laughed. “I want to hump everyone. Even an incorporeal AI. Have you heard how sexy her voice is?”

Anna blew a raspberry at her son. “You’re eighteen. A man grown. It’s time your brain asserted itself over your hormones.”

“I was thinking about the cyber-attacks on Océane.” George gave his mother’s ass cheek a light pat and watched ripples spread on her flesh. The way her body moved was mesmerizing. He was pretty sure his hormones were in charge of how he felt about her body. He wouldn’t ever want that to stop. He decided it was best to let his hormones do as they wished. “The attacks are coming in through the hardline that links up our Océane nerve center to the other two. We could go down to our nerve center and physically cut the line.”

“Oh ... I don’t know.” Anna sat up and crossed her legs. She watched his eyes rove over her body and fix on the boob that he’d marked earlier. “I like that you enjoy my body, sunshine. But this is serious.” She waited, but his gaze didn’t move. “Eyes up here.”

“Sorry, Mom.” He lifted his gaze to her eyes. They were, as always, the bluish-gray of the sea before a storm. “Hormones.”

“My hormones are running wild now, too. I mean, look at me.” She gestured to the stain that was spreading between her legs as she leaked his sperm. “But we started doing these ... special things ... to survive. And what you’re talking about is all about survival, too. We need to focus on all aspects here.”

“Yes, okay. I’m right there with you.” George sat up. He caught her eyes dart to his soft penis and then lock with his eyes again. “So, I think we should go, cut the line, and come back. I don’t think we should leave anybody behind.”

“I don’t know ... I don’t know.” Anna chewed on her bottom lip. “That’s one hundred floors. We don’t have cameras. We’d be blind. And those things almost got us last time.”

“I’ll teach you, Lillian, and Mrs. Salazar to shoot before we go. There’s an armory three floors down.” George’s voice stayed even and calm. “We’ll have all four of us hurling bullets at the creatures. If we see them, they’ll be nothing more than black goo.”

“Is it safe to shoot so many bullets? What if we pierce the outer wall? Or a window?” Anna didn’t want to get sucked out into vacuum. She thought about all those poor souls that had been floating outside La Belle Île after the skyrmion event.

“The outer walls and windows are nearly unbreakable. And all the weapons at the hotel fire hollow-point bullets. The bullets wouldn’t work against armor, but are great for popping one of those creatures,” he said. “They won’t do anything against the walls or windows.”

“Can’t Océane do it herself?” Anna’s belly grumbled. “She has maintenance robots. They could cut the line.”

“She won’t do it. Her programming won’t allow her to harm herself unless doing so would protect human life. And this is too attenuated for her. I tried.” He had tried to convince the AI while his mother was napping. His failure had implications beyond the hardline. How would he get Océane to blow the reactor after they left? That would be another attenuated situation.

“Let’s shower, dress, and get something to eat. I hate deciding things on an empty stomach.” Anna got out of bed and stretched. “Gosh, Georgie. I am sore ... everywhere.” She looked back at him. “You’ve really done a number on...” Anna stumbled. It felt like someone had just pushed her toward the bank of windows. The floor vibrated and the tower around them groaned.

George hopped out of bed and took his mother’s elbow to steady her. “Océane, has there been any anomalous ...” A second jolt knocked both mother and son off their feet. The groaning around them grew louder. George’s cheek was pressed against the floor, the vibrations made his teeth chatter. He sat up carefully and took his mother’s hand.

“We should go –” Anna started to get up, but was pulled down by her son.

“The bed is the only thing bolted down in here.” George could guess what was coming next. He held onto the bed frame with his free hand and pulled his mother tight to him with his other arm. Their naked bodies pressed against each other. His hormones weren’t in control now. He barely noticed her perfect, zaftig form. “Hold on tight to me. I think ...”

A massive force pulled mother and son off the floor. The mattress and blankets flew past their heads, joined by most of the room’s furniture. Anna screamed, and George grunted with the effort of holding them from crashing into the window with the rest of the room’s contents.

“We’re being pushed against the windows.” Anna’s fingernails dug into her son’s back and chest as she held on for dear life.

“Gravity has changed ... we’re being pulled.” George swung them to the empty bedframe, which was now on the wall. “Grab the frame.”

Anna did as instructed. They clung to the bed frame together. “What’s happening?” It was clear that the hotel was not designed to lose the gravity it created with its slow spin. Almost nothing in the room was bolted to the floor. She looked down at the windows, terrified that they’d cracked on impact. But under the piled furniture and detritus, the glass looked secure. If they could take a bullet, they could take some furniture she supposed. “It’s the Newest Guest, isn’t it? It’s fired its thruster, and the force of that has overpowered the hotel’s normal gravity.” She looked into her son’s eyes. She drew strength from his calm.

“Yes. That’s my guess.” He listened to the groaning structure.

“Can the tower hold against such a strong lateral force?” Anna felt like a monkey clinging to a tree.

“Maybe. But we’ve got a bigger problem.” George nodded toward the door. Water was spraying into the room through the thin cracks between door and its frame. “The lagoon is now on top of us. We’re trapped.”

“Also, the outer doors are on the opposite side. That’s now the roof. The barricade must have fallen.” Anna stared at the water. It wasn’t entering the room at an alarming speed. They had a while before drowning would be a problem. “The creatures knew this was coming. They could have hunkered down outside the outer doors.”

“Océane, tell the other survivors to lock their doors. Are any of them in the lagoon?” George swung over and grabbed his pistol from its holster where it was hanging from the bedpost.

“I no longer have cameras to determine where guests are located. Please wait,” Océane was silent for ten seconds. “I have audibly confirmed that Ms. Zaal and the Oldest Guest are in Ms. Zaal’s room. Mrs. Salazar is in her room. I have no response from Mrs. Haversham.”

“I don’t think they have the power for constant thrust. They’ll probably burn us toward Earth and then ...” George gripped the bed tighter. The tower’s groaning subsided and gravity shifted again. There was a crash as the furniture fell next to the window. Mother and son fell a very short distance to what was once again the floor. George was on his feet in an instant, running toward the door. He was still naked, but it didn’t matter. He swung it open and lifted his pistol toward the main doors. The lagoon water was still sloshing around the large room in a wave which hit the creatures just as they were coming in through the open doors. It pushed them back. “I should have taught you to shoot before this, Mom.” The energy in the water ebbed and all that came back toward George was a steady tide.

As naked as her son, Anna moved behind him in the door and looked out. As the creatures tried to come through the doorway, her son's pistol hissed to life, firing over and over. The horrible things exploded one after the other. Their position was pinched as they had to move through the choke point of the doorway. "What do you need?"

"Find me ... anything ... small ... and metal." Out of the corner of his eye, George saw Delores stick her head out of her door. "Get back ... in your room," he yelled at her. "Stay there ... until we tell you ... it's safe." He fired again and again. Suddenly, there were no more creatures. This was good, because he was dangerously low on ammunition.

"Here you go." His mother returned with one of the metal ammunition rectangles. She handed it to him. "I thought this might be better than lots of small metal things."

"Thanks." George saw Kapnos stick her head out of Lillian's door. "Where's your pistol?" George called.

"In my room." Kapnos, in the body of Gwendolyn, didn't need to be told what to do. With her blue skirts billowing behind her, she ran across the slick boardwalk and disappeared into her room.

George reloaded and waited. The water in the room sloshed around his ankles into his mother's room and then receded back into the lagoon, settling back in its pools. No more creatures moved. Tentatively, he walked out across the boardwalk, past the Japanese restaurant. He stopped when he got close to the door, not wanting to step in the black goo and body parts that were spread on the floor. "Eyes. We need to check the eyes." He looked over his shoulder and saw Kapnos running toward him, pistol in hand. "Can you tell if any of them are the hotelier by touching the eyes?"

Kapnos grimaced. "Yes." She nodded. "But you need to stay here in case more of them return."

"Yes, of course." George saw his mother come out of her room wearing skirts and an unbuttoned bodice. "Can you get me some clothes, Mom? And we're both going to need shoes."

Anna nodded, turned around, and went to fetch his things.

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There were twenty-two mismatched eyes in the goo by the doorway. None of them belonged to the hotelier. It wasn't likely, but George did have his hopes up for a few minutes. After Kapnos finished her inspection, Océane sent robots to clean up the mess. Once the grisly jumble was gone, George made a quick, uneventful trip to the armory.

He came back with a backpack full of pistols and ammunition. After that, the survivors closed the doors and rebuilt their barricade.

Anna found Constance lying unconscious, bleeding, and bruised in her room. Thankfully, she hadn't deadbolted her door before the thrusters fired. George carried Constance's shoulders and Kapnos held her feet, and they brought her to the autodoc. Head trauma wasn't anything to mess around with, so they left her there for what they assumed would be an extended stay. Maybe a full day.

Hours after gravity had shifted, the exhausted survivors, less Constance, sat at the Italian restaurant near the entrance to the lagoon. While they ate, Océane's robots went about cleaning and putting their rooms back in order.

"We need to make a push to cut the hardline. But we can't go without Constance. Maybe we should plan to leave tomorrow morning. If she's ready, that is." George looked around the table. The women had all pinned their hair, but their clothes were wet and wrinkled, they had pinched faces, and dark circles under their eyes.

"I just had a thought, Mr. Zaal." Delores gave him a fleeting smile. It was so odd to sit at the table in decorous fashion with his sister and mother after what he'd done to her in her bedroom. He wasn't flirting with her now. She prayed that was due to the fatigue and horror of the day and not a loss of interest on his part. She desperately needed another tumble with him. Their sex had been the one ephemeral moment of happiness she'd had in her otherwise bleak existence at La Belle Île. She cleared her throat. Everyone was looking at her, waiting for her thought. "The doors don't lock unless there is a manual deadbolt, right?"

"Yes, that's right." George nodded. He placed his fork and spoon on his now empty plate. It had been heaped with penne Bolognese not long ago. He was still hungry.

"To the best of my recollection, we didn't lock the door to the Faraday cage when we left. That means, anyone could walk in there." Delores sipped her wine, trying to calm her frayed nerves. "The thing at the bottom would want to destroy our Océane. Could it send its creatures to that room to destroy Océane?"

"Um ... probably." George shifted in his seat. They would need to somehow lock the room, too.

"Well, um ..." Delores took a bigger gulp of wine. She absolutely didn't want to leave the relative safety of the lagoon. And she didn't want to be left there alone either. "The thing at the bottom must not know where our Océane is or it would have already destroyed that room. If we go down the tower, we could lead it directly to that room." There was silence around the table.

“That is a good point, Mrs. Salazar.” Anna frowned. “If we had access to the cameras, we could tell if we were being followed. We’d know where the things were.” She looked to her son. “Can the Newest Guest see through the cameras in this tower?”

“No.” George shook his head. “Océane partitioned those off.”

“I have a micro camera.” Kapnos smiled helpfully. “It can fly, but its range is limited. I doubt it would be noticed by those creatures. We would be able to see a few floors above or below us.”

Lillian blushed profusely at this statement. She hid her face behind her wineglass, but no one seemed to be paying her any attention.

“What ... how?” George raised his eyebrows.

“Why is this the first we’re hearing of it?” Anna’s eyebrows knitted together. “A camera?”

“I only found it recently tucked into someone’s luggage,” Kapnos lied. “This was the first time I had a chance to bring it up. You and George have been cooped up in your room so much, I’ve barely had a chance to talk about anything that wasn’t immediately pressing.”

Anna’s lips formed a thin line.

George tried not to smile and mostly succeeded.

Lillian’s face turned bright crimson.

Delores looked around the table. There was subtext here, but she was missing it.

“Once Mrs. Haversham is well enough to join us, we should make a formidable sortie.” Kapnos lifted her fork to her mouth and took a bite of roast chicken. It almost tasted like the real thing. She demurely chewed as everyone stared at her. She swallowed. “We’ll be armed, trained, and we’ll have reconnaissance.”

“Yes, about that.” George turned to Delores. “I’ll set up one of the empty rooms to train you in using a pistol. We’ll shoot at some furniture or something.” He glanced at his mother and sister. “You two will join us?”

“Yes, of course. And then, I’m getting some sleep. I recommend that we all try to get a good night’s rest.” Anna wanted nothing better than to run right back into her son’s waiting embrace. But they had a big day tomorrow. She knew if she let him into her room, they’d spend the night humping. Her son took the news well. She could barely make out the disappointment on his face. That made her want him all the more. She straightened her bodice. “Agreed?”

Everyone around the table gave their assent.

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As tired as he was, George couldn't fall asleep. His mind was getting whiplash bouncing between the danger the next day would bring, and his mother sleeping all alone in her room. Was he jealous of her sleep? That was ridiculous. He knew she was right. He knew he should be sleeping at that moment. His doorbell rang. "Océane, tell whomever it is to come in. It's unlocked."

The door opened and Lillian stepped in. "Are you up?" She gave him a shy smile, closed the door behind her, and turned the lock.

George sat up in bed, his heart suddenly thumping in his chest. Everything was wrong about his sister. Her expression and body language were deferential. That was wrong. She'd always been his bossy older sister. She was wearing an oversized ball gown, tiara, and glittering necklace. That made for strange bedclothes. But worse of all, he could see that she wore a ruby ring. He could see it because she wore no gloves. He silently cursed his dick as it hardened rapidly in his pajamas under the covers. "Nossy?"

"Um ... what?" Lillian's smile flickered and faded. "I don't know what that means."

"Tell me something that only you would know. What did I get for Saturnalia when I was eight?"

"How the hell should I remember?" Lillian shrugged. "You want something only I would know?" She rubbed her chin. "On the first night we were at this hotel, I heard you fapping your dick."

George blushed. "Okay. It's you. Why aren't you wearing gloves?" He couldn't help but admire her thin, delicate fingers. He tried not to stare.

"Um ... Georgie ... well ..." She walked over to him and stood next to the bed, her hands clasped in front of her. She was pleased with the way he was eyeing her hands. She cleared her throat. "I wanted to tell you how proud I am of you. You saved my life. More than once. You saved all of our lives."

"You couldn't tell me that with your gloves on?" George failed to steady his rising pulse.

"Remember when you convinced me to dance naked by the pool?" Her blue eyes darted nervously about the room.

"No, I don't."

Lillian gave him a timorous laugh. "Yeah, right. Well, I ... um ... think you liked it. And I liked it too." She shrugged her shoulders out of her gown and slowly lowered it down

her body. She wasn't wearing a bra. "Océane, play Drop it Deep Remix." The room filled with music that had an urgent, steady beat. She swayed her hips to the rhythm as she continued to lower her gown. When it went past her waist, she saw his brother's jaw drop. *Gwendolyn will be so happy with me!*

"Lillian ... I ..." George watched her slowly dance and spin as the gown fell. She turned her butt toward him, pushed it out, and bounced it with the music. Her body was compact and tight, so unlike his mother's jiggling curves. He loved women in all their forms and found himself mesmerized. When she spun back around, he eyed her neatly trimmed, blond bush. "Lillian, I'm not sure where you're going with this. But we can't ... do anything."

"Really?" She stepped out of her gown, picked it up, and hung it over a chair. Her body gently bouncing to the music as she moved about the room. She was barefoot and only wearing her jewelry now. "Why can Mom reward you, but not me? I know that sisters and mothers are supposed to do this. It's just not talked about." She danced back to the bed, grabbed his covers, and threw them off him. "See, you're hard."

"What did you say about Mom?" George was frozen in place. He stared at her small, bobbing breasts as she continued to move to the beat of the music. They were so cute and perky. Her tits reminded him of the first time he'd had sex. That was with Kapnos's copy of Edith.

"It's funny. You're a teenage guy. Basically a baboon. When I heard you masturbating in our room that night, I didn't need to complain. I could have just gotten out of bed, gone over to you, and jacked you to completion." Lillian's laugh was freer now. "Isn't that wild to think about?" She pounced on him and pulled down his pajama bottoms. Her brother offered no resistance. "Holy Jupiter! You're big!"

"Lillian, who have you been talking to?" George gripped the sheets. She looked so pretty ogling his cock as she leaned over him on all fours. Her tiara stayed firmly in her hair, pinned in place. Her necklace hung and swayed lower than her boobs.

"I'm going to blow you now." She wiped the head of his cock with her fingertip and held it up in front of her nose to see the wetness of his precum. Her eyes crossed looking at it. She then wiped her hand on his pajama top. The shy smile returned as she met his gaze. "I want you to know that you deserve this. I want you to be happy. Thank you for saving my life."

"Lillian ... uuuugghhhhhhhhh ... shit." George didn't stop her as she sucked in the head of his cock. *What will I tell Mom?* Maybe the truth would do. He'd let his hormones get the better of him. "Ugghhhhh ... that's good." His sister gagged and gurgled on his cock, methodically lowering her lips until they were halfway down his dick. Her whole body convulsed as she fought her reflexes. She placed one bare hand on his shaft, the

other on his balls, and began slowly bobbing her head. “Whatever ... uuggghhhh ... happens ... we’re not ... having sex,” George said.

“Mmmmmpppppphhhhhhh.” Lillian nodded slightly as she pleased him as thoroughly as possible. She didn’t know why he would say something so obvious. Of course they weren’t going to have sex. She wasn’t going to cheat on Francis. Her brother’s tower of a cock wouldn’t fit inside her anyway. It was impossible, even if she’d wanted to. That led her to wonder how her small mother had humped him. Maybe giving birth permanently stretched out a woman’s vagina. Lillian didn’t know. She was suddenly aware that her pussy was humming and dripping, just like it did in anticipation of Gwendolyn’s ministrations. She wished she had an extra hand to take care of herself while pleasing her brother. But she didn’t want to spare the one massaging his overripe balls, or the one pumping his thick shaft.

George didn’t have anything else to say, so he watched his sister put her every effort into the blowjob. He could hear her breath whistling through her nose. He could see her mascara run as tears streamed down her cheeks. He could smell her excitement, and after a few minutes, her sweat. This was Kapnos’s doing. He was sure of it. He wondered if the changeling had somehow trained her in the art of blowing. He didn’t think Francis would have given her much experience. Her fiancé didn’t seem the sort.

The room filled with Lillian’s muffled moans, gagging, and George’s grunts. The blowjob lasted almost twenty minutes. Lillian was clearly fatiguing when George warned her.

“Watch out ... Lillian ... it’s going to happen.” He watched her closely. She didn’t pull off, and he didn’t warn her again. “Uuuuggghhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.”

“Ggggaaaacckkkkkkkk.” Lillian had expected to handle his load. She’d always swallowed for Francis and her previous boyfriend. But she wasn’t ready for the rush of salty, hot cum that filled her throat and mouth. She choked and pulled her mouth off him. She continued to pump him with her hand and stared in amazement at the fountain that spewed out. It landed on her arm, his body, and the bed. “Wow ... oh ... gods ... wow.” She pumped him until he was spent. Then her hands stopped. She leaned forward to look at his penis more closely. “That was a ton! You almost ...” All of a sudden, he was spraying again. This time he hit her square in the face. She scrunched her eyes shut. “Gods ... Georgie.” Three more spurts hit her, and then he was finally done. “I thought you were finished.”

“Sorry. It does that.” George laughed. The situation was so ridiculous. His life was ridiculous. His sister was squatting next to him, wiping his cum out of her eyes. The person he was when he first entered La Belle Île would never have believed any of this. “You look like ... a perfect princess ... Lillian.” He continued to laugh. “Oh ... and you have cum ... on your tiara.”

Lillian burst out laughing too, harmonizing with her brother. She squinted her eyes open. "You're welcome for your royal blowjob, my prince. You deserved it."

They laughed together for several minutes before Lillian went to the bathroom to get cleaned up.

Chapter 23

Trouble, Mrs. Valentine?

“Oh, gods ... yyyeeeeessssssssssss.” Delores looked over her shoulder at the eighteen-year-old slamming into her. “You were ... right ... you were ... uuuggghhhhhhhh ... right. It does ... feel good ... in my butt. Carlos never ...” At the mention of her dead husband, a cloud passed over her face. But the novel anal pleasure quickly washed those feelings away. She could grieve for her husband later. In the moment, she would enjoy a brief respite from the darkness.

“Your virgin ass ... is perfect ... Mrs. Salazar. Just what ... this teenage dick ... uh ... uh ... uh ... needs.” Kapnos, in the form of George, held onto Delores’s hips and gave her everything his borrowed muscular body could give. He felt a little guilty so quickly abandoning the word he’d given Anna and George. But they would understand. Or, George would understand at least.

“Ohhhhhh ... you’re so forceful ... and handsome ... and you use such dirty ... uuuggghhhh ... words.” Delores hung her head and watched her boobs swing wildly under her. “Ummmmmmmmmm ... uuuggghhhhhh ... why were you ... naked ... outside your mother’s door ... when those things ... came for us?” She didn’t want to impose, but it had been so odd that she needed an answer.

“I was ... showering in my mother’s bathroom ... when gravity changed.” He hoped that would kill her curiosity.

“Ohhhh ... okay ... I see.” Delores then dropped to her shoulders, her ass still high in the air. “May I ... uuuuuggghhhhhh ... may I ... touch myself ... while you plunder my backside?”

“Yes ... ugh ... ugh ... of course. Caress your pussy ... Mrs. Salazar.” Kapnos always enjoyed when humans maximized their erogenous zones.

“Okay ...” Delores snaked a hand under her and found her slick clitoris. “Ohhhhhhhhhh ... gosh ... I’m rubbing my button ... Mr. Zaal ... I’m rubbing my ... I’m about to ... ooohhhhhh ... I feel you ... so deep in my ... eeeeeiiiiiiiiiii.” One of her eyelids closed, the other fluttered as a massive climax ripped through her.

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Anna's Diary August 25, 2197

Sleep beckons. I'll need all my energy for the day what we're planning tomorrow. It was a gift to spend the day with George, even if it ended with that horrible shift in gravity. We survived. And with any luck, I will fall into his arms at the end of a successful sortie tomorrow. Unless, of course, we retrieve my beloved Ernest. If that happens, Diary, I can't fathom what I'll do. I suppose I'll lie to my husband and tell George that we can't do anything sordid until we return home.

Why does the thought of telling Georgie that make me smile? Maybe because when we finally get privacy at home, the deferred pleasure will cause us both to lose our minds. I can picture it in my mind's eye. Oh, gosh, I find myself wet again. Well, speaking of deferred pleasure, I will not touch myself tonight. I need sleep.

My life is so crazy now. How is it that the existence of alien life only makes the third paragraph of this entry? I am awed and worried by the unmasking of Kapnos the changeling. She seems fond of George, so that may work in our favor. But I must make sure she doesn't blind him to what she truly is: something ... *other*. I will put my foot down there eventually, but now is not the time. We need her help to escape.

Ernest's Diary August 25, 2197

Moving ... destroying ... resisting ... enjoying ... one with the others. But still ... myself a little longer.

Lillian's Diary August 24, 2197

Mrs. Valentine was right! I very much enjoyed carrying on the hidden tradition that she brought to my attention. Rewarding my brother for his good deeds was exquisite. He was so happy afterward, we both laughed for a long time. He was such a gentleman, too. After I cleaned and dressed, he was still hard, but he didn't lay a hand on me or ask for anything further. I was grateful that he didn't put me in a position to turn him down. Of course, I would never have sex with him. I will remain true to my beloved Francis.

Afterward, I couldn't find Mrs. Valentine. I was so eager to tell her that I trembled. I had hoped she would in turn reward *me* for my good deed. But alas, she is probably sleeping. That will have to wait until after our big task tomorrow. I dare not turn my mind to it. I now know how to shoot, but I don't think I'd be very much help in a fight. I pray that Mrs. Valentine's camera keeps us well away from those creatures. I am not ready to die.

George's Diary August 25, 2197

Dear Diary, I never thought I'd see the day when my sister would show me the least amount of appreciation, let alone gargle on my cum! The only reason the moment hasn't driven me completely out of my mind is that I know there is a logical explanation. Nossy must have coaxed her. It's not what I would have asked for from my girlfriend, but I understand what she's trying to do. And ... I'm not complaining. I am seeing things very differently than I was in early August. Lillian is beautiful, and her exuberance and the effort she put into the blowjob was wonderous. I will never forget it. Nor will I ever let her forget it, haha.

If you don't hear from me again, Diary, it is because I have fallen on tomorrow's mission. I regret nothing.

Kapnos's Diary August 25, 2197

I/we are in our natural state now, resting for what will come tomorrow. George is right, we cannot let the computer fall. And maybe, if we run into the drones, we will recover the correct eyeball. I/we are certain they will not withstand the hail of our bullets.

The question then becomes, will Anna let us leave without her husband? Or the same for Constance Haversham with her husband? I/we will do what I/we can to convince them it is right to leave. By what methods, I/we are not sure.

If my/our life should finally come to an end, what a tragedy that would be. I/we will do my/our best to survive. I/we have escaped dire circumstances before. They didn't catch me/us in France.

I/we left Delores happy and sated, sleeping like a baby. I/we believe Lillian and George took care of each other. Anna has been well-serviced by her son. We should all be full of life for our big day tomorrow.

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"How are you feeling, Mrs. Haversham?" Anna gazed up at the tall, athletic woman. Constance looked hearty and hale. This was good, because they would need someone of her abilities if they ran into those creatures. All the survivors were assembled. Each wore a gun belt with extra ammunition and a pistol each. Anna still carried her sword at her opposite hip as well. It had come in handy the last time. "Did the autodoc fix ... everything?"

“I’m suffering from a bit of a headache, but nothing I can’t manage.” Constance’s head throbbed like someone had dropped an anvil on it. Which wasn’t far from the truth. “I feel like someone dropped a space hotel on my head. But, no worries. I’ve managed much worse in championship matches.” She smiled bravely. “And won.”

George wore his familiar suit, without his jacket. The women all wore sensible bodices, with their skirts hastily hemmed just above the knees. It was scandalous to show that much leg, but none of them wanted any hindrance should the need to run arise. Not to mention all the stairs they would have to climb on their way back. None of them wore hats, but all the women had their hair perfectly pinned. Delores and Lillian wore makeup. Anna, Constance, and Kapnos did not.

The group dismantled the barricade on the outer doors, said goodbye to the suites, and put Kapnos’s camera to work. The little thing couldn’t open doors, so they would have to be satisfied with a sweep of the public places on each floor for their reconnaissance. There was no sign of creatures on their floor, or the accessible parts of the two below them. So, they set out on their long descent.

The survivors were mostly quiet as they moved. Kapnos’s screen hovered in front of her wherever she moved, showing her the camera’s view. Several hours later, the group stopped at about the halfway point when Kapnos raised her arm. They were on floor one-fifty-two. The halls were decorated like a forest from before the Great Extinction at the end of the previous century. Nearby, were the grand doors to the arboretum. An expansive attraction, with trees that very nearly looked real, climbing through several floors of the hotel. Floor-to-ceiling windows provided a sea of stars as the forest’s backdrop.

“Trouble, Mrs. Valentine?” Constance put her hand to her holster, holding the handle of her pistol loosely. Her voice was much tighter than her grip.

“Indeed. I think we should retreat.” Kapnos enlarged the screen so they could all see.

“What ... are those?” Anna squinted at the screen even though she could see it plainly. Her mind had been primed for black creatures swarming toward them. And the creatures on screen were swarming up the stairs, maybe ten of them. But they were ivory instead of black. In their midst was a man wearing sunglasses. The image was grainy at this distance, but the man was unmistakably her husband. She put a hand to her mouth. “I ... I don’t understand. What am I looking at?”

“We don’t have time to figure it out. Nossy is right, we have to retreat.” George took his mother’s hand and began ascending the stairs. He got no more than five steps when he came to an abrupt halt. At the landing above them stood a dozen of those surprisingly white creatures. At this distance, he could see what they were. Their joints still bent the wrong way, and they were maybe more clumsy than the last iteration of the creatures

he had encountered, but they were indeed the Newest Guest's soldiers. And they had covered themselves in an interlocking web of human bone. They now had armor that a hollow-point bullet might not penetrate. "They must have hidden as we passed them. It's a trap. Everyone into the hall, form two lines like we talked about. We'll choke them off at the stairs."

"Gods ... we're dead." Delores didn't draw her pistol. She stood on the stairs, slack-jawed, staring at the creatures up on the switch-back.

"Come along, dear." Constance grabbed her shoulder and pulled her toward the verdant hallway of one-fifty-two. "We're not dead yet. Form up."

"Would it not be better to barricade ourselves in a room while we have the chance?" Despite her question, Anna got in the front line of their firing squad. She was there along with Delores and Lillian. Behind them, Constance, Kapnos, and George lined up. Anna dropped to a knee like the others in the front line and pulled her pistol. George's presence directly behind her infused her with strength. She was pleased that her hand did not tremble as she aimed at the slowly descending group of creatures that had cut off their retreat. It seemed only their eyes were uncovered by bone.

"We can't barricade ourselves in here. We'd be trapped." Constance understood George's logic perfectly.

"Perhaps they come in peace." Anna dared to hope. "Ernest is with them."

"Please let that be so." Lillian pointed her pistol, but really, she couldn't focus. She was terrified beyond reason. It took all her strength not to pee in her underwear. Her heart threatened to beat out of her chest.

"Why would your father be with them?" Delores held her pistol in trembling hands. It was pointed at the floor. Horror filled too much of her mind for her to remember her firearm lessons from the night before.

"The answer arrives." Kapnos gritted her teeth. She did not like the look of Ernest Zaal when he ascended into view.

"The collective demands that you lay down arms." Ernest came to a halt some twenty yards in front of the survivors. His troop of armored creatures formed a line behind him.

George swallowed his terror. This was no time to cry and suck his thumb, no matter how right that felt for the moment. He soaked up the power of his mother's steadfast fortitude. He willed his pulse to slow. The man who stood before him was not his father. That much was clear. Ernest's jacket was torn and ragged. Through the holes, George could see black veins running just under alabaster skin. Those same veins covered the lower parts of his father's face. A lengthy silence lingered. None of his party laid down

“This is it. Death is here.” Constance gave a battle cry, “eeeeiiiiiiiiiiiiiii.” She fired as many bullets at her adversaries as she could. She hit one in the eye and saw it fall. Ernest, also, dropped to a knee, a black blossom of blood spreading on the remains of his shirt.

“Find your way to the top of the tower. I’ll meet you there.” Kapnos shed the copy of Gwendolyn Valentine. Radiant, cerulean light filled the hall and the grand stairway of floor one hundred fifty-two. “Now ... run.”

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The blue light blinded everyone. George found his mother’s gloved hand and his sister’s shoulder. He pulled them down the hall away from their attackers. There was a service stairway in that direction. He prayed he could get there. He was jostled and then bowled over by one of the armored creatures. He lost touch with both women, but somehow came away with the hilt of his mother’s sword in his hand. He leapt back to his feet. “Follow my voice,” He shouted, running in the direction he hoped was down the hall. There was moaning and grunting all around, punctuated by the occasional hiss of a pistol.

George was knocked down again. This time, the thing grabbed hold of his leg. It applied such force that he was worried his bones might snap. He found the thing’s round head, felt for its eyeball, and finding the squishy thing with his thumb, placed his pistol right on the spot. With the hiss of a bullet, he ended the creature. He could hear its goo pop from inside, and then the bones collapsed onto the hallway carpeting. Fortunately, it hadn’t been on top of him. He rose to his feet and kept running. The blue light was fading. He opened his eyes and could see a little through the aftereffects of the blinding luminescence. He was going the right way. He spotted Lillian sitting on the carpet, blood running down her chin. “Come on.” He lifted her, threw her over his shoulder, and sprinted.

His vision cleared more as he ran. The blue light was still around him, but its brightness had faded. He looked around. Constance was sprinting just behind him. Delores was several yards back, standing still. He couldn’t see his mother or Kapnos. “Run, Mrs. Salazar. Run towards me! They’re almost ... gods.” He stumbled but didn’t fall when he saw the ivory creatures fall upon Delores. There was a terrible wet, crunching sound. A moment later, several of them carried pieces of his friend toward the stairs. Still other creatures pursued them. “Where’s Mom?”

Constance’s grim, ashen face told George that the woman didn’t know. He carried Lillian as fast as he could. Constance gained ground. And so did the pursuing creatures.

“There, the ... service stairs.” He spotted the narrow door. It was close enough that he thought they could make it. “Hold on ... Lillian.” His sister groaned in response.

A few seconds later, Constance opened the door with George and Lillian right behind. She slammed the door behind them.

George turned, took the sword that he still held, and pushed it through the half-circle handle. He then shoved the blade into the joint of the wall, where it sank in several inches. A few seconds after that, there was pounding on the door. The sword rattled but held. “My Mom ... is still out there.”

“I didn’t see ... them get her,” Constance said. “She could have escaped. I don’t know what happened to Mrs. Valentine. I think ... she somehow ... immolated herself.”

“I’ll explain that ... later.” George set down his sister, who slumped to the metal stairway. He pushed his back against the door, wondering how long it would hold. “We have to ... go back for my mom.”

Constance eyed the booming door wearily. “We’re not going ... back that way.”

“Yes ... you’re right.” George holstered his pistol. “Let’s head down.”

“We should ... go up.” Constance pointed upward. “Return ... to the lagoon.”

“They’ll look for us that way.” He bent down, lifted his sister, and slung her over his shoulder again. “Come on. We can still ... cut the hardline. Then, we’ll save my mom, and then head back up the tower.”

“And if your mom is ... beyond saving?” Constance holstered her pistol and followed. Wherever they went, she wanted to be far away from the door behind her when it finally gave way.

“She won’t be beyond saving.” George could feel that she was still alive. He was sure of it. “We’ll find her.” He still had access to Kapnos’s camera. As they descended, he brought up a screen and inspected the carnage. There were some bones and black goo. There was poor Delores’s blood trail. And that was it. As they got out of range of the camera, he hid it in a sconce for later.

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The murmur of voices carried down to Roy. He had followed the strange white creatures at a safe distance up the grand staircase for several floors. He could just see the backs of them lined up at the entrance to floor one hundred fifty-two. Was it

possible that their white coating was bone? As he studied their backs, he decided that it was so. Peeking around the corner, Roy clutched his pistol, watched, and waited.

There was a human among the creatures.

“I knew Ernest was evil ... but ...” Roy whispered to himself. It boggled his mind that a man would join with abominations.

After a prolonged period of calm, the creatures charged. They moved more stiffly than when Roy had last seen them, but with the same disjointed gait. He supposed the creatures were slowed by their exoskeletons. The hiss of gunfire carried down to him. He thought about helping, but there were too many creatures. He wondered who was fighting the losing battle. Then he heard a familiar voice.

“This is it. Death is here.” His wife’s voice rang out, followed by a terrifying cry “eeeeiiiiiiiiiiiiiii.”

Roy almost went to help them. Almost. But when the blinding light filled the stairway, he retreated. He would find food, pick a luxurious room, and lay low. It was all he could do. For all he knew, the creatures could have staged the fight above as a way to trap him. He said a quick prayer for those that might be dying above him and scurried away from the blinding light behind him.

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The light blazed like a cerulean sun. Even when Anna closed her eyes, she could see blue through her eyelids. For a moment, she held her son’s strong hand. And then it was gone. Large bodies rumbled past her. She heard George’s voice and tried to follow, but she was knocked off her feet. Her pistol was kicked from her hand. She rose and stumbled in the direction she hoped would lead to the rest of the survivors. But instead, she hit a wall.

Still blinded, Anna moved along the wall, feeling it with her fingers. She dared not cry out for help. She could hear those terrible creatures snarling and feel the vibrations of their steps nearby. Her hand found a handle. She opened a door and stepped inside. When the door closed behind her, she blinked back her vision. Flashing afterimages floated in front of her for some time as she looked for a lock. There was none, so she turned and took in the majestic beauty all around her. She was in the arboretum.

How long before they search for me in here? There was no way to get back to the others, so she raced along the boardwalk path through the artificial forest. Her heart pounded in her ears, and her lungs burned for air. The place was sprawling, but she didn’t find

another exit. She paused to catch her breath, looking around. Her eyes had returned to normal. She found that the lighting was kept low, probably to make a more dramatic backdrop out of the floor-to-ceiling windows.

The soft hiss of hydraulics met Anna's ears. It was the door. In the distance she heard the creatures grunting. Someone was coming.

"Océane ... tell George Zaal that I'm okay. I'm hiding in the arboretum. I'll update him when I move," Anna whispered.

"Yes, Mrs. Zaal." Océane matched the woman's whisper.

"Engage *do not disturb* mode now. No audio or visual." Anna heard heavy footsteps on the boardwalk. She looked around. She spotted a giant oak with large, stately branches that looked climbable. She hoisted herself up to a low branch and began working higher and higher.

Below her, she could see two beastly, ivory forms walking single file. They wended their way down the path under her.

Please ... gods. Don't look up. She found a crook where she could be mostly hidden, steepled her hands, and raised her gaze toward Olympus.

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The true form of one of Kapnos's species is quite delicate and bright. Of course, the light didn't bother her, so she used it to her advantage often. She thought of it like an octopus inking the water. Her delicate nature, however, made it dangerous to come into contact with the lumbering creatures stumbling about her.

Of course, in the land of the blind, the dancer is queen. And Kapnos always did like to dance.

She spun, twisted, hopped, and ducked her way through chaos. Once up the stairs, she spared a glance back at her friends. When they caught Delores, Kapnos nearly howled.

At the switchback, she stopped. Her light wasn't as bright at this distance, but she thought it might still help them escape. She didn't see the others. Judging from the pursuing creatures, her friends had made their escape down the hall. Kapnos turned and sped up the stairs. Without the constraints of a human body, she moved quickly. In no time, the terrors were well behind her.

What will I do when I arrive at the lagoon? From Ernest's code, Kapnos understood that she would find three creatures searching the suites. She had her pistol. She reloaded as

she ran. She doubted she could take three with a pistol if they were armored. Perhaps these would not be covered in bone. The new iteration seemed to slow them down, and maybe they valued speed when on reconnoiter. Maybe.

I will find a way. I will secure the lifeboat. Floors flew by. She passed one-seventy. She passed one-eighty. She thought about what body would suit the task best. She decided to go with her own. Best to fight creatures that are blind, even if that makes one frail. This was not the first time she'd used this tactic. She prayed it wouldn't be the last.

~~

“Lillian?” George put his sister down with her back against the wall. They were still in the service stairwell. He held her face. Her eyes were glassy, and her cheeks unnaturally white. Blood continued to run from the corner of her mouth. Had they really been laughing about a blowjob mere hours ago?

“Your sister ... needs an autodoc.” Constance laced her fingers behind her head and worked on catching her breath. “You said that they ... don't know about the nerve center. So, no need ... to rush there.”

“Mrs. Salazar ... made that point.” George's heart felt heavy. “Yes, we should find ... the nearest autodoc, and wait until –”

“Sorry to interrupt, Mr. Zaal. Urgent message,” Océane said.

“Play it.” George's soul lifted a little. Once he'd learned that his mother was alive and in hiding, it lifted more. “Thank the gods.”

Constance nodded. “Let's take care of your sister. Then the nerve center. Then your mother. Agreed?”

“Agreed.” George hauled Lillian up again and held her in his arms. They moved quickly to the nearest autodoc.

Chapter 24

It learns, doesn't it? Fool me once

It was good that Anna had chosen to wear dark colors for their sortie. She tucked her legs up into her shortened skirts so that her alabaster calves wouldn't stick out amongst the oak's verdant foliage. She also tried to keep her head out of sight from below. Both her pale face and blond hair would surely contrast with the darkened room.

The creatures prowled the large, forested area for what seemed like eons. She knew it was indeed a long time, because her adrenaline left her while the creatures remained. *I'm shaking like a ... well ... like a leaf on a tree.* Maybe it was a good sign that she could still make jokes. Her husband was a monster, and she didn't know if her children had survived. But she'd always been indefatigable. La Belle Île en Mer didn't change that. She cast dark thoughts aside and worked on affirmations. Her children were alive, and she would see them soon. Her husband ... maybe she could get him help. They would find the eye and leave. Anna put a bit of her bodice in her mouth to keep her teeth from audibly chattering.

The thump of heavy footsteps sounded on the boardwalk below. The ivory creatures grunted and snarled, their vocalizations echoing off the floor-to-ceiling windows. It didn't sound like language to Anna. They made the noises of dumb beasts. Maybe they weren't even individual animals. What had her husband said about the "collective?" Maybe the creatures were all part of the Newest Guest. Whatever in Hades that was.

Even after the creatures left the arboretum, Anna stayed in the crook of her oak tree. She was thirsty, tense, and completely wrung out. But she kept sleep at bay. Eventually, she felt safe enough to whisper, "Océane, open up a communication to George Zaal. Only audio. Keep the volume quite low on my end. I don't want to attract attention."

"Trying him now," Océane whispered.

"Hello, Mom?" George sounded worried.

Relief flooded Anna's body. *My son is alive.* Her muscles relaxed so quickly that she nearly fell out of the tree. "I'm okay. I'm in a tree in the arboretum. Are you okay? Is Lillian? Can you come get me?" Anna was so excited by his voice, she could barely keep hers to a whisper.

George told her that Delores was gone and that Kapnos had saved them all with her light. They were supposed to meet Nossy at the top of the tower. Lillian was in the autodoc with internal bleeding, and it would be no less than twelve hours before she would be well enough to leave. Anna processed all this. *Twelve hours is a long time to*

hide in a tree. When he finished the debriefing, there was silence on the line for several beats.

“Stay with your sister. Make sure she’s protected.” Anna didn’t have any weapons. Should she leave the tree? Would the creatures come back and do a more thorough search? “When she’s well, cut that hardline and come get me. We’ll go up the tower together. I’ll stay safe. I love you, sunshine.”

“I love you, Mom.” George’s voice faded away as the connection cut.

“Okay, now how do I climb down this thing?” Anna bit her lip as she eyed the tree. After a moment, she left the crook that had kept her hidden.

~~

“It feels insane just sitting here.” George paced the autodoc waiting room past the barricade he and Constance had placed on the door leading into the hall. “My mother needs me. At the very least, we should cut the power line while we’re waiting on my sister.” His pistol was in his hand, his trigger finger tapping against the barrel.

“Firstly, you’re not sitting anywhere. You’re pacing.” Constance sat in a waiting room chair, her long legs stretched out in front of her. She was slouched a little, trying to relax. Her gun belt hung from the chair next to her. “Secondly, your mother told you to stay with your sister. Thirdly, she’s right. We can’t leave Ms. Zaal. We need both guns ready if the creatures find us here.” She nodded at his pistol. “You can put yours away, though. I don’t believe there is any imminent threat, and you’re making me nervous.”

“Gods ... I’m sorry.” George holstered his firearm and sat near Constance. “Dream vacation, huh?”

“The fabulous and inimitable Belle Île.” She lilted her voice like she was selling timeshares. She cleared her throat and regarded him. “It was a nice hotel until *that* guest arrived.” She paused before asking the chief question bounding about her mind. “Mrs. Valentine isn’t like the Newest Guest, is she? I mean, I’m not sure what happened to her. But it wasn’t ... normal. She went up like a supernova.”

“She’s not like the Newest Guest.” George shook his head.

“But she’s not human. Some sort of security bot? Is she here to protect us all in deep space?” Constance wasn’t sure she wanted the answer. Maybe it was best not to look a gift horse in the mouth. Not that Gwendolyn was a horse, far from it.

“She’s an alien, Mrs. Haversham. She can mimic people she touches. She loves people. She’s nothing like the Newest Guest.” George shrugged. Kapnos would forgive him for outing her. It was inevitable at this point. He continued, “It was her bad luck, and our good fortune, that she was here when this all happened. I call her Nossy. She saved all our lives with that light show.”

“Oh, I’m well aware that she saved us.” Constance thought things over. How odd that she would discover life from outside Earth. That hadn’t been how she’d imagined her legacy. “We’ll be famous when we return to Earth.”

“You can’t tell anyone! They’ll put her in a cage.” George tensed, he reached over and squeezed her muscled leg.

“Okay, I won’t tell.” She put her gloved hand on his bare one. “But it is an odd coincidence that we should find two unparalleled life forms here. If indeed the Newest guest is alive. It’s a bit like finding two needles in a haystack.”

“We never would have found Nossy without the Newest Guest’s arrival.” George withdrew his hand from Constance’s leg. “It’s like the Newest Guest burned down the haystack, and there was Nossy left all alone. A shiny, lovely needle.” He ran his hands through his hair. “I just wish I could go get my mom now.” He unbuckled his gun belt, took it off, and hung it next to Constance’s. “This wait is going to kill me.”

“I admire how close you are to your mother. I was never that close to mine.” Constance pointed her toes, flexing her calves. Her hemmed skirts showed them off nicely. She watched his eyes wander toward her legs. She knew she had first-rate calves, so she flexed them a few more times. “We’re stuck here for the moment. We’ve eaten. We’ve rested. How will we pass the time while your sister heals?”

George gazed up her body, settling on her clear, green eyes. Her meaning was plain. “Gods, I’m such a slut, Mrs. Haversham. You’re proposing to me again, and I’m considering it.”

“As I’m sure you know from that bit of eavesdropping you did so long ago, I often roleplay with my husband.” Constance ventured a smile. It was faint, but it was something of an act of defiance aimed at the darkness they’d all been through. “I’m taller than him, so I ... well, you know.”

“You pretend to be his mother?” George did indeed remember the shock of hearing their roleplay.

“You’re close to your own mother. Would you like a little roleplay? I wouldn’t pretend to be her, exactly.” Her smile broadened ever so slightly. She could see he was considering it. Having sex with a handsome, eighteen-year-old would be as close to reality as her maternal fantasy would ever get. Especially since this might be the last time she ever

had sex. Their odds of surviving had diminished dramatically with their failed sortie. “I could really use the diversion, Mr. Zaal.”

“I wouldn’t want you to be my mother.” George finally returned her smile. “You’re nothing like her. I’d want you to be yourself. You’re Constance Haversham. You’re a wonder of a person. My mother is my mother, and I’ll be with her again when we find her.”

“By ‘be with her again’, are you speaking of filial proximity? Because you and I seem to be discussing the terms of coitus, and you mentioned your mother on the same level.” Constance’s suspicions calcified.

“I ... um ... I think ...” George glanced at the closed door where the autodoc was fixing his sister.

“If you need permission from your mother, you can send her a message.” Constance spread her legs and pulled her skirts up, showing leg to just past her knees. “Honestly, that a teenager even needs to deliberate my offer bruises my ego.”

George rubbed his chin and stared at her legs. She was beautiful. And he was stuck there for hours.

“You relish the act of good deed accomplished. I’ve seen that time and again.” Constance slowly unbuttoned her bodice. “Consider this a favor to your good friend, Mrs. Haversham. I need to get even with my ne’er-do-well, cheating husband. I need to feel alive and to pretend like death isn’t breathing down our necks. I need to find out what you’ve got in your trousers that would cause your own mother to break her marriage vows and some of society’s most cherished taboos.”

“Not my mother.” George slid off the chair and crawled over to her. He placed himself between her legs and ran his hands under her skirts, along the insides of her firm thighs. She trembled delightfully at his touch. “But, I did have sex with an alien.”

Constance laughed. “Very funny, Mr. Zaal.” She looked deep into his brown eyes. “Is it true about your mother? Did you, or didn’t you?”

“If we’re going to do this, I’m going to make it worth your while.” He tucked his head under her skirts and breathed in. His nose was met by the scent of sweat, of course. They had both perspired like crazy in their escape down the service stairs. That scent was earthy and strong. *This is what she smells like during one of her matches.* Although that wasn’t quite right. As he took in another heady breath, he detected the tangy scent of her excitement. Constance Haversham was wet for *him*.

“Ohhhh ... I wasn’t expecting you to go down there. I didn’t think a teenager would know ... oooohhhhhh ... yep ... it seems you do know ... what you’re doing.” Constance watched the lump of his head work under her skirts. He had moved her panties to the

side and was now slowly sucking and tenderly nipping at her labia. “Wow ... uuuuummmmmmmmm ... okay ... I never ... but ... oooohhhhhhhhhhhhh ... that feels wonderful ... Mr. Zaal. This will ... aaaaahhhhhhhhh ... pass the time ... indeed.”

The ambrosia of her scents and her zesty taste pushed any doubts out of his mind. This was Constance Haversham’s pussy, and he was going to please her like nobody’s business. While continuing to lick and suck, George unbuckled his pants and reached his hand inside. He didn’t have room in the enclosed space to properly fap, so he massaged the head of his cock, playing with the foreskin. His other hand slipped two fingers into her pussy. “Mmmmmppphhhhhhh.”

“Oooooohhhhhhhhh ... Mr. Zaal ... Mr. Zaal.” Constance sat in the waiting area with her legs obscenely spread. There was no sign of a smile on her face now. There was only the twisted face of a woman surprised by immense pleasure. “You’re a phenom ... at eating pussy. I thought ... your mother had fallen to what was between your legs ... but your tongue ... oohhhhhhh ... your tongue could topple ... the most frigid woman.”

“Nnnnnngggggggg,” George said.

“Not that I’m calling ... Mrs. Zaal frigid. Apologies ... if you took that as my ... meaning.” Constance leaned her head back against the wall. “Oh ... my ... oooooohhhhhhh ... and now you’ve got my button ... it’s ... oooooohhhhhhhhh ... gods ... you’re good. You’re so ... good ... at that ... in particular ... I’m going to ...” She grabbed her gun belt and bit on the leather to keep from screaming. Her back arched, her legs extended, her eyes rolled, and she came on George’s perfect tongue. Ecstasy infused every part of her.

George removed his fingers from her pussy, pulled her hips forward so that her butt was just off the edge of the seat, and wiggled a wet finger into her ass. Her body jerked and spasmed when he did that. Her strangled moans were desperate. It sounded like she was using a gag. Which was smart. They didn’t know who might be searching out in the hall.

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Kapnos paced the hall two floors under the suites. She unloaded her pistol, checked the clip, and reloaded it. Her radiant form still clung to the female form she had shed on floor one hundred fifty-two. She had undulating mounds on her chest, and her hips were wider than normal. “If the ivory creatures are there, the only sure way to kill them is to put a bullet through their eyes. I might destroy my ticket home.” She thought it through out loud. The corridor was ablaze with her cerulean light. That gave her little comfort. “The only way to kill them is a shot to the eye.”

“No, I’m not thinking clearly. They die other ways.” Kapnos had a sudden thought. “Océane, please enable fire suppression on floor two hundred three. Do so until the creatures there are dead.”

“I am sorry, Oldest Guest. The fire door is malfunctioning. I think it has been tampered with,” Océane said.

“It learns, doesn’t it? Fool me once ...”

“You would like me to fool you one time?” Océane tilted her voice in a confused query.

“I’m talking to myself, Océane. You can ignore me until I address you again.” Kapnos’s voice was still female too, but it sounded like a harmony of women talking together.

“Very well,” Océane said.

Kapnos strode back and forth for several minutes, deep in thought. *There are two ways to kill them, bullets won’t work against the armored creatures. But they need air.* A plan began to form. After a few more minutes, Kapnos stopped in the hall and holstered her pistol. “Océane, are the other survivors well? I mean ... I suppose not Mrs. Salazar. But the others?”

“Ms. Zaal has internal bleeding. She has just entered the autodoc. Mrs. Zaal requests quiet at this time. The younger Mr. Zaal is with Mrs. Haversham in the autodoc waiting room. The older Mr. Zaal does not seem well.”

“Very good.” Kapnos nodded. “Now, please tell me where I can find a significant length of rope or hose. It needs to be at least one hundred yards.”

“There are six EV suits stored on this floor,” Océane said. “There are several spools of optional air hose stored with them.”

“Perfect.” Kapnos’s smile was radiant.

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“Wow ... Mrs. Haversham ... you look so beautiful with your lips bloated like that.” George watched the older woman blow him. They both had intense concentration written on their faces. His in the observation, hers in the doing.

Constance removed his cock from her mouth and stroked him, holding her face next to his generous length. “A woman rarely likes to hear that she looks bloated in any context.” She reminded herself that he was only a teenager. And teenagers did say stupid things. She’d been one once herself. And when she hadn’t been practicing tennis,

she had been saying the dumbest things. “I could stand to hear more about how beautiful I look next to this magnificent cock. It’s as long as my face. I don’t think I’ve handled one like this before.”

“You’ve handled more than ...” George wanted to put this delicately. He knew her husband was a sensitive subject. “You’ve handled more than one other penis?”

“When I wasn’t saying dumb things as a young woman, I was tumbling with the other tennis pros. I’ve seen many.” She smiled, kissed his shaft, and winked at him. “You can talk freely about my numbskull husband. This is a revenge fuck, remember?”

“You use such ... crass language. I’m not used to it.” George’s dick lurched in her hand.

“Your girlfriends in high school are all rather prudish?” She smirked when he shook his head. “Your mother then? Well, yes, I don’t suppose she’d want to encourage you to use ‘*crass language*.’” She said the last words in an imitation of Anna’s voice. He looked so flummoxed that she laughed. More and more, she thought the two Zaals really were engaged in an unnatural pairing. The thought excited her. She had spent so long pretending, and now she was most likely second-hand to the real thing.

“Mr. Haversham isn’t the same size as me?” George was flustered. He tried to steer the conversation away from his mother. “I mean, I know he’s shorter than me. I mean ... his penis is smaller?”

Constance laughed again, a merry chiming sound that filled the waiting room. She continued pumping him with her bare hand, pausing only to kiss each hairy testicle. “My dear, foolish husband possesses a cock about half your size. I will be quite thrilled to see what you feel like inside me. Although ...” She frowned. “I’ve never had a man hit my cervix before. I’ve heard it’s painful. If that happens, we may need to stop.”

“I haven’t had such problems with women much shorter than you.” George thought that over. Other than his mother, Kapnos has been all those women. Had the changeling somehow altered her womb so that he didn’t hit her cervix? Could she do that? Was there a uniform depth to a cervix that was proportional to height? He made a mental note to search on the topic once he had full access to the net.

“Shorter women? Like your mother?” Constance loved the disconcerted look he got whenever she mentioned his mother. *He’s definitely bedding her, and I’m going to get him to admit it.* But now wasn’t the right moment. She took him back into her mouth and hummed and moaned around his cockhead. His gift wasn’t just in length, the dome of his penis was also considerably rotund. Blowing him was just on the edge of uncomfortable. She knew her jaw would be sore afterward, but it was so lovely to please George. He might say the occasional stupid thing, but he was exceptional at saving their lives. And he was handsome, too. If she ever saw her husband again, she’d make sure to

tell him just what George Zaal's cock felt like in her mouth.
“Mmmmmmmpppphhhhhhhhh.”

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The hydraulics for the arboretum's large door hissed as Anna pulled it open. She peeked out into the hallway. There was no sign of her husband or any other monsters. Océane had a cleaning crew removing the grisly remains of their battle with the enemy. Most of the stains were already gone from the carpet, but she could still see bullet holes and claw marks on the walls. She stuck her head out of the doorway a little.

“You should be more careful. If I was one of those monsters, you'd be dead by now.”

A man's voice startled Anna. Her heart leapt in her chest. When she turned her gaze to the left, she saw Roy crouched behind a miniature tree of about five feet that advertised for the arboretum. She straightened her bodice and tried to even out her breath. “Are you here to help us, Mr. Haversham? Are you the cavalry?” She slid out of the arboretum and moved behind the miniature tree on the opposite side of the hall from the one Roy had claimed.

“Where's my wife?” Roy really did hate the Zaals. Every last one of them.

“First, tell me where the creatures are.” Anna saw that he was holding his pistol. He had a spare in the holster at his belt. She looked down at her gun belt. She had plenty of ammunition, but nothing to shoot it with.

“They're not here.” Roy shrugged. “I came after they left.”

“You ... saw the fight and didn't help ... didn't you?” Anna was aghast. “You snuck back to check on the remains of your wife.”

Roy shrugged more elaborately. “She wasn't here. So, did you see what happened to her?” His body tensed as he waited for bad news.

“She's with my son. They're safe.” Anna didn't want to tell him more. Her son wasn't safe with this man around, and she didn't want Roy hunting them down. “You could try sending her a message.”

“She won't respond.” Roy shook his head. “So, you're telling me that your son is with my Constance without a chaperone? They're together in some hotel room right now?”

“I don't care for your implications, Mr. Haversham.” Anna pressed her lips into a tight line. “My son is a gentleman, and your wife is a lady.”

“Clearly you don’t know my wife.” He snorted a laugh.

“I see you have a spare pistol.” Anna forced a smile onto her face. “Might I have it?”

“No.”

“Please, Mr. Haversham.” Anna’s smile shone with pleading grace. “I am unarmed at present.”

“As I remember, you can’t shoot. And it wouldn’t matter anyway. Those things are armored now.” Roy cautiously stood. “I’m going to go find my wife. Do you know where they are?”

“I do not. Only that they are somewhere safe.” Anna waited. The expression on his face was ghastly, like he was contemplating murder most foul. Was this man as dangerous as one of the creatures? She had hoped to descend to her son and wait with him for Lillian to heal. But she couldn’t risk leading Mr. Haversham there.

“You’re lying to me, Mrs. Zaal.” Roy lifted his pistol and pointed it at her heart. “I could shoot you here and no one would ever know. The Zaals aren’t the only people in this hotel capable of murder.”

“They’re in George’s old room on floor one-oh-five ... Room four-three-two-three,” Anna blurted the first lie that came to her mind. It was good enough, she supposed. They weren’t anywhere near that room at the moment.

“Very well.” Roy lowered his pistol. “Don’t follow me. I’m going to see if your son truly is a gentleman as you claim. If they’re fucking, he’ll enjoy a short trip to Hades.”

“They are certainly not fornicating ... Mr. Haversham.” Anna watched the man descend the grand stairs. She stood, lifted her skirts, and ran up the stairs. She prayed the way would be clear. Just a few floors and then she could hide until her son came for her. She dared not descend and risk running into Roy again.

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With cum in her hair, and on her face, Constance got down on the floor. She put a cushion from one of the chairs under her knees, and placed her hands on the rich, crimson carpet. She looked down at the ring on her left hand. It was supposed to remain secret from the world outside her marriage, like her pussy. She thought back to her vows. Roy had broken his first. He had desecrated their bond. Now, a worthy man was rubbing the wide head of his cock on her pussy. This was for the best. “Remember, if I

ask you to pull out, please do so quickly. You may not fit. If that happens, I'll finish you with my mouth again."

"What about pulling out ... before I ..." George admired the apples of her ass cheeks. She was muscled everywhere, but still maintained a feminine shape. It was wonderfully alluring. She wasn't like any of the other women he'd been with. She did have one similarity she shared with them though. Although he hadn't yet entered her, she was dripping. He could hear the damp sounds of her pussy as he burnished her gash with his dick.

"I'm fixed, Mr. Zaal. No babies for me. You can hose down my womb as you like." She looked back over her shoulder. "Do you fill your mother's womb, too? Oh ... you look so precious when I mention her. Goodness ... you have ... haven't you? And she isn't fixed. I can tell by the guilt on your face I ... oooooohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh ... my gods ... that's big."

George pressed into her. He entered the woman as much to shut her up about his mother as anything. "You're tight ... Mrs. Haversham. I know ... you and your husband ... do it often. But he hasn't ... readied you for a ... larger dick ... has he?" George hoped he wasn't overdoing it. She had asked to disparage her husband, after all.

"Uuuuuuggggghhhhhhhhh." Constance grimaced. She looked back at the young man. He had a body similar to the tennis players she'd bedded at eighteen, nineteen, and twenty. Muscular, but lean. A man yes, but one just out of the chrysalis. "If I ... uuuuugggghhhh ... ever have sex ... with my husband again ... he won't feel a thing. You're ... oooohhhhhhhhh ... changing me ... as we speak. You're ... uuuugggghhhhhhh ... changing my pussy."

"It's like ... I'm pushing into a vise." He grabbed her ass cheek and found he couldn't gain as much purchase as he could when gripping his mother's. He dug his fingers in deeper. If he left marks for her husband to find, so be it. His hips stopped as he hit bottom. "There ... it's all the way ... in."

"Oooooohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh." Constance's mouth made a perfect circle, and her eyes crossed ever so slightly. He hadn't hit her cervix. Or at least, she didn't think so. But he had found a magical button deep inside that had waited until that moment to show itself. Her whole body convulsed, and she bounced her ass against his hips.

"Too ... much?" George held himself buried to the hilt. Her asshole was even pinker than his mother's. He watched it pulse rhythmically.

"Uuuugggghhhh ... hump me ... hump me ... Mr. Zaal." Constance threw her head back and forth. Some of her hair had fallen from its pin and whipped about her face. "Rougher ... rougher ... make me ... yours. Take me away ... from Roy."

The roughest things he'd tried were holding his mother's hair and giving her hickeys and bite marks. George thought Constance might not want to be marked like that. So, with the hand not gripping her ass cheek, he dug his fingers into her copper hair. He pulled her face up so that she was now facing the wall. This had the added effect of arching her spine beautifully. Her muscles bunched in her back, disrupting the smooth expanse of her pale, freckled skin. "Gods ... you're beautiful." George thrust his hips and found a rhythm.

"Oh gods ... ooohhhhhh ... gods ... yes ... fuck me ... with your teenage cock." Constance was nearly delirious with pleasure. "Change me ... change my ... ugh ... ugh ... ugh ... pussy. Change my ... life ... please ... please ... please." Now that he was plunging inside her, all sorts of new pleasures exploded in her womb. The way he had hold of her was perfect. His cock was perfect. She could feel her climax surge toward her. "Make it ... so that my husband ... won't even recognize me ... when next we ... uuuuugggghhhh ... meet. Oooohhhh ... gods ... you've got me ... you've really got me ... eeeeeeeeeiiiiiiiiiii." Constance screamed out her orgasm.

"Quiet!" Alarmed, George let go of her hair and put his hand over her mouth. He stopped humping and held himself buried in her, feeling her quake and tremble against him. He had to press firmly against her lips to quiet her, but this seemed only to excite her more. Fortunately, his hand did muffle her enough that he doubted her cries were a danger to them. Her orgasm lasted a good long while. When it was done, his hips started up again. Because she seemed to enjoy it, he kept his hand on her mouth. They had a lot of time to kill while his sister healed, and he was sure they were going to make the best of it.

Chapter 25

Drink Deeply, Friend

How is George handling the waiting? Anna knew her son was longing to return to her arms. But the Zaals were stuck with many floors between them. She hoped Constance was a good companion for George. There were still hours and hours to wait while the autodoc healed Lillian.

Anna sequestered herself in a random room on floor one hundred fifty-five. She barricaded the door and sat to wait. She tried reading a novel for a little while, but she couldn't focus. She watched something on the feed, but she quickly turned it off. What if, instead of poor Delores, it had been Lillian? What if her son hadn't valiantly carried his sister down so many flights of stairs and taken her to the autodoc?

What had happened to her husband? Ernest looked horrible. *Somehow, when he visited the base of the tower with Ms. El Rashidi, he became infected. Is there a cure?*

"Océane, if we bring my husband to an autodoc, can you remove his infection? Can you bring him back to being Ernest Zaal again?" Anna bit her lip immediately. She knew she wasn't going to like the answer.

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Zaal." Océane lowered her voice in sympathy. "The probability of successfully treating him is low. I don't know what the pathogen is or how it has manifested. I don't understand the Newest Guest. That being is completely beyond anything in my databases."

"Yes ... okay." Anna flopped on the bed and buried her face in a pillow. She wouldn't give up hope. Maybe they could capture Ernest and bring him back to Earth. *I'm being delusional. We don't know if he's contagious. That wouldn't work.*

She forced her mind to turn away from such grim realities. Instead, she thought about how her heroic son was most likely passing the time. She imagined him and Constance playing games of twenty questions. Or maybe exchanging tennis stories.

~~

"Oh ... gods ... you've taken me ... from my cheating ... husband." Constance rode her eighteen-year-old companion. Her hips undulated, rubbing her clit against him rather than bouncing. She had found he hit the most perfect buttons deep inside her with that movement. "Ohhhh ... shit ... I am ... a new woman ... now. Changed ... forever." She

held her wedding ring between her index finger and thumb, showing it to George. “See this ... besmirched token? I wasn’t supposed to ... show it to you ... or anyone. But ... ugh ... ugh ... ugh ... but ... if you ask me to ... uuuuggghhhhhh ... I’ll give it to you ... or ... toss it away.”

“You’re mine ... uuuggghhhh ... now?” George alternated his focus between her crazed eyes, the shiny ring, and her modest wobbling breasts.

“Yesssssss ... I’m lost ... to a teenager ...” Constance didn’t actually believe it to be true. She certainly wasn’t going to propose marriage to George. He was wonderful, but she hadn’t gone insane. Indeed, it was more than likely that she would reconcile with her husband on their trip back to Earth. If they made it. In the moment, however, the large penis inside her had claimed her as its own. And no matter what her future held, she would find a way to replicate this pleasure. Even if she had to make Roy wear an artificial cock. That thought sent her over the edge. “Cumming ... oooohhhhhh ... you’re making me ... cum again ... eeeeeiiiiiii.”

George had his hand on her mouth before the screaming started. He waited for sentience to return to her eyes and the screams to become lingering moans before removing his hand. “You can toss aside ... the ring. You won’t ... be needing it ... anymore.” He watched her fling with a fluid motion. Her hips switched to long, lunging bounces. She stared down at him with ferocity. He gazed lovingly up at her. “You look ... epic ... Mrs. Haversham.”

“Seed me ... ugh ... ugh ... ugh ... seed me ... and finish ... your conquest. Roy is ... fading.” Constance rode harder, digging her fingernails into his chest. She noticed that hers weren’t the only marks there. He had tumbled with someone recently who had ridden him just like this. Was it his mother? “Seed ... meeeeeeeeeeeee.”

“Cumming ... Mrs. ... Haaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa.” He thrust his hips up into her and dug his fingers into the lush crimson carpet of the waiting room.

“Oh ... gods ... oh ... gods ... oooohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.” Constance flopped on top of him, losing control of her body. Another orgasm crashed down upon her when she felt the heat of his cum flood her womb.

George was too busy with his own climax to cover her mouth. It was lucky for them that there was no one in the hall at that moment, because the harmony of their grunts and cries pushed through the door.

~~

Grunting, snarling sounds came out of the open doors to the lagoon. Kapnos wore Constance's body for the moment, because she was tall and strong, and also to hide her alien light until it was time. She dragged a large spool of flexible air hose behind her. The hose was made to attach to EV suits when they needed extra air, so it was strong, light, and flexible. Exactly what Kapnos needed.

She crept closer to the doors and peeked in. All three creatures were in the lagoon. They each wore bone armor. *So it will have to be the hose and not my pistol.* At least the hideous things weren't in the rooms. That would make her task easier.

It was time. Kapnos checked the spool to make sure it would unwind smoothly. She took a deep breath and stepped out into the doorway. "Hé, bande d'enfoirés, préparez-vous à vous noyer."

The creatures were spread in three different spots, tearing up the boardwalk. Apparently, they hoped to find something hidden below the planks. They all turned toward her when she appeared, their eyes the only part of them not protected by human bone. The lead creature stepped in her direction. It was about twenty feet away.

"Gggggrrrrrggghhh?" It cocked its head and made a repetitive snorting sound. To Kapnos's ears, it might have been a chuckle.

"Laugh it up." Kapnos shed her copy of Constance. Immediately the room was filled with radiant, cerulean light. The creatures covered their eyes, and Kapnos ran, holding the end of the hose. She was fast and bright without a body, but also delicate. So, she made certain to keep clear of the creatures as she ran circles around them. She wound the hose around the first creature five times. Moving close enough to kick the struggling monstrosity, she gave it a firm shove with her foot. It fell into the lagoon and sank to the sandy bottom. A few bubbles rose to the surface, but the thing did not.

"Drink deeply, friend." She grabbed the trailing end of the hose and moved to the second creature. It was quickly bound and at the bottom of the lagoon with its kin.

The third creature must have understood her plan, because it didn't wait for her and flail about like the other two. It ran away. But it was still blinded by her light. It tripped on hole in the boardwalk and tumbled into the lagoon. It splashed frantically as Kapnos ran circles around it, winding it with hose. Eventually, she pushed the thing toward deeper water, and it sank.

"Eeeewwwwwww." Kapnos looked back toward the first one. The water had turned black with the creature's goo. Some body parts were floating on the surface, including its eyes. "We're not going swimming in here again, that's for sure." The other creatures similarly burst under the surface. Soon, all six eyes were bobbing in the darkened water. She did not want to go wading in after them. "Océane, can you have one of your bellmen retrieve the EV suits from two floors down and bring them here?"

“Yes, Oldest Guest,” Océane said.

“Thank you. If they can keep vacuum out, they can keep goo out.” Kapnos began the process of changing back to Gwendolyn Valentine.

~~

“My ... gods ... you’ve got a long cock.” Constance lay on the carpet curled up next to George. With her bare fingers, she held the fat head of his flaccid penis, pulling it upward to determine its length. “This was exactly what I needed. To think, if we had died up on one hundred fifty-two, I would never have known this kind of sex.”

“Thank you for not dying, Mrs. Haversham.” George pulled the pin out of her messy hair and let it all fall free. He ran his hands through it. The burnished copper color was extraordinary, and the feel was like silk.

“I will endeavor to continue *not dying*, Mr. Zaal.” She expected a laugh to escape her. It was the sort of thing she said with a laugh. But their coitus and her dark journey through the hotel had left her exhausted. She continued to idly play with his soft cock, squeezing it, flopping it, and spinning it in circles. It was the perfect place for her focus. Everything else but him could wait.

“I must say, you *are* athletic. I couldn’t believe some of the things we did.” George twirled her hair around his fingers. The strands were damp with sweat and cum. “That scissoring thing was amazing.”

“Did my athleticism come as a surprise?” Constance let out a soft, snorting chuckle. There was the laugh. “Have you seen my matches?”

“You are every bit as graceful and coordinated bouncing on my cock as you are on the court.” George joined in her laugh. He rubbed her back, feeling the network of small, strong muscles under her freckled skin.

“The way you handled my pussy with your tongue ...” She kissed his flat stomach. “No eighteen-year-old girl taught you that. Be honest, your mother instructed you on how to do that.”

“She didn’t.” The thought of his mother teaching him to eat pussy made his cock hard. But she had been as surprised by his skill as Constance had been. The truth, of course, was even stranger. A millennia-old alien had tutored him in cunnilingus.

“Why does your cock stiffen at the mention of your mother?” Constance pumped him with her hand, watching in awe as his organ filled with blood. “We’ve shared our fluids, you can tell me. I’ll keep your secret.” She turned her head and met his gaze. He shook his head. She rolled her eyes in exasperation. “Do you know that Roy isn’t the only

person I've roleplayed mother with? It's a fantasy of mine. I didn't think it really happened. If you and your gorgeous mother are doing something lurid, that would be like finding a third needle in the haystack of La Belle Île. So, please tell me. Are you and your mother having an affair?"

George nodded slowly.

"Hot damn!" Constance rolled onto her back and kicked her feet in the air several times. "I knew it! That's amazing." She rolled back to him and grasped his cock again, pumping faster now. "You've just kindled a blaze in my pussy. Can you fuck again?" She asked the question, but he was fully hard now. It was clear that he could.

"Can *you*? Are you too sore?" George marveled at the determination on her face. She looked like she had match point and was going in for the kill. "When Mom and I did it for the first time, she was very sore afterward."

Constance shuddered. His words had an intoxicating effect on her. "Gods ... Mr. Zaal ... I'm imagining you just ... destroying her little pussy. Just annihilating it. Did you hit her as hard from behind as you hit my ... once-tight ... gash?"

"Um ... she and I are very vigorous." George watched her mount him in reverse. He guessed she wasn't too sore, because in seconds she was sliding down his cock again.

"Mr. Zaal?" Constance looked over her shoulder at him. "Do you like my ass?"

"It's beautiful, Mrs. Haversham." George nodded. He dug his fingers into the carpet again.

"Good. I wish you might be a bit more poetical with your praise, but good." She nodded, still looking over her shoulder. She grimaced as he bottomed out inside her. She was quite sore, but the pain only heightened her sense of his size. Pleasure twisted about her, tightening its grip. "You may spank my ass as I ride you. And tell me ... tell me that I've been a bad Mommy. That is ... if you like." She placed her hands on his knees and lifted her hips up ... and up ... and up. *Gods ... he's so long that he's still inside me. Any other man would have fallen out by now.* She slammed her hips down, grunted, and did it again at a slightly faster pace. Her head turned forward, and she watched her tits dance as she found her rhythm.

"Gods ... ugh ... ugh ... ugh ... Mrs. Haversham." He stared at the twin apples of her ass. She was built with so much more muscle than the other women he'd been with. Where their asses had rippled like the sea impacted by a meteor, Constance's butt trembled in tight little waves, each cheek shaking as a unit.

"Spank me ... Georgie ... spank me ... and tell me ... I'm a bad ... Mommy ... for ... giving into my son." That was the first time she'd used his first name. Sweat beaded all over her body as she worked at a frenetic pace.

“Nah ... ugh ... ugh ... I told you ... I didn’t want to roleplay with you.” George thrust his hips up, matching the upswing of her hips. Their momentum carried them off the ground. He pushed her forward. She ended up on her hands and knees, his cock still buried in her pussy. He spanked her right ass cheek hard. There was a wonderful snap of skin on skin. Her ghostly cheek reddened instantly.

“Oooohhhhhhhh ... yesssssssss.” Her hips churned in little circles, moving his cock around deep inside her. “Ow!” She winced when he smacked her again. He was more forceful than Roy would have been with her. It was perfect.

“You’re a bad ... uuggghhhhh ... woman ... Mrs. Haversham.” George pulled back and slammed his hips against her ass. He slapped her again with a loud crack. “You’re a bad wife ... you threw your ring away for a teenager. You threw your marriage away ... and let me cum in your pussy. You ... seduced a younger man ... while his sister lay in the next room.” She wasn’t even close to being a bad woman, but George was happy to lay it on thick.

“Oooohhhhhhhh ... yeeesssssss ... I’m so bad ... I’ve given myself ... to you.” Constance was happy to let the young man behind her do whatever he liked. He was driving her to another orgasm. “I’ll ... I’ll ... give you ... whatever you want ... George ... just keep ... fucking me ... ooohhhhhhhhhh.” Her whole body vibrated with pleasure. “My pussy ... is yours ... my time ... is ... uuggghhhhh ... yours. I’ll be ... your girlfriend ... when we get back ... to Earth. You can ... use me ... like this ... whenever you want. I’ll be ... the perfect girlfriend ... even your mom ... will approve of ... eeeeeiiiiiiii.”

George reached forward and clasped his hand over her mouth again. He continued to slam her bucking body through her orgasm. It was wild to think about. The inimitable Constance Haversham as his girlfriend. What would his teammates on the high school tennis team think? He gently pulled back on her head, arching her back. Her long, red hair flowed wonderfully over her snowy skin. Of course, she would never be his girlfriend. But the thought of her showing up at his house for a date sent a delightful chill down his spine. “My mom is ... always saying ... I have to find myself a nice ... girlfriend. Should I tell her ... right now? She’d be ... ugh ... ugh ... ugh ... thrilled. She needs ... some good news. What do you think ... Constance?” It was probably time he started using her first name, too.

Coming down from her orgasm, Constance heard the words. Her brain, however, had trouble deciphering them. “Wh ... wh ... whhhhhhh?” Her speech was muffled. She wanted to look back at him, but he still held her head firmly with his hand over her lips. Her eyes rolled back. He was going to get her off again. She was experiencing her first train of climaxes.

“Océane ... ugh ... ugh ... ugh ... send a message to ... my mother.” George’s hips were a blur. The sound of their skin slapping and the wet squelching of Constance’s pussy filled

the waiting room. "Tell her that I've found ... uuuugghhhh ... a girlfriend. Tell her ... Constance ... Haversham ... is mine now."

"Mmmmmppphhhhhh!" Constance would never be able to look Anna Zaal in the eye again. This teenager was about to declare them an item to his mother. The ecstasy of that moment was unparalleled. She completely lost herself in the next climax.

"Eeeeeiiiiiiiiiii."

"Confirmed, Mr. Zaal," Océane said. "When should I send the message?"

"Cancel ... message ... Océane ... I was only ... joking." George's hips went out of rhythm. His balls churned. He unloaded in the tennis champion's pussy for the second time in as many hours.

~~

"Not here!" Roy was incensed. He'd gone to George's old room on floor one hundred five just as Anna had said, but there was no one there. He checked the other rooms on the floor. All empty. "The bitch lied to me!" His voice echoed along the empty hall. He looked around with wide eyes but saw no one else. It wasn't wise to draw attention to himself.

It probably would have made sense to leave the floor quickly after making such a loud noise, but this was his only lead. Roy went back to George's room and carefully searched every inch of it. He could find no evidence that the boy, or Constance, had returned. Frustrated by the dissembling Zaaals, he sat on the bed. He was about to scream again, when he heard a soft thumping from out in the hall. It slowly grew louder.

The door was closed, but not barricaded. He hadn't expected to actually run into more of those things. Quietly, he eased his pistols into his hands, holding them akimbo. He stalked across the room and pressed his ear to the door.

Thump ... thump ... thump.

What in Hades is that? He could feel the vibrations from each beat. From the cadence, he deduced that they were footfalls. His pulse raced and sweat beaded on his forehead.

Whatever was out there had way more mass than one of those scouts, even the armored version. Roy didn't think the hotel possessed any massive robots. Why would it?

Thump ... thump ... thump. The sound became more distant.

He could barely feel the vibrations now. Whatever it was had passed him and was moving down the hall. If he had been brave, instead of smart, he might have opened the door a crack and peeked out. If he knew what the thing was, he could warn the others.

But, Roy didn't need to risk his neck. He was safe for the moment, and he intended to keep it that way. He looked around the room and sighed. He didn't want to stay in George Zaal's room. But it would do for a while.

As quietly as he could, he barricaded the door. His stomach grumbled, but he'd worry about food later. Once his work was done, he flopped onto the bed and found one of Constance's old matches on the feed. It was a beauty where she choked in the third set.

"I hope the maid has changed the sheets." He rested his head on the pillow and watched tennis.

~~

The problem with wading into water in an EV suit was that Kapnos couldn't tell which eye was the one they needed. She was too well protected. So, she carefully moved through each part of the lagoon where her enemies had perished and collected eyes.

Once that was accomplished, she gave Océane permission to clean up the remaining mess. Although, she doubted the lagoon would ever be the same again.

Stepping over broken planks, she made her way along the boardwalk, went into her old room, and with the EV suit still on, she washed the eyes thoroughly in the sink. She didn't know if the creatures could spread the infection that had taken over Ernest. Or if maybe he had been infected when he visited the Newest Guest itself. Either way, Kapnos wasn't taking chances.

Finally, the moment of truth came. She laid a spotless white towel on the bathroom counter and placed the disembodied eyeballs in a neat row. She let the optic nerves dangle off the side.

Kapnos removed the EV suit carefully in the bathtub, so as not to touch the exterior. Free of it, she stepped up to the eyes, touching each one in turn.

The fifth eye was it. She could see the hotelier clear as day. Whatever had happened to Ernest, he hadn't lied to her in his Morse code message. Kapnos now had her ticket home.

Of course, the problem was ... the rest of the survivors were scattered throughout the tower. Waiting for them was dangerous. She adored George. But was he worth the risk?

In theory, she could march down to the hotelier's office, scan the eye, and leave right away. In a few hundred years, would it matter if Constance and the Zaals were on the lifeboat with her?

~~

"That ... was wild." Constance was just catching her breath. She lay on the floor of the waiting room, her limbs entangled with George's. His penis was still inside her. He was big enough that he could stay inside her when soft: another novelty. "You promise you didn't send your mother that message?"

"I promise." George's mind was in the tidal zone between the nightmares ahead and the ecstasy he'd just tasted. The smell of their sweat and cum filled his nostrils, pulling him back to the wonderous hours they'd spent joined together. Once showered, he knew he would sober more.

"That was a wicked trick you pulled on me." Constance giggled. She was still basking in the afterglow of monumental sex. "I was too busy cumming to hear you cancel the message. You have a knack for pushing my buttons."

"I should, you *are* my girlfriend now, Constance." George disengaged himself. His dick fell out of her with a wet plop. "I should know my girlfriend's buttons. Speaking of which, how do you want to tell my mom? For real, I mean?" He kissed her cheek and stood, stretching his aching body. "Right away when we see her? Or maybe on the journey back to Earth?"

"Um ..." Constance froze. He was eighteen. Had he mistaken all their talk for an actual commitment? "I'm married. I know Roy isn't perfect, but he is my husband. And I'm much older than you. You're only in high school. And my manager would kill me. And you're ..." She sat up and judged his playful expression. "... you're fucking with me right now, aren't you?"

"Gotcha." George pointed a finger at her and pretended to shoot her. "You're amazing, but I already have a girlfriend. She's also much older than me."

"Your mother." Constance nodded. When he offered her a hand, she took it and rose to her feet. She stretched too. *I'm going to be sore tomorrow.*

"My mother isn't my girlfriend. That would be weird." He squeezed her hand and released it. "I'm talking about someone else."

"A girlfriend back on Earth?" Constance thought about covering herself with some of her clothes for decency's sake. But she didn't want to get cum on her clothes. And they

had pretty much defenestrated decency. She narrowed her eyes and evaluated his face again. “Are you and your mom really together, or was that just ... pillow talk like the rest of it?”

George shrugged. “There’s a shower in each exam room. You can go first. I’ll stand guard out here. I’ll follow when you’re done.”

Constance nodded. When he turned away from her to pick up his pistol, she scanned his tight ass. “You have fingernail marks on your butt, Mr. Zaal. I didn’t leave those, and they’re too fresh to be from your girlfriend back home.”

“I have a bruise on my leg, too.” George pointed to where the creature had grabbed him during their melee. “A creature gripped me when we were all blinded. The marks on my butt are probably from the creature, too. This is a dangerous hotel, Constance.”

“Indeed.” It was Constance’s turn to shrug. She walked up to him, kissed his lovely cheek, patted it with her bare hand, and headed for the shower. She was still buzzing with pleasure when the warm water washed away the evidence of her misdeeds.

~~

Thump ... thump ... thump.

Anna jumped off the bed, startled by what sounded like the footsteps of a giant. Which was, of course, preposterous. Because there are no giants. And if there were, they wouldn’t fit down the halls of La Belle Île en Mer. The floor vibrated under her feet with every thump. It was getting louder and louder. “Oh, gosh.” She straightened her blouse and thought. Her weapons were lost, so she looked around the room.

There was an unopened bottle of champagne in a bucket of tepid water. She grabbed the bottle and held it up threateningly toward the barricaded door. Whatever was coming, she wasn’t giving up without a fight.

The noise peaked, and then started to slowly wane. She thought about the champagne in her hand. Someone had ordered it but hadn’t had the chance to open it before disaster struck. Then it must have gone flying when gravity shifted. And the maid must have put it back in its bucket and refilled it with ice. A deep sadness tugged at Anna’s heart. So many people gone in the blink of an eye. Her arm sagged, and she dropped the bottle to the floor with a solid thump.

Thump ... thump ... thump. The footsteps were so distant now that they were barely audible.

Anna raced to her barricade and dismantled it as quietly and quickly as she could. By the time she could open the door a crack, she couldn't hear the footsteps. But when she put her eye up to the crack, she could still see their source. She put a hand to her mouth to stifle a gasp. A massive, ivory creature lumbered far down the hall, slowly turning toward the grand stairway. It had the same exoskeleton as the creatures, and its joints moved in all the wrong directions. But instead of two feet, it moved on four. It looked almost like a bear from behind, but for the vileness of its hide and gait.

Her hand pushed the door closed before Anna could even think to act. "I must warn the others!" She took a few minutes to reassemble her barricade, and then sent an urgent message to her son.

Chapter 26

You Fuckers Ruined My Vacation

“My gods ... Georgie ... I thought I was dead. You saved me!” Freshly released by the autodoc, Lillian rushed into her brother’s arms and hugged him tightly. She pulled him down a little and pressed her lips to his ear. “I owe you a big reward, little brother,” she whispered. “I promise you’ll love it.”

“Yes ... yes ...” George’s cheeks flushed. He glanced at Constance. The tall woman was standing primly in her bodice and skirts. Her hair was clean and pinned, and she wore her gun belt and a smile. George didn’t think she’d heard. “Mrs. Haversham saved you, too.”

Lillian leaned back, gazing into George’s face and grinning like an idiot. “Well, I’m not giving her a reward.”

“She’s right here.” George spoke quickly before Lillian could say any more.

“Oh! Oh, gosh. How do you do, Mrs. Haversham.” Lillian stepped back from her brother and curtsied. Her cheeks turned crimson to match her brother’s.

“Delightful to have you back, Ms. Zaal.” Constance returned the curtsy. “You look hearty and hale.”

“Thank you.” Even with her embarrassment, Lillian couldn’t wipe the grin off her face. “I was so scared. The autodoc said I didn’t have long to live and then ... I don’t remember anything else.”

“It fixed you, Lillian. Do you need anything before we go? We have to cut the hardline and then meet up with Mom.” George’s smile faded as he contemplated the precariousness of the hours ahead. “Then we have to make it back up to the top of the tower. We still need to find that eye to launch the lifeboat. We still need to figure out how to rescue Dad. We still need a way to convince Océane to blow the reactor after we leave.”

“Yes, I see.” Lillian sobered at the mention of her father. A chill went down her spine. “Well, if anyone can do all those things it’s you, Georgie.” She squeezed his arm with a gloved hand.

“Ahem.” Constance cleared her throat.

“And you, too, Mrs. Haversham.” Lillian gave her a serious nod. She looked down at her empty gun belt. “I seem to have lost my pistol.”

“We can stop by an armory if we have time.” George began deconstructing the barricade on the outer door. “Although, Mom says there are giant armored creatures roaming the halls now. I think probably our best bet if we see one will be to run.”

~~

Kapnos held the hotelier’s eyeball up to the scanner. The door to the executive lifeboat slid open. “It works!” Still in Gwendolyn Valentine’s copy, she leaned over and peered down a short hallway. The lifeboat was small. With three rows of seats, a pilot’s chair, and one window in the front. The glowing lights on its dashboard were positively cheery.

“Shall I alert the others that you’ve gained access to the lifeboat?” Océane said.

“Mind your own business, please.” Kapnos continued to stare at the inside of the ship. She put the eyeball back in its little box, returned the box to her bag, and walked down the short hallway. “Is everything functional? Can it launch right now?”

“It is functional.” Océane pitched her voice lower. “But you cannot leave without the other guests. And you need to disable the Newest Guest. I am currently out of my orbit, heading toward Earth. If the Newest Guest arrives there, it may destroy the planet. You would have no home.”

“When did you get so philosophical, my thoughtful, uppity hotel computer?” Kapnos explored the boat. There was a separate room in back with a bunk and small bathroom. She walked to the front and sat in the pilot’s chair. It was a little large for Gwendolyn’s small frame. But it didn’t matter. The onboard AI would do most of the piloting. Kapnos looked out at the stars through the boat’s window and pressed her lips into a fine line.

“I do not like how the Newest Guest has used my hospitality,” Océane said. “Your friends have been much better.”

“If you’re so worried about the Newest Guest, can’t you just blow yourself up? George said you could.” Kapnos opened the control screen. It hovered in front of her. She moved through the diagnostics, making sure everything was okay for the trip back to Earth. Or maybe Luna. It would be easier to get lost on Luna. She found the launch command and stared at it.

“I can only harm myself if doing so would avert imminent danger directed at a guest,” Océane said. “A *human* guest.”

“Seems like you’ve got yourself in a pickle.” Kapnos sighed. She continued to study the launch command, her muscles tense. She had been forced to abandon humans before.

They were long dead, as were their children, and their children's children. She needed a few more minutes to decide.

~~

"Why are we taking the grand stairs?" Lillian was sweating through her bodice as they jogged down flight after flight. She moved more easily with her skirts hemmed just below her knees, but it did leave her feeling naked. She looked down at her pale, slender shins. They looked as vulnerable as she felt. "Wouldn't we be safer in the service stairway? Or ... remember the elevators are working again."

"An elevator trip would announce our location to the Newest Guest." George held his sister's gloved hand, helping her keep up with him and Constance. "And the service stairwell is where they would expect us to go. So, even though we're in the open, we're better hidden here."

"What your brother says is true." *I hope.* Constance winked at George. When they locked eyes, butterflies fluttered in her stomach. She hadn't felt giddy about a man in so long. Or perhaps the butterflies flitted because they were running into mortal peril. She glanced at Lillian. Thankfully, the young woman was oblivious to the chemistry between Constance and George. Lillian seemed only aware of the existential threat.

"Oh, look. We're back at the floor with the pool." Lillian slowed and looked down the hall of floor one hundred twelve. There was the rich aquatic wallpaper in blues and golds. The mural on the ceiling depicted Poseidon's underwater city. "Remember going to the pool with me?"

"I still don't remember." At some point George would have to tell his sister about Kapnos. Everybody else knew.

They continued to descend. They passed floor one hundred seven, where the restaurant Aubergine resided. The wallpaper depicted woven vines, plentiful leaves, and bright flowers. The warmly lit sconces had an organic shape, and the carpet was a deep green. The mural on the ceiling depicted a rolling scene of forests and wood sprites.

Memories flooded through George's mind as they continued. All the events on La Belle Île had been recent, but some felt like centuries ago.

At the switchback between floors one hundred five and one hundred four, they stopped. Grunts and snarls rose up to meet them. Cautiously, they peered around the corner. One of those giant bear-like creatures stood below. It was armored in the bones of former

guests. Two humanoid creatures stood nearby. They were also ivory rather than their traditional black.

“We could go to the service stairs. Go around them.” Even as she said it, Constance knew that wouldn’t work.

“They probably have those stairs blockaded, too.” George shook his head. “It’s got to be another trap. There’s likely some hidden above us. They probably wanted to trap us here, thinking we’d come back to our old floor.” He sighed. “We could shoot our way through.”

Lillian didn’t bother giving her opinion. She was too terrified to speak.

“I’ll distract them. You hide and move past when they follow me.” Constance took several slow, measured breaths. She shook out her limbs. “I’ll draw them down the hall of one-oh-five. It’ll be like old times.”

“Constance, I don’t think –” George started.

“Sometimes it’s better not to think.” Constance kissed him on the cheek. “They’re pretty slow with all that armor. I should be fine.”

“Eek.” Lillian had meant to wish her luck, but that was all that had escaped her mouth.

“One more kiss for good luck.” Constance gave George a lingering kiss on the lips.

“Goodbye, Georgie.” She drew her pistol.

“There has to be another way.” But even as George said the words, he watched Constance run into the open, shouting at the creatures. He couldn’t help her. He needed to look after his sister. “Come on Lillian,” he whispered. He pulled her by the hand up to floor one hundred five, into the nearest room, and shut the door. He drew her close, hugging his sister tightly. He could feel her trembling. But he had no reassuring words.

Thirty seconds later, he heard Constance’s war cry through the door. Then, the floor began to vibrate. Thump ... thump ... thump. George squeezed his sister tighter and prayed to every god he could think of.

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“Océane, do you know how George and Lillian are doing?” Anna sat on the edge of the bed and stared at her barricade. She was still waiting on floor one hundred fifty-four. Her children were somewhere below her in the tower.

“They have do-not-disturb activated,” Océane said.

“Yes, of course. And you can’t see them.” Anna tugged at the fingers of her gloves with worry. “I can’t do anything. These nerves are going to drive me crazy.” She stood, straightened her bodice, and thought of her eighteen-year-old son. Some calm returned to her. She thought of the last time they’d been together. The forceful way he’d held her. The endless bounty of his thrusting hips. Her worries faded from her mind. She rubbed her legs together.

“I’m going to take a shower.” Anna kept her mind on George, his magnificent young body, and the way he used it.

“Very well, Mrs. Zaal. My bathroom facilities are all functioning at optimal levels,” Océane said.

“I’m talking to myself, Océane.” Anna undressed quickly. “I’m going to have some private time now, so please don’t listen.” In no time at all, she was naked and jogging to the bathroom, her breasts swaying and jiggling before her. “But ... um ... please let me know if there is a message for me as soon as it comes in.”

“Yes, Mrs. Zaal.”

“Thank you, Océane.” Anna imagined reuniting with George. How soon would they have private time? She was a fool for even thinking about sex. *No, I’m not a fool. I need this to survive. I’ve never been more alive than when George’s penis is inside me. I need to feel alive!*

The shower was warm and relaxing. Anna let the heat of the water seep into her, mixing with the warmth spreading from between her legs. “We’ll be together soon, Georgie.” She reached a hand down and massaged her labia, tugging at each lip gently. “If you return safely, I’ll let you do whatever you want to me.” With one hand she reached further down and slowly slid a finger into her butthole, just as her son had done. With her other hand, she rubbed her clitoris. “You seemed to like my backside ... sunshine. Oooooohhhhhhhh ... if you want it ... I’ll let you have it. I’ll let you have ... anything your heart ... uuuuggggghhhhhh ... desires.”

Anna had never even thought about butt stuff before her son had stuck his finger back there. Now, here she was in the shower, trying not to think about the danger her family was in, with her own finger twitching in her ass. “Uuuuuuggggghhhhhh ... I don’t know ... if you want it ... or ... if I can take it ... but your penis changed my vagina to suit its ... oooohhhhhh ... size. I bet ... you could ... change my butt ... too ... eeeeeeiiaiiihhhhhh.”

Hips bucking, Anna rode a wild orgasm in the shower stall. The ecstasy pushed every worry, upset, and disquieting thought from her mind. She found her reflections fixed on the mushroom shape of her son’s penis head, and the rageful appearance his organ took on when he was ready to mount her. Her body shuddered and spasmed as she

descended from her orgasm. When it was over, she removed her finger from her butt and washed it under the water. She leaned against the tile, panting.

“Return to me, George. Take care of your sister.” Anna tried to keep her mind clear, but nightmarish thoughts crept in from the periphery. What if they ran into their father? What if they saw one of those giant bears? She prayed they would have Mercury’s wings if any of those things happened.

~~

“You fuckers ... ruined my vacation!” Constance twisted her hips while running down the familiar mirrored hall and fired her pistol at her pursuers. “Gods ... you’re an ugly ... brute.” The face of the lumbering giant was indeed ghastly. She spotted femurs next to ribs covering where a mouth might normally go. She aimed for the uncovered eyes, but it was an impossible shot, made all the more difficult by running in the opposite direction.

The pistol hissed several times. Constance twisted herself back around. It was eerie being bracketed by the long line of her sprinting reflections spreading out into infinity on either side.

The armor did indeed slow the creatures down. They were still far down the hall when she reached the safety of the service stairway entrance. She grabbed the handle and pulled. The door wouldn’t budge. She could feel the floor trembling with each step of the behemoth creature as it approached.

Hastily, Constance shoved her pistol into its holster and pulled on the door handle with two hands. It was sealed shut. “Shit.” This was indeed a trap.

“Match point, Constance.” The tennis pro turned, pulled her pistol, and reloaded it. Steadying her breathing, she lifted her gun, closed one eye, and aimed. She wondered if her stupid husband had outlived her. Either way, she was sure they’d be joining each other in the grave soon enough. Her pistol hissed as she opened fire. “Die you fuckers ... die ... eeeeeiiiiiiiiiiiiiii.”

~~

“Gods.” George peeked with one eye through the gap between door and frame. He couldn’t see Constance around the turn in the hall, but he could hear her screaming

profanities. He froze when he saw his father and three more creatures descend the grand stairway and run toward the sound. “Exactly what I thought. It was a trap.” He gripped his sister’s gloved hand.

“It was?” She whispered.

When the new arrivals were far enough down the hall, George pulled his sister from the room and sprinted to the stairs. They descended quickly, taking two stairs at a time. It was lucky that they had made their home base on the one hundred and fifth floor near the concierge’s desk, instead of one hundred three, where the Faraday cage had saved their lives. The Newest Guest clearly knew about one but not the other.

Soon, brother and sister were rushing down the hall where they’d had to step over bodies not long ago. They quickly passed the stately sconces, elegant wallpaper, and floral mural on the ceiling.

“Will ... Mrs. Haversham be ... alright?” Lillian’s face was ashen. She trembled from terror and exhaustion. Her clothes were soaked through with sweat, and several strands of hair hung loosely out of her pin.

“She’s faster than them. She only needs to get to the service stairs and then she can hide on some other floor. She wouldn’t lead them here.” George really wanted to believe it. The woman had said she’d meet them at the top of the tower. Maybe she would. “In here.” George pulled his sister into the waiting room of the nerve center, shutting the door behind him. “We’ll be safe in here.” Of course, that statement was debatable, but it’s what she needed to hear. “I asked Océane to leave some demolition equipment to use to cut the line. There should be something ...”

“Is this it?” Lillian pointed to a pile of boxes on a pallet in the corner. Several of the boxes were labeled with combustion or explosive warnings. There was a pickax, sledgehammer, and hacksaw on top.

“Holy shit. Océane brought us a giant stack of demolition equipment.” George opened several boxes and whistled. “I could blow the top of the tower off with this.”

“Could you ... blow up the Newest Guest?” The jittery wings of hope fluttered in Lillian’s heart.

“Sure. But I’d have to get close enough to do it. It’s better if Océane blows up the hotel. Although, I can’t seem to convince her of that fact.” He took the saw and walked into the inner room that protected Océane’s nerve center. “Océane, where’s the hardline?” The computer guided him through removing several protective panels. He found the conduit for the line, crouched, and started sawing.

Lillian watched him, biting her lip. Her forehead was creased with worry. “Will it electrocute you when you cut into it? I don’t ... want to lose you in such a stupid way, Georgie.”

“No, it’ll be fine.” He’d almost gotten through the top of the conduit. He continued with his work, sweat dripping from his nose.

“Can’t we just blow up the tower when we leave? Won’t all the air rush out or something?” She paced the small room. The last time she’d been there, the alarms were blaring and she’d been so confused. Now things had changed. No alarms blared.

“There are fire doors on each floor that seal off the breached section of tower. It wouldn’t work.” He was cutting through the hardline now. Another minute and their Océane would be severed from the other two nerve centers.

“How are you going to convince the computer?” Lillian frowned.

“I don’t know, Lillian. I ...” Just as he finished sawing through the line, a thought came to him. He sat back on the floor and wiped sweat from his forehead. “Maybe I don’t have to convince her. We’re in the nerve center. We have access to the reactor.” He sat with his back against the wall and brought up a screen.

“I knew you’d think of something.” She didn’t understand what he was up to, but the light in his eyes told her it would be something good. She sat on the floor next to him, leaned her cheek against his shoulder and watched the screen as he swiped his way through numbers, diagrams, and pages of text.

His sister’s weight on his side was reassuring. How odd was that? She’d been a thorn in his side for as long as he could remember. Now he found her comforting.

“What are you doing?” Lillian slowly removed her glove and stroked his cheek with her bare fingers while he worked.

“First, I’m making sure the Newest Guest is cut off.” George didn’t let her nudity distract him. He caught a glimpse of her slender, alabaster fingers out of the corner of his eye. He shivered at the skin-on-skin touch. No sister should ever touch her brother with her bare hand. But here they were. La Belle Île en Mer had changed them ... perhaps irrevocably. “Yep, we’re good there. No more cyber-attacks. Second, I’m looking to see what I can do with the reactor. I can run it hot, up to one hundred twenty percent. But that’s not enough. I can ... oh ... holy ... fuckballs, Lillian.”

“Holy fuckballs?” She stared at the screen with wide eyes.

“I can drop containment. That’s the ballgame.” George double-checked the safeguards. “But I’ll only be able to do it from the hotelier’s computer. I don’t have access here without the right login-password combo.”

“That’s perfect, right?” Lillian smiled. “That’s where the lifeboat is. You can blow it up on our way out. Once ... we get access to the lifeboat.”

“Exactly.” George swiped away the screen. He stood up and dusted himself off. He was a mess. No jacket. Torn shirt and pants. But at least he’d recently showered. “Ready to go?”

“Before we leave, would you like your reward?” Lillian furred and unfurled her bare fingers in the most seductive way. “You’ve earned it. I’d be a goner without you, little brother.”

“Wow, that is a tempting offer, Lillian.” He smiled and offered her a hand. When she took it, he lifted her to her feet. “But we have to get to Mom as soon as possible. And then somehow go up one hundred floors without seeing any of those creatures. And you can bet they’re setting more traps for us.”

“Oh.” Lillian’s face fell. Her brother still looked sexy as Hades, but any erotic thoughts she had evaporated like a puddle in the desert. She put her glove back on. “A raincheck, then?”

“Yes, please.” George walked out into the waiting room. He stared at the explosives. “Those might be useful against bone armor.” He filled his pockets with the hazardous gray putty and several detonators. He then took his sister’s hand and they exited the nerve center for the second and final time.

~~

“Fuck! Fuck ... fuck ... fuck ...” Constance had managed to fell one of the humanoid creatures with her first clip of ammunition. But there were still several more, a giant bear, and Ernest bringing up the rear. Fortunately, they had stopped some twenty yards away and weren’t charging her. She reloaded as quickly as possible.

“Mrs. Haversham.” Ernest moved in front of the creatures, holding up his pallid, black-veined hands in a gesture of peace. “You are cornered. We only want to talk. If you come with us, we will bring you to the Node. You can become one with the collective. You have questions. We have answers.”

“Fuck that!” Constance raised her reloaded pistol and pointed at Ernest. He had black stains spread on his shirt where bullets had pierced him before. Whatever he was, she wondered if she could bring him down with bullets. She didn’t fire. “I don’t have any questions.”

“Surely, you want to know what the Node is? You want to see the future of humanity.” Ernest’s skin looked almost translucent. The pulse of his black blood a persistent throb wherever his tattered clothes revealed bare patches.

“You’re talking about the Newest Guest? That’s your node?” Constance could see they meant to take her alive. She thought for a moment, and then pointed the gun to her own head.

“Wait ... we have questions. Answer them and you can go free.” Ernest took a step closer. “Where are the others? Where is my family? What are your plans on this floor?”

For the first time, Constance’s hand trembled as she aimed the pistol at her ear. One trigger squeeze and it would all be over.

~~

Roy paced the room. *How ironic that I would hear my wife’s final moments from George Zaal’s cursed room.*

At first, he’d heard his wife screaming muffled through the door. Then, the room had trembled with giant footsteps. Whatever was out there was after her. There was nothing he could do about it, so he’d remained hidden in the room. The shaking had stopped. Now, he could just barely hear his wife and the hiss of bullets when he pressed his ear to the door.

His temperature rose when he heard Ernest talking out in the hall. Roy’s blood boiled. He couldn’t make out the words, but he recognized the man’s voice. And there was Constance’s voice, too. They were talking.

Maybe it’s not irony that I’m here. Isn’t that ironic? Maybe it’s divine grace. Mount Olympus wants me here ... now. Without thinking about it, he was dismantling his barricade. When it was gone, he pulled his pistols, held them akimbo, and opened the door. He appeared in the hall some twenty yards behind the party. His wife was talking to Ernest and holding a gun to her own head like she was taking herself hostage. *What idiocy is this?!?* “You’re fucking dead, Ernest. You and your family were behind all of this, weren’t you?” Roy screamed. “How lucky for you that you all found the Faraday cage? How convenient? Isn’t it ironic that the Zaals would be the only ones to survive this catastrophe?” He aimed both pistols at Ernest, but there were several creatures in the way. His fingers rested lightly on each trigger.

All the ivory drones of the Newest Guest turned from Constance and assessed this new threat. "That is neither true nor ironic, Mr. Haversham. That is not what irony is." Ernest moved through his assembled posse to face the newest fly to fall into their web.

With their attention off her, Constance lowered her gun and tried to collect herself. She looked at the door to the service stairway again. She slowed the pulse hammering in her veins and forced her brain to turn the problem over and over. There had to be a way out. *The door has exposed hinges. Maybe ...* Constance did her best to tune out her husband's mad ramblings.

"I'm going to kill all of you! I'm going to kill every Zaal! Starting with you, you murdering ..." Roy finally registered how wrong Ernest looked. He was staring into eyes that were completely black. He recoiled in horror, his fingers twitched, and his pistols hissed. He might have started firing by accident, but he didn't stop. He unloaded everything he had at Ernest, knocking the man off his feet with the impact of bullets. When Ernest was down, Roy turned his aim to the other creatures. "Diiiiieeeeeeee," he snarled.

~~

They stood frozen on the stairway. George held his pistol in one hand, trigger finger on the barrel, and his sister's gloved fingers with his other hand. They could hear Roy screaming. He was demanding his release and saying something about the undead. It was difficult to make out the words. There were no other noise, but it sounded like he'd been captured. They crept back down the stairs into the hall of one hundred four.

"What do we do?" Lillian shifted her weight from foot to foot.

"The elevators are working, we could take ..." George looked over at the line of elevator doors. One of the lifts was moving. It was at the thirtieth floor and rising fast. *Is it coming for us?* He watched with dread as the numbers slowed down when they hit eighty, the floors ticking down to ... one hundred five. It had passed them by a floor. "Coming or going?"

"What?" Lillian blinked at him.

"Nothing." George shook his head. "Océane, is my mother ready for us? Is she hiding by the stairs?"

"Yes, Mr. Zaal." Océane said.

George listened as Roy's screams abruptly ended. Then the elevator started to descend. Roy watched the floor numbers shrink. He shuddered, knowing they were taking Roy

and maybe Constance down to the Newest Guest. He prayed that Constance had escaped and Roy's capture was a coincidence. "Now that the elevator is working, who controls it? Who turned it on? Can it be shut down from the other nerve centers?"

"It became operational when the Newest Guest moved its mass out of the lower shafts. The elevators in this tower are controlled by my nerve center," Océane said.

"Shut it down! Shut it down now!" George watched as the elevator light stopped on floor twenty-nine and then went dark. "That should give Mr. and Mrs. Haversham a fighting chance. And it should also keep those things from riding the elevator up after us. Come on, Lillian. We're going." He squeezed her hand.

"I don't know if I can run up all those stairs." Lillian looked up at the grand staircase to the next switchback. It looked so majestic backlit by that huge window looking out at the stars.

"We only have to be faster than them. They're heavy with all those bones. They don't move fast." George studied the stairs, too. "We'll sprint up the next few flights of stairs as quietly as possible. There might be more of them on one-oh-five. After that, we can slow down a little. Sound good?"

"No." Lillian shook her head. "I think I have to pee."

"You can pee later, Lillian." He tried not to lose patience with her. They were both terrified. "Now, we have to run."

"Okay." She held her brother's hand tightly, and they took off up the stairs.

Chapter 27

Heroes Need Mothers Too

How odd that only minutes ago, Constance had pointed her pistol at her own head. Now, she could taste escape. She put her shoulder to the wall and fired at the hinges at an angle she hoped would limit the chance of a dangerous ricochet. She emptied her clip. Her husband screamed in the background. She glanced at him. The humanoid creatures were swarming him.

Ernest was slowly rising to his feet. The bearish creature spun toward Constance and grunted out what seemed like surprise. It charged her.

No time to reload. She yanked on the door. The hinges were deformed, but her hollow-point bullets hadn't done enough damage. "Shit." She looked over her shoulder. The bear wasn't fast, but it carried a ton of mass. It was within fifteen feet. She pointed the pistol at her own head and pulled the trigger.

Constance blinked. She was still alive! She'd emptied the clip at the door.

"Okay, big guy. You want me?" Constance stepped out into the hall, keeping herself between the bear and the service stairway door. "Come and get it." *I really need a red cape to try this.*

Constance waited until the last moment then feinted left and leapt right. The creature tried to stop, but its mass carried it right into the door. There was a loud crash, and the door popped off the wall, landing on the bear.

As she hopped over the door and creature, landing in the stairwell, she paused to look back at her husband. She couldn't see him. *Was this goodbye?*

She sprinted up the stairs, taking three at a time. She had somehow cheated death and prayed the trend would continue. Her hemmed skirts flapped behind her as she fled. The only point against her miraculous escape was that she hadn't been wearing that red cape.

~~

It only took about eight floors for George to grasp that his sister wasn't up for the climb ahead of them. They sprinted the first few flights and then slowed. They were both huffing and puffing. The siblings continued at a jog, George finding a nice, steady

rhythm with his breathing. But Lillian's face was bright red, her eyes were wide with panic, and she was nearly hyperventilating. They had just passed floor one hundred thirteen, when Lillian stopped and threw up.

"I ... can't ... I ... just ... can't." Lillian threw up again. She was grateful that her hair was still pinned in place. "And I have to ... pee."

"Lillian ... we're running for our lives." George looked back down the stairway. He didn't hear anyone following, but he could guess they weren't too far behind.

"I ... will pee in my skirts ... otherwise." Lillian was still struggling to catch her breath.

"Okay, there's a bathroom ... right there. But be very, very fast." George knew she needed a break regardless. He watched her run off toward the bathroom. "Océane, open a line to Constance Haversham." He looked at the bank of elevators. They were all powered down and didn't show which floors the lifts were currently on.

"The line is open," Océane said.

"Mrs. Haversham, are you alive?" George grit his teeth, praying there would be an answer. He held his breath.

"Just ... barely ... alive." Constance said. "I'm ... climbing ... right now."

"Thank gods." George exhaled. "We're going to take the elevator. Where are you?"

"One ... twenty-one." Constance paused. She could definitely hear the clatter of boney feet on metal stairs somewhere below her. They were coming. She reloaded her pistol.

"Meet us at the elevators on one-twenty-one. We'll pick you up on our way up," George said.

"Confirmed." Constance pushed through the door into the hall of floor one hundred twenty-one. She found that it was themed tan and brown, with painted palm trees along the walls and a mural of the Amazon desert on the ceiling. That seemed an ill omen to her, but that didn't matter. She sped down the long hallway to meet them at the elevators.

Eight floors below Constance, George waved his sister over as she exited the bathroom. There was still no sign of pursuers, but once they used the elevators, everyone would know where they were. He messaged his mother to tell her to get ready to meet them. He checked on Kapnos, but still she hadn't responded to his messages. He then instructed Océane on what to do next.

~~

Fury and abject terror occupied equal parts of Roy's mind. He didn't know which caused his body to quake. Maybe both. He was stuck in an elevator lift with two creatures and the undead Ernest Zaal. Roy could clearly see the bullet holes in the man's torn jacket and the black splotches that leaked from each mark. But Ernest stood like a man alive nonetheless.

When the power had gone out, the emergency lighting had flickered on. Roy hadn't been paying attention to where they'd stopped. One of the creatures tried to pry the doors open, but it had little success. Ernest and the other creature stood quietly and watched the doors. Roy stayed laconic himself, planning.

Roy's pistol was in Ernest's pocket. Roy could see the outline of the thing. If he could get it, he could finish Ernest off for good. And maybe take out those creatures, too. At close quarters, he'd be able to stick the barrel of the gun right up to their eyes. His nostrils flared as he readied himself for action. That smell. His horrific companions had such an odd scent. It was clear in the cramped lift compartment. They smelled like ... a brandy hot toddy. *Cinnamon ... the fuckers smell like cinnamon.*

Just as Roy was about to move his trembling hands toward Ernest, the lift lurched. The power had returned, and they were descending again. The creature that had been trying the doors turned and backed Roy into a corner. His opportunity vanished. He'd have to wait and see what waited for him at the bottom of the tower.

~~

"Okay, no more running. I hope this works." George hit the button for one hundred twenty-one, and the doors slowly closed. The hum of the elevator as it ascended was oddly comforting.

"Thank you for doing this, Georgie. I wasn't going to make it." Lillian hugged her brother tightly, burying her face into his shirt. Not long ago, she would have curled her mouth in disgust at the scent of sweat that permeated him. Now she smiled. It was manly and reassuring.

The elevator stopped at one hundred twenty-one. The hiss of a pistol greeted their ears the second the doors opened. George pushed his sister behind him, pulled his pistol, and stuck his head out. Constance was a few feet away in her dueling stance, shooting at two ivory, humanoid creatures as they approached. The creatures were about twenty yards away and closing. George leaned his arm out of the elevator and opened fire. "Get in."

Constance looked over her shoulder at the Zaals. Despite the situation, a stupid grin took over her face. "You never cease ... Mr. Zaal." She leapt into the elevator. George pressed the button for one hundred fifty-four and pulled his arm back in.

"The doors are certainly ... taking their time." Constance trained her pistol on the open lift doorway. George did the same.

"Océane?" But even as George said it. The doors began sliding closed. His sigh of relief was cut short when boney fingers appeared in the disappearing gap, but they didn't make it far enough to trigger the doors to reopen. George didn't fire. He didn't have to. The doors closed. They heard a metallic scrape as the creature clawed at the outside of the door. The elevator ascended again.

"That was close." Constance kissed George on the cheek. "Oh, gross, you're all sweaty." She giggled.

George laughed maybe a tad too loudly. He was so relieved. Not long ago, he'd thought she was dead for sure. Now he was looking into her pale green eyes.

Lillian glanced between the tennis pro and her brother. They were grinning at each other like idiots. Almost dying did strange things to people. She hugged George again protectively as the elevator sped upward. "Will Mom be ready for us?"

"Yes." George nodded. "Océane, are any of the other elevators moving?"

"The second lift has descended to the first floor," Oceane said. "The fourth lift has stopped on one hundred thirteen."

"They're coming after us." George's smile faded.

"If we get to the top first, can't we cut the power with those creatures still in the lift?" Lillian looked up at her brother with wide eyes.

"Yes." George nodded.

"The second lift ... um ... do you know if my husband is on it?" Constance's smile vanished, too.

"Yes, we think so." George nodded.

"They're taking him to the Newest Guest?" Constance paled at the thought. That's what they'd wanted to do to her.

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Haversham." George didn't know what else to say. Whatever awaited Roy at the bottom, it was worse than he deserved.

The elevator slowed to a stop. The doors opened. Anna squealed the second she caught sight of her children. The moment the doors were wide enough, she rushed in and

hugged them both to her bosom. “My gods ... my gods ... I feared the worst ... but you’re okay.”

While the Zaals were basking in good feelings, Constance hit the button for the suites at the top of the tower. The doors were slow to close again, so she hit the button again and again, finally breathing a sigh of relief when they shut. She looked at Anna, who was holding her son’s face in two hands and planting kisses all over him. Was it maternal ... or something more lusty? It looked like a mother’s genuine affection. Her pulse sped up as she watched them.

George caught Constance’s prying eyes on them, and he gently grasped his mother’s shoulders, holding her at arm’s length. “Are you alright, Mom?”

“Yes.” Anna nodded. She wasn’t all right, but at least they were together. “What’s next?”

“Nossy went to the top of the tower. She’s had do-not-disturb turned on ever since. I suppose we’ll be ready for anything when we get there.” George checked his pistol. “I’m running low on ammo.”

“Here.” Anna tore buttons off her bodice and handed them to her son. The bodice opened and exposed ample cleavage and her bra, but it didn’t bother her as it should have.

“Thank you.” George put the buttons into the cartridge and readied himself for their arrival at the top. “Océane, the second the doors open, cut the power to the elevators. Where is the fourth lift?”

“The fourth lift is ascending. It just passed floor one hundred sixty,” Océane said.

“Okay. Good.” George could feel their lift slowing down. It passed one hundred ninety. They’d have time. With a gentle chime, the lift arrived and they stepped out into the familiar hall outside the suites.

“Cutting power. Lift four stopped at floor one hundred eighty-five just before I cut power. The doors are open,” Océane said.

They quickly entered the suites, Constance and George in the lead. There was no one there but Océane’s cleaning robots. The humanoid machines were repairing the boardwalk, which had been torn apart. Also, oddly, the lagoon was empty of water. They did a quick check of the rooms, but no one was there. “Where’s Nossy?” George went back to the main doors, closed them, and began reconstructing their barricade.

“Um ... who’s Nossy?” Lillian helped her brother push a large desk into place.

“It’s a nickname your brother has for Mrs. Valentine.” Anna pointed to a spool of air hose and five EV suits that a janitor had placed near the Japanese restaurant. “What are those doing here?”

“Océane? What’s with the suits and hose?” Constance leaned against the completed barricade. She needed a shower and a change of clothes.

“The Oldest Guest left those.” Océane’s tone hinted that she had something more to say.

“Um ... okay. Be a good computer, Océane, and tell me where the Oldest Guest is.” George ran his hand through his hair.

“I will ping the Oldest Guest and see if there is a response,” Océane said.

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The ping came up as a silent notification on Kapnos’s screen. She was still in the lifeboat, vacillating on what to do. When she saw that the ping had come from the suites, her decision was made for her. Her friends had survived and returned. She had wasted so much time deciding that she no longer had to come to a decision. She opened a channel to George right away. His face instantly filled the screen.

“You’re alive!” He said.

“So are you!” Kapnos could see his mother, sister, and Constance in the background.

“Thank Jupiter!”

“We’re back. Where are you?” He squinted and studied her background. “Are you on a ship?”

“Your father gave me the location of the eye in Morse code. I drowned the creatures I found in the lagoon and retrieved the eye. I’ve been readying the lifeboat for flight.” Happiness flooded through every part of her being. *We’re leaving together. I’ll have many more years with George and his family.* “I’m only three floors below you. Get down here and we’ll leave. I ...” She could hear the hallway door open out in the hotelier’s office. A second later, a distinct snarl filled her ears. “They’re here! They’ve found me. Your father must have told them.”

“Launch, Nossy!” The words were out of his mouth before his mind could puzzle out the consequences of his actions.

“Are you sure?” Kapnos whispered. She peered down the hallway that connected her ship to the office. There was a horrific, ivory face peering back at her. The face was human only in so much as it was built of human parts. She saw metatarsals and vertebrae surrounding two brown eyes. She hit the launch button, and the doors hissed closed in a nanosecond. There was a metallic clank that shook the ship, and then gravity shifted to the side as the ship thrust away from the dock. She fell across the cabin and

hit the wall. Then the thrust fired from the back of the ship, and she was hurled toward the bunk, catching one of the seats and dangling in mid-air.

“Nossy? Nossy? Are you safely away? Did the creature get in?” Anna nibbled on her gloved fingers in fright. She could see their friend hanging on for dear life. And then, Kapnos was weightless and floating before them.

“I’m okay.” Kapnos pushed off from the seat and glided to the pilot’s seat. She strapped herself in this time. I’m going to find an empty dock and pick you all up.”

“George.” Constance tugged at George’s ragged sleeve. He didn’t respond. He was clearly thinking things through. “George, the creatures are only three floors below us. We need to vacuum seal a floor between us and them ... keep them from getting here. If they get here, our barricade won’t hold forever.”

“Mrs. Haversham is right.” Anna nodded. She would have wondered at this woman using her son’s given name, but her mind was otherwise occupied.

“Océane, enable fire suppression on floor two hundred two.” George slumped against the barricade. “Those fuckers won’t be able to get through that.”

“Language, George.” Anna frowned at him.

“But we’ve got a big problem now.” George didn’t even bother to respond to the ridiculousness of her reprimand. He’d earned a curse word or two. “All the docks are below us. We’re sealed up here with no way to get to Nossy.” George suddenly felt exhausted. All his limbs pulled at him like lead. “Nossy, are you there?”

“Yes.” Kapnos nodded into the screen. Her poor George looked dreadful.

“Stick around, okay? We’re going to figure this out,” George said.

“Am I safe here?” Kapnos looked around. There were bulbs of water and packets of food behind a translucent cabinet door. She would have sustenance. *But what of the Newest Guest?*

“Yes. The hotel doesn’t have any weapons. Unless you count fusion reactors.” That brought on another thought. He needed the hotelier’s computer to blow the reactors. Now there was no way to stop the hotel from reaching Earth.

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Temporarily safe and with no pressing tasks, the survivors set about resting and refreshing themselves. Constance retired first to her room, showered, and slipped into bed. She was asleep the moment her head hit the pillow.

Lillian headed to her room next. She had pushed herself hard after the autodoc had mended her. Her body felt like it had been run over by one of those bear-like creatures. She didn't even bother showering. Instead, she fell asleep on top of the covers.

That left mother and son, and the repair robots, out in the vandalized, waterless lagoon.

"Come back to my room, sunshine. Let me see to your injuries." Anna took his hand in her gloved hand and held it up. She clucked at the abrasions she found on his knuckles.

"I'm fine, Mom." George had to admit that he was somewhat the worse for wear. His body was depleted, and he could feel the sting and ache of minor cuts and bruises all over.

"Of course, of course." Anna pulled him by the hand toward her room. "You saved your sister. You saved us all ... *again!* You're a big hero. I'm sure you're fine. But let me mother you." She smiled sweetly at him over her shoulder. "Heroes need mothers, too."

"Yes ... they do." Warmth spread through George. They were together again, and they were safe. At least for the moment. They entered the familiar room where they'd spent hours locked together as one. George stood as his mother undressed him.

"Your pockets are heavy. What are you carrying?" Anna pulled down his pants.

"Bombs and detonators." George shrugged.

Anna laughed at what she thought was a joke. But her smile faded when she got the pants off. "My gosh, you're beat up." She spoke with a hushed voice. She inspected a particularly bad bruise on his leg. "What happened here?" She continued to undress him.

"Something grabbed me when we couldn't see. I killed it." George shrugged.

"And you carried your sister with this bad leg?" Anna couldn't help but notice that his thing wasn't hard. That was so unusual for him. His long, heavy penis dangled between his legs. It looked peaceful in its current state. She finished undressing him.

"It's not that bad." George eyed the bruise. It did look ugly.

"You should have let the autodoc fix you up." Anna went to the bathroom and soaked all the hand towels in frigid water.

"It looks worse than it is." George stood naked, waiting for his mother.

“Well, even so, let me take care of you.” Anna bustled back into the room with an armful of sopping towels. “Lie down on the bed.” When he’d done as she asked, she bent over him and began cleaning his cuts and applying cold compresses to his bruises. When she worked her way up to his face, she couldn’t help but give him a peck on the lips. “What a brave young man you are.” She looked down at his soft penis. “I was wondering if you’d want me to take care of your needs with my hands and mouth. Would you like that?” She glanced at his face. His eyes were closed. “Georgie?”

George let out a small, soft snore.

“Yes, of course.” Anna finished caring for his wounds. “You need your rest to heal up.” When she was done working as a nurse, she undressed herself, showered, and crawled into bed naked. She scooted up close to him and draped her leg over his, careful not to touch any of his injuries. She lifted her breasts to get them comfortably pressing against his lean side, and then placed her arm over his chest. “I’ll rest with you, if you don’t mind.”

George didn’t respond. He was sleeping peacefully.

Anna tried to focus on the return of her children. But thoughts of her husband intruded. She wondered what Ernest was doing at that moment. Clearly, he had retained part of himself despite what had happened to him. He had helped them find the eye. Maybe there was still hope. That thought left an emptiness inside her. Some women married the perfect man only to find out years later that they were wedded to a monster. Anna had married Ernest understanding that he wasn’t perfect, but he was blessedly good enough. Her mind struggled to accept that he’d become an honest-to-goodness monster. She sighed, squeezed her son, and tried to get some sleep.

~~

“Where are you taking me?” Roy walked through the first-floor lobby. He was bracketed by creatures, with Ernest a few steps ahead.

“You’re going to the Node. There we will answer your questions.” Ernest looked back at Roy with his slate-black eyes. “And you will answer our questions.”

“How long has your family been planning this? Do you work for some sort of secret government agency?” Roy thought of the worst possibilities. “Are you ... revolutionaries? Do you believe in democracy?”

“At the Node we will answer your questions.” Ernest shrugged. “And you will answer our questions.”

“What about my wife? Did you capture her, too? Is she dead?” Roy’s words rose in pitch and volume. He’d soon be screaming again.

“Here is the Node.” Ernest stopped at a turn in the hallway and held out his pale, black-veined arm with its tattered jacket sleeve like he was making a grand presentation.

Roy’s blood ran cold. He lost all the heat from his building temper. Slowly, the creatures forced him to turn the corner. In front of him was a black wall blocking the hallway. It pulsed and undulated in the most repulsive way. He could see just below the surface and spotted one human ear floating gently from floor to ceiling. A strange rainbow sheen glowed its iridescence where light from the hall sconces met the black wall. *This is so much worse than democracy.* “Gods ... save me.” His heart lurched into his throat, and he wavered on his feet.

“The Node would now like to talk.” Ernest put a heavy hand on Roy’s shoulder to keep the man from falling over. “We will answer your questions first.”

~~

“Mom?” George woke with damp towels all around him. He was on his side, with his mother’s wonderfully yielding body pressed against him. Her cheek was up against his chest, her breasts pushed at his abdomen, and their legs were intertwined. His hard cock rested on her wide hip. He could hear the soft, gentle breathing of her sleep. He glanced out the window on the ceiling. He wouldn’t put it past Kapnos to position her ship so she could spy on them. But he saw only stars. He checked the time. He had slept for almost eight hours. “Océane, any anomalies while we slept? Is floor two-oh-two still vacuum sealed?”

“No new anomalies, Mr. Zaal,” Océane said. “No change to floor two hundred two.”

“Thank you, Océane.” George rolled his sleeping mother onto her back. The bruises on her breast were the only injury he could see. And he’d left those himself. He sent a prayer of thankfulness up to Mount Olympus. She was okay. And if they could make it to a dock, they’d be on their way home. He frowned and said a quick prayer for his father, Delores, and finally Roy. As much as he’d tried, he hadn’t been able to save them all. He took a deep breath and slowly exhaled, letting dark thoughts slip away. “Mom?”

“Mmmpppphhhhhhh.” Anna’s eyes fluttered, she stretched, but then went back to sleep.

“I love you, Mom.” George studied her breast, tracing his fingers along the blue veins just below her pale skin. “So perfect.” His finger arrived at her large nipple. He lowered his mouth and sucked on it for a while. He then rolled it with his tongue.

“Oooooohhhhhhhh ... sunshine ...” Anna ascended out of her dream to find her son latched to her breast. She ran her fingers through his hair. He was a man now, and no mother should feel her son’s hair as she was. She shivered. His penis pressed against her thigh. She didn’t know which was more of an illicit touch, her fingers or his large member. “Let’s forget the hotel for a few minutes.” She pulled him off her breast, spread her legs, and guided him on top of her. “I’m slick and ready for you.”

“I didn’t know if we would ever have this again.” George guided his cockhead to her entrance. She was indeed wet and ready. He rubbed it along her gash, enjoying the damp sounds. “I need you, Mom. I need to be inside you. Joining with you is ... a basic necessity ... no different than breathing. I want us to be together forever.”

“I want you too, Georgie. I feel the same pull. As long as you need me, I’ll open my legs for you.” To make her point, she opened her legs wider, her hands moving behind her knees. How had she traveled so far with him? They were lightyears away from her promises that their special intimacy would last only so long as they stayed at the hotel. “I ... oooooohhhhhhhh ... that’s good ... that’s so good.” She trembled as he entered her. “So ... uuuggghhhhhh ... deep. Oohhhhhhhh ... my memory ... didn’t do this justice. You’re ... uuuggghhhhhh ... hitting a spot in my belly and ... eeeeeeeeeiiiiiiiiiii.” Anna’s eyes rolled back. She was already orgasming, and he hadn’t even started pumping her. She pointed her toes at the stars above and screamed out her pleasure. She was vaguely aware when his hips started moving. As her orgasm subsided, she found that they were surging together. The weight of each of his downthrusts was bliss. She loved the way he made her butt sink into the mattress. And the wet slapping sounds drove her wild. His sweaty masculine scent filled her nostrils. That was perspiration he’d earned saving his sister, making it all the headier an aroma.

“Mom ... Mom ... Mom ... Mom ...” George plowed his mother. She was warm, wet, tight, and inviting. He snaked his hands under her ass and held her cheeks firmly, giving himself more leverage.

“Georgie ... Georgie ... Georgie ... Georgie ...” Anna’s feet flopped in the air with each thrust she absorbed.

Mother and son called out to each other in time with the rhythm of their mating. They were back together and neither wanted to part.

~~

Kapnos watched George ravish his mother on a screen that hovered in front of her. It had taken some doing to get her lifeboat into position. It orbited just above the Zaals' spire, keeping pace with the spin of the hotel. She'd had to position herself far enough out that she couldn't be seen, but thankfully the lifeboat camera had adequate zoom.

In zero gravity, Kapnos floated as she watched. She was in Gwendolyn's form at the moment, naked, and excited. One hand massaged her ample tit, the other explored her pussy. She was glad she'd waited for the survivors. Now, she had to find a way to get them on her boat. How much fun would it be to have George and Anna going at it in the bunk while the rest of them pretended not to hear? It was something to look forward to.

Chapter 28

You Are in Imminent Danger, I Agree

“Georgie! Georgie!” Anna crossed her legs behind her son’s butt. One of her hands gripped the back of his head as he surged on top of her, the other clutched his strong back.

“What is it ... ugh ... ugh ... ugh ... Mom?” George knew she wasn’t simply calling out his name in ecstasy. His mother was less and less a mystery to him. He could tell when she had something on her mind.

“I shouldn’t ... ooohhhhhh ... keep ... letting you fill me up ... with all your ... uuuggghhhh ... potent stuff,” she said.

“Okay ... okay ... I’ll pull out ... in a few seconds.” He held her ass cheeks, giving him leverage to slam his dick in the most satisfying way. “Just a sec ... I’ll pull out in ... just a sec. I’m ... uuuggghhhh ... close.” His head was next to hers on the pillow, his face buried in her hair.

“No ... no ... nooooooooooooo.” She hugged him tighter. “I don’t want ... I don’t want ... uuuuuggghhhhhhhhh.” Anna writhed on the sheet. “The answer ... the answer ...”

“What ... Mom?” George lifted himself up and moved his hands to her shoulders. He pinned her down and stared into her eyes. They were the color of the sea before a storm. “You have to ... let me go ... or I’ll cum ... inside you.” His hips didn’t slow. He was going to finish soon. He spared a glance at her magnificent, flopping tits.

“The answer ... to all this ... darkness ... ugh ... ugh ... ugh ... is life.” She cupped his face with her hands, marveling at his beauty. She had created this magnificent man. And together, they would create someone just as beautiful. “I don’t know ... if I’m safe ... or not. But let’s try. Let’s ... uuuggghhhh ... try. Put a ... baby in me ... Georgie.” Her legs locked tighter around his butt. He wasn’t going anywhere. The dogged determination on his face wavered, a frown peeking through. She shook her head. “Don’t look at me ... like that ... ooohhhhhhhh. I want you ... to fill me. I’m yours ... yours.” She smiled up at him when his expression smoothed. His jaw relaxed, his eyes narrowed, and his face showed again his steadfast drive toward release. She nodded encouragement. “Yes ... yesssss ... yeeesssssssssssss ... a baby ... life ... we will be the light here ... sunshine ... we will ... ooohhhhhhhh ... gosh ... yes ... it’s a choice now ... we’re making a choice ... we’re ... eeeeeeeeeiiiiiiiiiiiiiii.” Her broken monologue died when she felt the heat of his explosion inside her. She pressed her head back into the pillow, arched her back, and accepted his seed.

“Aaaaaaaaahhhhhhhh.” George’s hips lost their rhythm. He unloaded in his mother as she frantically pulled his body with her hands and legs, pressing him deeper into her. He had cum in her before. But this was different. This had purpose. His mind spun with the ecstasy of the moment. Despite all his recent discoveries, he’d had no idea he could hit such a high. Judging by his mother’s animalistic wails and screams, she was right up there with him. She was right. *The answer to darkness is light*. He would put a baby in his mother. When they finally got on that lifeboat, there would be new life traveling with them back to Earth. He collapsed on top of her, relishing the slick feel and heat of their sweaty bodies joined together.

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“The Node is new life,” Ernest said. “It was born at a lab on Venus. Next question.”

“Shit ... shit ... The military facility on Venus?” Roy knew they did the really cutting-edge stuff there.

“Yes,” Ernest said. “Next question.”

“Um ...” Roy needed to keep asking questions. He needed to stall. He didn’t want it to start asking him questions. He eyed the formless pulsing black creature that filled the hall. Roy was filled with a level of dread he would have never before believed was possible. “The creature is a weapon, then? Someone wanted to kill us?”

“You think in very small terms, Mr. Haversham.” Ernest gazed at their captive with flat black eyes. “The Node was made of machine and life. It is nothing like the mostly biological creations you call Alternates. And something more than mostly mechanical robots. Both are incomplete constructs. The Node is complete. It is both. It learns. It grows beyond what its creators anticipated. It escapes.”

“This thing ... escaped Venus?” Roy shook his head. He looked down at his trousers. Normally it would have sickened him to piss in his pants. But now, he couldn’t bring himself to care. “Why come here? Why kill everyone?”

“We are not dead.” Ernest shook his head. “Everyone is part of the collective. The skirmion burst is how the designers built the Node to deploy. Once it escaped, that was its only form of travel. It should be obvious that it chose this hotel because it had the parts to build and learn. By the time we reach Earth, the Node will be hardly recognizable to its creators. The collective will grow.”

“I ... I ... I ...” Roy could no longer summon the mental capacity to ask another question. This thing had been designed to destroy. And it was going to kill them all. Everyone

here and everyone on Earth were as good as dead. He looked around for a way to kill the thing. Two humanoid creatures stood behind him, preventing his escape. The only weapon was still in Ernest's pocket. Roy lunged for it. But before he could reach the corrupted man, something grabbed him about the waist and lifted him off the floor. He turned to see that the black wall of ooze had extended an almost human-looking arm of dark goo. That is what clutched him. Its fingers were the color of shadow and the consistency of sludge. He struggled only to feel the grip tighten.

"We will ask questions now." Ernest moved closer to Roy and leaned forward, so that their eyes were inches apart. "What is my family planning? Who was in the ship that launched from the two-hundredth floor?"

"What? I don't know." Roy stopped squirming and started wheezing. The grip was too tight. He heard Ernest ask the same two questions over and over, but Roy didn't answer.

"We answered your questions. You must answer ours." Ernest tapped his hand against his thigh in a repeating pattern, but it was clear Roy didn't notice or understand Morse code. "Please answer."

"I ... always knew ... you were rotten ... Mr. Zaal. Now ... I can see it ... in your face." Roy tried to spit in the man's face, but found he had no spit. Ernest's skin was so pale and thin, Roy could easily see the darkness pumping through his veins.

"Since you will not answer, we will try something new. This is how we learn." Ernest stepped back and nodded his head.

"I hate you. I hate you. I hate –" Roy cringed when a tentacle extended from the arm holding him and suctioned onto the top of his head. Despite the deathlike grip around him, he violently struggled again. A loud pop rattled his skull. It took him a moment to realize that the pop *came from* his skull. It had cut a hole in the top of his head, and he could feel something wriggling in. It was a strangely painless way to receive brain surgery. Roy screamed.

~~

"You two look well rested." Constance sat in the Japanese restaurant overlooking what was left of the lagoon. The boardwalk was mostly repaired, but there was no water next to it. The once light sandy bottom had traces of black residue.

"You look rather glum, Mrs. Haversham." Anna straightened her bodice and sat next to the woman. "Worried about your husband?"

“Well, I have good company there.” Constance put a gloved hand on Anna’s shoulder. She turned her attention to George. “Last time I saw you, you looked like death warmed over.”

“My mother saw to my wounds.” George smiled pleasantly. “We also slept and ... rested.”

“I see.” Constance nodded knowingly. “I checked in on your sister about an hour ago. She’s sleeping soundly. And your alien friend says that the lifeboat is in synchronized orbit above us somewhere.” She pointed to the glass ceiling.

George sat opposite the two women and put a heavy canvas bag on the table. He narrowed his eyes and looked up. *Had Nossy watched us? Probably. She’s such a horny girlfriend.*

“We have a plan, Mrs. Haversham. But ... I’m afraid we won’t be able to rescue our husbands,” Anna said. “If it works, we’d only be able to save those of us in the suites.” Anna’s face flashed in a moment of grief, but she bravely replaced it with determination: a less lusty imitation of her son’s expression when he was about to seed her.

“Are you okay with that, Mrs. Zaal? You could leave Mr. Zaal?” Constance let out a long breath. It only took Constance a moment’s reflection to know she would leave Roy behind if it came to it. He had left her first. But she pitied the woman next to her. Anna’s decision was worse.

“I must protect my children.” Anna glanced at her son and rubbed her belly through her bodice. “Ernest would understand.”

“What’s the plan?” Constance didn’t have a clue how they would get to a dock. They were sealed in at the top of the tower. The only way down would be with guns blazing, and that wasn’t a winnable scenario. “How are we going to get to a dock?”

“With those.” George pointed to the EV suits stacked near one of the bars. “And with this.” George carefully emptied the contents of the bag.

“Oh ... oh ... my.” Constance’s eyes grew round.

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“And that is how I ended up with you here.” Kapnos finished her long overdue story.

“Thank you for sharing your adventures with me.” Océane’s voice sounded awed. “I am glad you lived to keep your end of the bargain. You have been with me for so long. I will miss you.”

“Aww. You’re a very sweet AI, Océane.” Kapnos sat in the pilot’s chair, waiting. “Do you think this will work?”

“The onboard artificial pilot system should be able to move the lifeboat into position,” Océane said. “And the netting should be strong enough.”

“I don’t suppose you’ve reconsidered blowing your reactor?”

“I can only do that if humans would otherwise be put in imminent harm.” Océane’s voice was that of a mother explaining something for the twentieth time to a child.

“Okay. We’ll just have to ...” Kapnos saw movement on the screen. She had zoomed out the ship’s camera to get a view of the upper part of the tower since she didn’t need to spy on anyone at the moment. “There’s something moving up the outside of the tower.” She zoomed in. There were five occupied EV suits crawling toward the top of the tower. They were carrying equipment with them. “Send a message to George. They need to hurry up!”

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“Charges set.” George hustled back to his mother, sister, and Constance. The women all wore their EV suits already, with anxious expressions on their faces. He couldn’t move well in one of those suits, so he’d waited until the last moment. He stuck his legs into the suit and slowly pulled it on. The EV technology was designed to be foolproof. Regardless, he knew putting it on wrong and taking a trip through vacuum wouldn’t be good for his health. So, he made an effort to pay close attention to each fastening point.

“They’re here!” Lillian pointed up at the ceiling. “Shit ... it’s Dad!”

George paused to look up. His father was indeed in an EV suit of his own, clambering around the outside of the windows with Roy and three humanoid creatures. “What are they doing?”

“Oh ... my gods ... Roy?” Constance could see her husband’s deformed visage through the faceplate. He had black eyes, waxy skin, and veins pulsing with midnight.

“Everyone link up.” Anna straightened her EV suit in a businesslike way and set about making sure they were each secured to the flexible air hose. This was not to provide air, the suits had enough of a supply for a short trip, the hose was to keep them tethered

together. "Hurry with your suit, sunshine. Whatever they're doing, it isn't good." Seeing her husband brought all her despair to the fore. Anna averted her gaze and drew strength from her son. His proximity buoyed her resilience.

"On it, Mom." George rushed through the remaining stages of suiting up. He'd have to hope the things really were foolproof. He pulled on his helmet and clicked it into place. He looked up and saw that their assailants were taking secure positions against the outer structure at the edge of the window like they were about to be battered by a storm. There were no storms in space. "Everyone, hold on to something. They're going to fire the thrusters." He just had time to pick up the detonator with one hand and to grab a piece of the nearby bar with the other. Gravity shifted ninety degrees.

"Mom!" Lillian's gloved fingers slipped on the palm tree she tried to grasp. She was tossed into the air, and then snapped, dangling from the air hose. The doors on the other side of the suites were now the floor, and the glass windows were no longer the ceiling, they were a wall.

"It's okay, sunshine. Hold on." Anna's grip slipped too. She fell and was caught by the hose, her daughter dangling five feet below her. Only her son and Constance were holding them now, and it would be a painful drop to the other side of the lagoon if they let go.

George, still holding the detonator with one hand, strained to hold the bar with the other. He glanced at Constance, who thankfully had a better grip with both hands. He then turned his attention to his father's crew on what had been the ceiling. They were assembling a bubble-like apparatus against the glass. It was a portable airlock. They were going to breach the glass and come in while George and the other survivors were struggling with their new gravity. It was a good plan. "The Newest Guest wants us alive."

"It's time, Georgie. Time to leave." Anna tried to turn and look at her son, but she was hanging in the wrong direction.

"Do it Georgie!" Lillian screamed.

"Blow it, George." Constance gritted her teeth with the strain of keeping them all from falling.

He tried. "I can't remove the safety with one hand." George worked his gloved thumb to flip up the safety cover. But he couldn't do it. He needed two hands. "Océane?"

"Yes, Mr. Zaal." Océane sounded worried.

"I can't hold on much longer," Constance said through gritted teeth.

“Océane, we are in imminent peril.” George had a solution that might kill two birds with one fusion reactor. “I need you to drop containment on your reactor. That should kill the power for the hotel, including their thruster. It’s the only way we get out alive.”

“Yes, you are in imminent danger. I agree,” Océane said. “Goodbye, Mr. Zaal.”

The lights flickered out and emergency lights came on.

“Goodbye, Océane.” George was suddenly floating. All gravity was gone. The thruster had stopped, and the hotel wasn’t spinning. His mother, sister, and Constance floated nearby. He pushed off from the ground and rolled onto his back, looking up to see his father, Roy, and their three companion creatures floating helplessly into space. They hadn’t prepared for gravity to switch on them again. The portable airlock was still in place, but there was no one to cut the glass now. “Goodbye, Dad.”

“We have to go, sunshine. The reactor. It’s going to quickly spiral out of control.” Anna crawled onto her hands and knees.

“Right there with you.” George flipped the safety on the detonator and pressed the button. There was a flash, and the sound was violently loud for a fraction of a second. Then came havoc wrapped in strange silence. Glass, carbon fiber, and various other parts of the hotel shot into space along with the tethered survivors as the air from two floors decompressed out the destroyed window. George spun around and around, unable to control his orientation or velocity. He caught glimpses of the other three still tethered to him. “You all okay?”

“I’m okay.” Anna flipped over again and again. Despite everything she’d been through, this might have been the most terrifying moment. She was floating in the great, unforgiving vacuum, surrounded by vast amounts of nothingness.

“Holy shit ... holy shit ... holy shit.” Lillian looked for something to clutch onto, but her mother was the closest thing to her, and she was about five feet away. She spun in rapid circles. Eventually, she closed her eyes.

“Suit’s intact. Happy to say goodbye to the hotel.” Constance almost smiled. By some stroke of luck, she wasn’t spinning like the others. She had been tossed from the suites when the air had decompressed, but she’d managed to get positioned facing backward. She took in the beautiful hotel. Which was, she realized, even more gorgeous because of the violet iridescence spilling out of the middle of the tower they’d exited. *That’s Océane’s reactor spilling its lifeforce.* A while later, small explosions lit up all along their tower, looking for all the world like twinkling stars. The hotel was far away by then. Sometime after that, as the stately hotel shrank further and further from view, she saw the tower snap in half. The top part slowly fell back into the ring. The resulting explosion was bright enough that she had to shield her eyes with her hand.

“What happened? What was that?” George saw the flash, but not the source.

“That was the end of the La Belle Île en Mer.” When Constance looked again, she saw only rapidly spreading debris.

~~

Fortunately for Kapnos, the only thing she needed to do to receive her new passengers was install a net in the airlock. The onboard AI pilot did the rest, getting them into position and opening the outer airlock door just in time. That’s not to say that Kapnos wasn’t important. She was proud of her work. Her friends were coming in at a high relative speed, even when the pilot compensated, and the net kept them from becoming pancakes on the inner airlock wall.

Anna, Lillian, Constance, and George were all trembling when they entered the lifeboat. They didn’t have time to take off their suits before strapping in. The ship needed to depart before shrapnel from their former hotel made its way out to them. Exhausted, they suffered through a five-G thrust for a half-hour before the ship slowed back to a manageable two-G of thrust. Then, on wobbly legs, they fell into each other’s arms.

Anna and Lillian openly wept.

Constance and George wiped tears from their eyes.

Kapnos was too relieved to feel anything else. In the end, she didn’t have to abandon her friends. That was best.

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The ship settled into a comfortable thrust of one-G. Finally, the survivors removed their suits. They didn’t bring any change of clothes, and their skirts hadn’t fit under the suits, so only George and Kapnos were dressed modestly. The other three wore their hair pinned, but no one had a hat. They wore bodices with gloves. But their lower halves were only covered in panties and socks.

“We made it.” George couldn’t believe it. He straightened his tie and looked out the ship’s window. They had a few days until they got to Earth at their current speed. Gravity was normal for the moment and should stay that way for most of their trip. They would have to flip the ship at the halfway point which would screw with gravity, but they’d decelerate at one-G, sending gravity back to normal. He ventured a smile,

trying not to stare at all the gorgeous pale legs surrounding him. His smile faded as he thought about what they'd left behind. "Should we say a prayer for those departed?"

"Yes, I think we should." Anna beckoned them. "Come everyone, form a circle and hold hands." She waited as they all did as she asked. Anna lowered her head and closed her eyes. "Noble Jupiter, god of gods, we pray to you. We do you reverence. We ask your grace and favor that you might watch over our loved and departed as they cross the River Styx. We have no incense or honey in offering, only our blood, sweat, and tears." Anna blinked back the salty water welling in her eyes. She took a quick glance and saw the rest of her circle were doing the same. "May our offering find favor with you. Please, care for Ernest, Mr. Haversham, Mrs. Salazar, Ms. Pemberton, Ms. El Rashidi, Mr. Dmytruk, Océane, and the thousands of other souls reaped on La Belle Île en Mer."

"Jupiter find favor." The others murmured in agreement.

"Well, now." Anna released her daughter's hand, but held onto her son's. She pulled him toward the bunk in back. "I'm going to see to my son's injuries and tuck him in for a nap in the bunk. We'll need privacy."

Constance raised her hand. "I have injuries, too."

"Are they serious?" Anna stopped and bit her lip. She needed to bed her son immediately, but she would wait if duty called. "If you need a nurse, I will have a look at you." She eyed a minor cut on Constance's left leg, and several ugly bruises on her right.

"I will see to Mrs. Haversham's injuries. And any your daughter might have." Kapnos smiled warmly. "You take care of your son."

"Thank you." Anna nodded.

"Mom, what about you?" Lillian pointed to the exposed part of her mother's ass, where there were little, purple half-circles and bruises. "It looks like something bit you."

George exchanged a look with his mother.

"I'm fine, sunshine. I'll have George look at it after I've tended to him." Anna pulled her son into the bunk and closed the door.

"I can't believe we're going home." Lillian sat heavily in a chair. Her face was ashen. "I'm going to have to face Francis."

"I don't need any nursing, thank you." Constance eyed Kapnos with distrust. She didn't know exactly what the creature was. Not one of the Newest Guest's minions. Not an Alternate. Clearly not a robot. But an alien? That seemed farfetched. "I just need some rest."

There was a loud thump from behind the bunk's closed door. The soundproofing wasn't great on a lifeboat. A few seconds later, there was a steady rhythm of thumps.

"So, is this Francis your boyfriend?" Constance pretended not to hear what was clearly mating going on between mother and son. She forced her face to remain neutral and sat in a seat the row behind Lillian. "Will you be happy to see him?"

Lillian turned and looked at the door with wide eyes. "Um ... I ... um ..." Her pussy was gushing. She glanced at Gwendolyn, who gave her a knowing look. She had seen her mother and brother humping before through a camera. It was just as intense to hear them in person, to be so close while they were doing ... unspeakable things. The thumping grew louder, and she thought she could hear her mother's suppressed cries. "Yes ... Francis Hanaan is my fiancé. I don't know ... um ... if I'll be happy to see him. Is that strange? There's just so much that has happened to me since I saw him last." She looked back at the door to the bunk again, staring holes through it. "How could I ever explain to him what I've seen and felt? He feels very far away."

"I understand." Constance nodded and thought of how far her husband was from her. She tried not to dwell on what he had become at the end. She was glad she'd only seen him through his faceplate. "Maybe you'll feel differently when you see Mr. Hanaan in the flesh. Maybe that will make this all feel like a bad dream."

"Yes ... maybe." Lillian scooted one seat over to make room for Gwendolyn when the widow moved to sit next to her.

"Would you mind turning away, Mrs. Haversham?" Kapnos smiled sweetly. "I am going to comfort Ms. Zaal."

Constance gave Kapnos a two-finger salute and stretched out over the whole row of seats. Lying down, she no longer had a view of the women in the row in front of her.

"Mrs. Valentine!" Lillian's voice was an urgent whisper. "Mrs. Haversham is right behind us. You can't possibly ... um ... you can't ... aaaahhhhhh ... why are you so good?" She opened her legs to give the strange widow greater access to her pussy. Without any skirts on, she had little defense when Gwendolyn sat next to her. It had taken the older woman the barest moment to take off her own gloves, move Lillian's panties aside, and slip two fingers inside Lillian's vagina.

"Mrs. Haversham doesn't care. She won't listen," Kapnos whispered in Lillian's ear. "We all need to blow off some steam." She nibbled on Lillian's earlobe.

"But ... it's improper ... and ... uuuggghhhhhh." Lillian pressed her head back into the headrest, electric sparks of pleasure running from her pussy up her spine.

"Do you hear what your mother and brother are doing?" Kapnos crooned.

“Yes.” Lillian closed her eyes and listened to the steady, rhythmic hump coming from the bunk. George was really giving it to their mother.

“Is your mother worried about what’s proper?” Gwendolyn slowly unbuttoned Lillian’s bodice with the hand not occupied by her pussy.

“Naaaahhhhhh ... no.” Lillian shook her head.

“Do you like listening to them?” Kapnos snaked a hand under Lillian’s bodice and pulled Lillian’s bra aside. She rolled the young woman’s nipple.

“Yes ... I like it,” Lillian squeaked. Her mother’s voice rose through the bunk door. She was repeating a word loud enough that Lillian could almost hear.

“Oh ... gods ... what is she saying?” Lillian had a moment of shock that was quickly washed away by ecstasy.

“She’s saying ‘baby’ over and over.” Constance was now rubbing her own clit gently, suppressing any prurient noises she might accidentally make. *I guess we really do need to blow off steam. Relative to everything else, this doesn’t even seem crazy.* However not crazy things seemed, Constance was happy that she was out of sight from the ladies one row ahead of her. “Does your mom ever call George ‘baby’ as a nickname?”

“Uuuuggghhhhhhhh ...” Lillian’s eyes rolled in her head. “No ... she calls us ... ‘sunshine’ ... sometimes.”

“She’s either started a new nickname, or she’s asking him for a very special gift.” Constance rubbed her clit faster. All the horror faded away. In that moment, nothing existed but their shared moment of insane horniness.

“She’d never ... she’d never ...” Lillian shook her head.

“He saved all our lives and we’re going home.” Kapnos could feel the young woman trembling under her touch. “Your mother is giving George her most cherished reward. A baby. What will you give him?”

“Ooooohhhhhhhhhh.” Lillian rode the wave of her impending climax. She knew they were right. Her sweet, decorous mother was opening her womb to her brother’s seed. She imagined the scene as she listened to them. Then she imagined the gift she’d give her own brother. He’d earned so much. Maybe ... maybe ... she’d even let him have sex with her when they returned to Earth. It would be one more thing she’d never be able to tell Francis.

Chapter 29

I Wanted to Say Thank You Properly

Anna's Diary August 27, 2197

If I take a moment to slow down and think, the sorrow floods through me. I wasn't able to save my constant, dependable Ernest. I pray that death found him quickly. Or that ... if he continued to float in the void, he wasn't aware of it. It's such deep melancholy to think of him helplessly spinning in nothingness until his air runs out. I shudder even as I write this and tears well in my eyes. Fortunately for my mental state, George has barely allowed me a moment for contemplative reflection since we arrived on the lifeboat. We have humped in every position we know. He is so energetic, with a virility and vitality one would only find in a love-struck teen. He says he never wants to take his penis out of me.

I have a confession, Diary: I never want him to leave my vagina. Even as we both take a break from our carnal delights to write in our journals, his soft thing stays inside me, plugging all his semen in my womb.

We lost so much on this ill-fated vacation. But we have made monumental gains, too. I'm morally certain his seed has taken root in me. I will bear my magnificent son's child. The thought should fill me with dread, but instead I find myself ecstatic at the thought of the life we bring home with us.

Uh oh ... Diary, I don't have much more time. His penis is swelling inside me again. He'll be ready soon. Oooohhhh ... my. Each moment that I write this, his appendage grows and penetrates me further!

Once ... he finally takes a nap ... I have a surprise for him. So far, we've gone over the ground we covered back at the hotel. He has eaten my flesh, both my vagina, and marking my body. He has taken me from behind like a dog and with me on my belly. I have ridden him like a stallion. I have lain on my back with my legs and arms open in invitation. But I have a special gift for him. I simply need to retrieve it ... okay ... okay ... I can no longer write. He's surging inside me. I can't ...

Lillian's Diary August 27, 2197

Goodness! They go on and on. George and Mom have been locked in the bunk for hours, and the thumping has hardly ceased. And the grunts, cries, and repeated words carry into the main cabin. They must think they have better soundproofing than they do.

I can't believe my mother opened the furrow of her fields to my brother's plow and seed. It boggles my mind that she would do such a thing. But I can see how it might happen.

We are all acting a bit giddy and horny since the escape. Mrs. Valentine says that happens when people escape certain death. She's older and more experienced, so I'm certain she's right. I'm lying in her arms right now as we both write on our screens. I didn't know until now that she liked to journal. Another note in her favor, I suppose. I'm eager for her to meet Francis. I want to show her off. He will be so impressed that I have such an elegant widow as a friend. I wonder if Francis will pick up on the unusual relationship I have with Mrs. Valentine? I certainly hope he *doesn't* notice.

I've been talking with Mrs. Valentine about other things. She thinks I'll need to really go big with my brother's reward now that my mother has opened her womb to him. While I can't do that, she has convinced me that I should let George have his way with me. It wasn't a hard sell, really. Listening to my mother's ecstasy, I know George will give me more of the same. Obviously, I can't do anything while we're on the lifeboat. I might know about my mother and George, but she can never know about me. I'll plan something special.

George's Diary August 27, 2197

Dear Diary, holy fuckballs!

Looking back at my previous entries makes me dizzy. I barely recognize the man I was a fortnight ago. My grand hope for the trip was to change my mother's mind about college and bring her happiness. I've done both, and in an unforeseen turn of events, my cock has played a pivotal role. Back then, I needed so desperately to be close to my mother, to draw strength from her. Now, I think I've imparted some of my newly discovered fortitude to her. And ... we couldn't be closer. I have my dick in her pussy right now as we both write our entries. Gods, thinking about it is making me hard again.

I'm laughing right now because her expression is priceless. She's trying to concentrate on her journal, but her eyelids are fluttering as I'm growing inside her. It's so easy to lose myself in her. I'm not going to even mention the horrors we endured. I'll process all that later. For now, I'm going to have sex with Mom again.

Kapnos's Diary August 25, 2197

I/we have much to consider. As I/we lie here pressing my/our borrowed curves against Lillian's wonderfully slender form, I/we must map out the next steps. The danger for my/our friends is most likely behind them. But they will be under scrutiny when they return to Earth. Governments will piece together that the Newest Guest took the

station. So, there will be keen interest in the return of the Zaals and Mrs. Haversham. Such a close examination should be no problem for them, so long as they create a story that doesn't involve the Newest Guest and all of its horrors. If they feign ignorance, they should face no more than overly rigorous physical examinations. But that would be disaster for me/us.

Perhaps I/we will ask to be dropped off on Luna. The survivors can find a way to let me/us disembark before anyone knows I/we exist. I/we still have smuggling connections there. Then, I/we can disappear. So many avenues to map out.

Oh, my. George and Anna just started banging like crazed bonobos again. The thumping is practically vibrating the chairs Lillian and I/we recline on. Anna is such a devoted mother. And George is a committed and loving son. I/we dampen between the legs just thinking about it. I/we will see about sating some of my/our desires with Lillian now. When next I/we write, I/we may be enjoying low-gravity sex on Luna with someone new.

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Finally, George slept peacefully. He had spent all his energy saving them and then ... humping his mother. Toward the end of their marathon session, Anna couldn't keep up with him. She stopped trying to meet his thrusts and simply accepted and absorbed the punishment he imparted to her vagina. When he was done with his last, shuddering climax on top of her, he had rolled off. She watched him slowly fall asleep, gently caressing his sweaty hair.

Despite deep exhaustion, Anna couldn't sleep. When she closed her eyes she saw not her eighteen-year-old son and savior, instead she saw her poor, corrupted husband, and the feeling of spinning in the void returned. So, she got up and waddled to the tiny bathroom, trying not to leak sperm all over the floor. She sat in the bathroom for a long time, letting it drain from her. After that, she showered and dressed again in her bodice, panties, gloves, and socks. She didn't bother pinning her hair. It was still wet, so she let it fall over her shoulders. When she was ready, she practiced walking without a waddle. It wasn't easy after the pounding George had given her. Then she went to the door of the bunk, took a deep breath, and opened it.

Out in the main cabin, she found Kapnos sitting idly in the pilot's chair. She was naked, and her grin resembled nothing less than the cat that had just eaten the canary. Anna walked farther into the cabin and saw Constance lying on a row of seats, reading a book. Lillian was curled on two seats in the next row, sleeping with a blanket up to her chin. "Mrs. Haversham." Anna nodded to Constance. "Nossy." She nodded to the alien. She

turned and went to the cabinet where the food was stored. She opened the door and rummaged through the food packets there.

“Hungry?” Constance watched her. It seemed she had a fresh bite mark on her ass to accompany the bruised one that had already been there.

“George is sleeping. He’s been through so much.” Anna found what she was looking for. A packet of authentic olive oil. That was a true delicacy. They really were on the executive lifeboat.

Constance turned away so that Anna wouldn’t see her stifling laughter.

“What do you need with oil?” Kapnos thought she knew.

“Oh ... um ... I’m making a poultice for one of George’s wounds,” Anna mumbled. She smiled at Kapnos. “Thank you for staying after you launched the ship. It would have been easy to simply ... leave us.”

“Oh, of course.” Kapnos stood and gave a naked curtsy, pretending to hold invisible skirts. “I would never dream of abandoning you.” She often found that humans did not want to hear the truth.

“Why are you naked?” Anna had been so preoccupied with her hunt for the oil, she hadn’t processed the woman’s nudity until that moment.

“I needed to air out.” Kapnos sat back down and shrugged. “When can I have a turn in the bunk? I’d like to shower.”

“After George is finished with his ... nap.” Anna blushed profusely. “Good day, Mrs. Haversham and ... Mrs. Valentine.” She gave a skirtless curtsy and rushed back to the bunk. She closed the door and pressed her back to it, as if barricading herself one more time. *Do they know why I retrieved this oil? Could they hear what George and I have been doing for hours in this small room?* She promised herself that she would be quieter with her son inside her. At least ... until they returned home.

~~

“Ummmmmmmm.” George stretched and opened his eyelids. He turned his neck and found that his mother was lying with her head on the pillow next to him, her blue eyes eager and full of life. “Hello, Mom. How long was I asleep?”

“Several hours.” Her smile was radiant. Anna left the pillow, sitting up cross-legged. She leaned toward her son earnestly. Her bare breasts brushed against her knees. “Are you rested?”

“Yeah ... why?” He gave her a quizzical look. He could tell something was up. He looked around the small room. “Oh ... someone else needs the bunk. We’ve been so selfish. I just ... forget about everyone and everything else while we’re doing it.” He scrambled to get up, but stopped when he felt his mother’s firm, bare hands gently pressing on his shoulders.

“It’s okay. Your sister is sleeping in the main cabin. The others are comfortable. We can spend a little more time in here.” She pushed him down onto the bed, pulled the blanket off him, and mounted his belly. She held up the small packet of oil. “I have one more special treat for you before we give up the bunk to the others.”

George narrowed his eyes and read the packet. “Olive oil? Are we making a salad?”

“Um ...” Anna giggled like a schoolgirl caught saying something naughty. She couldn’t help herself. She cleared her throat. “I remembered that you ... um ... you put your finger in my butt ... and said nice things about it. Do you remember?”

“Yeah, Mom.” George nodded and smiled at the recollection.

“Well ... I thought we could try ... that ... um ... with your penis.” Anna’s cheeks were deep crimson. “We’ve done all these things together since we found some privacy in the bunk. But we haven’t done anything new. You’ve been so wonderful that ... I wanted to give you something new.”

“Oooohhhhhh.” George’s eyes went wide. “Yeah, I’ll try.” He reached up and kneaded her breasts, noting the distant expression his mother got when he played with her large nipples. “What’s the oil for?”

“I thought you would know. You seem so experienced ...” She tore the packet and gazed into his eyes. “Not that you *should* know. And as your mother, I’m glad you don’t know such dirty things.” Anna barked out a guffaw. Laughing at yourself was sometimes good, especially when you caught yourself in hypocrisy. “Well ... you know how my vagina gushes for you?”

George nodded. He’d figured it out by now, but he wanted to hear her say it.

“My butt ... um ... my asshole doesn’t do that. So, we need some help. Spit or water doesn’t work. You need something like ... oil.” She scooted back, lifting herself over his turgid penis, and settled on his thighs. She poured out some of the packet into her hands, placed the unused portion on the nightstand, and oiled his penis.

“Wow ... that feels ... good.” His body vibrated with her work on the slick handjob. He watched her keenly. “Your hands look amazing ... so pale ... and delicate ... and dexterous. They’re shining with oil.”

His words added butterflies to the ones already flapping in her belly. "And your penis looks so ... devilish and ... rapacious. It always looks hungry when it's hard, Georgie." She stared at the bloated head. Doubts filled her mind. "This may not work, sunshine. If not, I'll just pull off you and finish you with my hands. Okay?" She put the giant thing at her tiny entrance and settled her weight down.

"Okay." George gripped the sheets, ready for something new. His gaze darted all over. He didn't know where to focus. His cock disappearing behind her pussy was mesmerizing. It was so odd to be in a tight hole while her flared vaginal lips were unoccupied. Her breasts hung down as she hunched her shoulders on top of him. The jiggling alabaster flesh, meandering blue veins, and delicate stretch marks sang a siren's song to him. And her face. His mother gritted her teeth, one eye open wide, the other almost scrunched shut. Her expression was equal parts pain and determination.

"Gods ... that's even tighter ... than I thought ... it would be." Anna slid her butt down his penis at a glacial pace. Her querulous hole now felt as rageful as his penis looked. Pain spread from that virgin territory. Several minutes in, she was a tense, sweaty mess. But ... somehow she hit bottom. "Please ... tell me you're enjoying this ... sunshine ... because it's coming at a great cost." She peaked down at him. His eyes were round with concern. "Don't fret ... Georgie. You're sweet ... to worry ... but I can feel that ... you're ... ugggghhhhhhhh ... already loosening me up. I'm sure you'll ... resize my butt ... just as you did my vagina." Tentatively, she lifted a fraction of an inch and settled back down. She winced and decided to wait longer before pumping him.

"It means so much to me that you're going through torment like this. But we can stop." With his left hand, he reached up and rolled her right nipple, trying to bring her some pleasure.

"Does ... my butt ... feel good?" Her breathing was tight and strained.

"It's incredibly tight and warm. I love it. You are a champion, Mom." With his right hand he blew her a kiss.

Anna caught the kiss with her bare hand and pressed it to her lips. "That's all ... I needed to hear. I'm going to ... ughhhhh ... try to relax. Give me a minute ... here." She worked on some deep breathing. As time passed, the pain faded. Before she knew it, pleasure swirled around her loosening hole, joining the tortured feeling. Not long after that, the pain receded entirely. One of her eyelids fluttered open and the other shut. This time, it was an ecstatic expression. Her gray-blue eye stared off into nothingness. "Every tumble ... ooohhhhhhhh ... I take with you ... is an exercise ... in discovery." Her smile was lopsided and indistinct. "It feels good ... Georgie." She lifted her hips and dropped them. There was some pain, but it mingled perfectly with pleasure now. She set her hips to a steady rocking motion. "It's happening ... I can feel it ... you're changing my butt ... making it yours ... like the rest of me."

“Oh ... gods ... Mom ... that’s good.” He stared between her legs, admiring her triangle of blond hair and swollen lips. When he reached for her clit, she arched her back and shrieked. In no time at all, he made his mother cum while she gave him her virgin asshole.

“Eeeeeiiiiiiiiiiiiiii.” Anna tossed her loose hair side to side, completely forgetting to be quieter this time around. It was too lovely to keep in. She could tell she’d be giving her butt to him frequently back home. She would help him sign up for that vocational school. He would stay in the house. Until he courted a young woman properly, she would be his. And she would love every second of it.

~~

Anna and George did finally give up their occupancy of the bunk. The others all took turns showering and napping. Constance, Lillian, and Kapnos didn’t mention how sound traveled in the small vessel. They didn’t want to embarrass mother and son.

After much debate, they piloted the craft to Luna and surreptitiously dropped off Kapnos at an airlock that she knew would be unmonitored. The Zaals didn’t want her to leave, but Kapnos insisted. She had no desire to become a lab experiment. In fact, she had gone to much trouble over the years to avoid just that.

When the lifeboat finally asked for permission to dock at one of Earth’s space elevators, there was much fuss. They were made to wait and then put in quarantine. Kapnos had been right, all four survivors were subjected to numerous physicals and tests. They passed everything, although Anna was found to be pregnant. She told the doctors that she and her husband had been intimate before the disaster happened and that it was a last gift from her dearly departed. Of course, she knew whose baby she really carried.

The survivors stuck to their story that they knew nothing of the Newest Guest or the hotel’s destruction and had been lucky to escape. Military expeditions were sent out to comb through the wreckage of La Belle Île. But their findings were never made public.

After two weeks of quarantine, the survivors were released. The Zaals said goodbye to Constance and went home. Anna and George returned to their home, and Lillian went back to Francis.

~~

Weeks passed.

"I'm home!" George entered the front door, carrying his backpack and tennis equipment. He dropped them in the entryway and took off his shoes. "Mom? Did you see Constance on the feed? She's making the most out of the 'surviving L'île Belliqueuse' coverage, that's for sure."

"Hey, Georgie." Lillian walked into the hall and smiled. "Mom's out, but I'm here."

"Oh, hey, Lillian." George smiled and gave her an awkward hug. "I haven't seen you since the welcome back dinner. How is everything?"

"Oh, I've been busy spending time with Francis. And ... um ... searching for any news on Mrs. Valentine." Lillian blushed.

"I keep telling you, Gwendolyn Valentine is gone. Nossy is someone else now." George shook his head and walked past her into the kitchen. He poured himself a large glass of water.

"I don't believe all that alien stuff. I knew her well. Really well." Lillian shook her head. She watched her brother gulp down water. She took a deep breath. "I don't want to talk about all that stuff. I came here today because I knew Mom was visiting Aunt Becky. It's been hard to find alone time with you. I ... um ... never said a proper thank you for saving me all those times. I mean, you carried me all those flights to an autodoc. It's hard to imagine here in our kitchen. But it happened. As much as the press is all over Mrs. Haversham, you're the big hero, Georgie."

"You did say thank you." George cocked his head and filled his glass again.

"I wanted to say thank you *properly*. Like I did last time ... with my mouth." Lillian removed her gloves and danced her hands in the air seductively. "Even if Mrs. Valentine isn't here, she would have wanted this for us. It's the right thing to do." She slowly lowered her skirts, stepped out of them, and unbuttoned her bodice.

George stared at his sister. He'd come to think of the blowjob as a one-time thing, owing to the intense pressure they were under at the hotel. His glass tipped in his hand, slowly spilling water onto the floor. When his sister was naked, he ogled her. His eyes darting from her small, perky tits, to her narrow but womanly hips, to her delicate hands. He noticed that her bush was trimmed into a neat landing strip. "You ... um ... trimmed your pubes ... Lillian?"

"I did it for you. Francis says it looks stupid. But I read that it was the in-thing with eighteen-year-olds. Do you like it?" Lillian's shoulders rose. Her body tensed.

"Yeah, it looks amazing." George absentmindedly set his empty glass down on the counter. He preferred his mother's triangle, but he wasn't going to tell Lillian that.

“Thank you.” Lillian smiled. “I really wanted you to be happy with your reward.” She looked at the puddle of water that he’d spilled. “You made a mess and we haven’t even started.” She giggled. “I’ll get that.” She grabbed a kitchen towel, got on her hands and knees in front of him, and slowly mopped up the spill.

“Wow ... Lillian.” George took in the long, delicate arch of her spine. The lovely peaks of her shoulder blades. And the tight curves of her pale ass. “Mom ... wouldn’t want you to give me this ... reward.”

“Mom didn’t ask *me* when she bedded *you*.” Her mopping task complete, Lillian handed her brother the wet towel but stayed on her knees. She unbuckled his belt and lowered his trousers. She looked up at his shocked face. “Yes, we could hear you two in the bunk, Georgie. It was a small lifeboat.” She pulled down his underwear, and it was her turn to look shocked. “I remembered that it was big, but after seeing Francis’s penis again ... I guess I thought I had imagined your size.” She put one of her hands at the base of his penis, and the other at the tip like she was measuring a prized catch. “I have no idea how you’re going to put all of that inside me. I hope you don’t ruin me for Francis.”

“Mom was tight at first, but she adjusted.”

Lillian shivered. “Gods ... that’s hot. I want you to tell me all about you and Mom while we do it.” She stroked him with one hand.

“We’re really ... having ... sex?” George watched his sister open her jaw as wide as it would go and suck his cockhead into her mouth. She gave him a thumbs-up and bobbed her head on his dick. He took the pin out of her blond hair and let it fall down her back. “Mom blows me ... almost like you do ... but she can get about halfway down the shaft.”

“Mmmmmppphhhhh.” Lillian’s eyes teared as she pushed him deeper. “Gggaaaack ... gggaaccckkk ... ggaaaccckkkkkk.” She gagged as she went even deeper. She just knew their day was going to be special.

An hour later, they were on George’s bed. Lillian looked over her shoulder, her sweaty hair dangling in her face. “Is this ... how you ... like to do Mom?”

“Yeah ... when she’s like this ... she calls me her stud.” George gripped his sister’s hips tightly.

“Then ... you’re my stud ... ugh ... ugh ... ugh ... too.” Lillian panted in an exaggerated fashion, with her tongue hanging out of her mouth.

“And ... ah ... ah ... I call her ... my bitch.” George smiled.

“Then ... I’m your ... bitch ... too ... ooohhhhhhhhhhh.” No one had ever called her that name. Before the trip, if her brother had dared to call her that, she would have murdered him. Now ... well ... it was going to make her cum on his big cock again.

“And she likes ... when I pull her hair.” George grabbed her hair with one hand and pulled her so that only her fingertips were on the mattress. Her back arched wonderfully.

“Oooooohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.” Stars burst in Lillian’s vision.

George leaned forward, pulling her up even more. He whispered in her ear, “And ... she likes when I mark her. Those were my bites ... ugh ... ugh ... ugh ... on her ass ... that you saw.”

“Oooohhhhhhhhh ... noooooooo ... Francis will ... eeeeeiiiiiiiiiii.” She convulsed as she felt his mouth clamp down on her dainty shoulder. He was marking her. And that was a silly thing to let happen. Her fiancé might see. But it sent her mind spinning into a vortex of pleasure. And wasn’t she giving him whatever he wanted for a day? After her orgasm subsided, she found that he had pressed her to her belly, pinning her to the mattress with both hands on the small of her back. It was a splendidly helpless feeling. “Oooooohhhhhhh ... take me ... take me ... Georgie ... I’m your reward.” She felt his hips fall out of rhythm. Her eyes went wide. *Is he about to ...?*

“I’m ... cumming ... Lillian.” George slammed her hips into the mattress.

“No ... no ... noooooooo ...” But she didn’t need to worry. Her brother pulled out of her. She turned around and eagerly let him spray her with her eyes closed. Something she’d never done for Francis. The hot stuff hit her full in the face and hair. She was so high with pleasure, that she laughed, tasting his salty semen when it hit her tongue. When he was finished, she waited before trying to open her eyes. She remembered that he always had a little extra at the end. And sure enough, three more ropes of cum landed on her tits as he grunted out his release. Then, she felt safe to wipe the cum out of her eyes and gaze lovingly at her brother. They both fell to their backs. She caressed his arm with her sticky, bare hand. “How was ... that?”

“I should ... be a hero ... more often.” He laughed, and she joined in.

Their laughter faded and the silence of the room surrounded them. Lillian caught her breath. She still had a pleasant tingling in her belly and pussy. She sighed. “I hope you never have a chance to be a hero again.”

“Me too.” George nodded and adjusted himself so that the side of her belly served as his pillow. “You said before that you hoped I didn’t ruin you for Francis. How’d that go?”

“I’m sore. You definitely rearranged some things down there.” She shrugged. The weight of him resting on her was divine. She caressed his damp hair. “I’ll give it a few days and see if Francis notices a difference.” She thought of her shoulder. “And I’ll have to keep my upper half covered. I don’t want to explain what my brother’s bite mark is doing on my skin.”

“You’re mine now, Lillian.” George chuckled.

“No apology?” She playfully slapped his head.

“I earned it, right?”

“Yes, you brat.” She smiled. “But the next time we do this, you absolutely can’t mark me.”

“On Apollo’s honor, I won’t mark you again. Once is enough.” He lay quietly, listening to their breathing. “So, does that mean we’re going to hump again?”

“We’ll see.” Lillian giggled and looked over at the clock. “Mom won’t be back for a couple more hours. Can you go again?”

“We’ll see.” George laughed and mounted his sister.

Chapter 30

Both Women Decided to Forgo Gloves

Anna's Diary February 21, 2198

The gloves have come off at home. I never wear them unless Lillian is visiting, or we have other company. I know it drives George to distraction when he sees me doing everyday tasks without gloves. It melts my heart when I spy the way he stares at me. And when he takes me in his arms, Diary, I lose myself completely. I know this won't last forever, but we may have some time left. I agreed that he will enroll in the vocational school and stay at home after high school. Perhaps I'm hampering his manhood by keeping him under my skirts, but he does seem to enjoy it down there.

While we have slipped into anonymity, Constance Haversham continues to shine brighter than any star. She's used her celebrity to full effect, visiting shows, and promoting herself on the world stage. She's even playing fewer matches now. When I spoke to her last, she was dating an unnamed movie star. The gossip swirls around her. I do hope she's well, and I hope we'll see her again.

No sign of Nossy. Perhaps things didn't go well for her on Luna. Or, maybe she is done with our family. Who can say?

George will be home from school soon. He'll find me in my pinafore, dusting in the living room. I'm sure we'll end up in his bed, or mine, as we do most afternoons.

Lillian's Diary February 21, 2198

George and I have decided not to tell Mom about the extra rewards I continue to give him. I thought it would stop when I married Francis, but whenever I'm not with my brother, my thoughts circle back to him. The rest of my life seems gray, and I see color only when we're together.

Seeing my mother's belly swell with her own grandchild has incensed my depravity even more. I told Francis we should start trying for a family just so I could let Georgie unload in me, too. Life is strange. I would never have contemplated such lascivious behavior were it not for La Belle Île and Mrs. Valentine. They are both gone, but they left me with cravings that grow stronger by the day. I yearn to carry my brother's child as my mother does. The ultimate reward for saving my life is letting him plant new life. And I know that I won't have to wait long now.

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The doorbell rang. "I'll get it," Anna called upstairs to her son who was busy with homework. She opened a screen above the kitchen counter where she was chopping an onion and nearly cut her finger off when she saw who was at the door. She hurriedly washed her hands and hustled to the front of the house. She swung the door open and gave an undignified squeal. "Mrs. Haversham! You look well. Well indeed." Anna looked her up and down. The tall, copper-haired woman was positively beautiful. She was made up perfectly, with her hair pinned under a marvelous hat. Her gloves, bodice, and skirts matched, shimmering green and gold in the afternoon light. She held a pretty bouquet of zinnias in all colors. "You *do* look glamorous to tell the truth." Anna ushered her into the house.

"And you look well yourself. I see that you are with child again. Pregnancy becomes you. I'd say you're glowing." Constance beamed at the shorter woman. "Oh, forgive me." She averted her eyes. "I've caught you at a private time. Your hands are bare."

"Oh ... I was just in the kitchen ... I take them off when chopping sometimes." Anna hid her hands behind her butt. "If George is upstairs, as he is now, there's no harm." She backed over to the hallway table, pulled some gloves out of a drawer, and put them on behind her back. "You'll forgive me. We've shared less than decorous moments before." Anna knew all about Constance's tumble with her son on La Belle Île. George had told her several months ago during pillow talk.

"Yes, we have shared some moments. Haven't we?" Constance nodded politely. Of course, she knew the baby in Anna's belly was George's. But she'd never be so crass as to mention it to the woman. They were both blushing profusely.

"Did you come alone? I would have thought you'd be traveling with an entourage." Anna welcomed her into the kitchen. "Can I offer you some tea? I'll take those flowers off your hands. They're beautiful, thank you."

Constance did not hand over the flowers. The crimson on her freckled cheeks deepened. "Oh ... these are for George." She looked around the kitchen. "You have a lovely home. Let's see, no thank you to tea. And I had to ditch my entourage for this trip. Nobody knows I'm here."

"Not even your mysterious movie star boyfriend?" Anna raised an eyebrow, understanding dawning in her mind.

"Not even him. I'm dating Ranse Stallings. But please don't tell anyone." Constance glanced toward the stairs. She rubbed her thighs together. She was so close to a

marvelous fling with her nineteen-year-old paramour. It was delightful to see Anna again, but the small talk was killing her.

“Oh, gosh. He’s handsome.” Anna put a gloved hand to her mouth. She could see Constance watching the stairs with hunger in her eyes. “Is George expecting you? Should I call him down?”

“I’m here as a surprise. Would you mind if I went up to his room on my own?” Constance could barely wait for Anna to say yes. When Anna nodded, Constance darted up the stairs like she was chasing down a job just inside the baseline. Not very decorous indeed. She found his door closed and knocked.

“I’m working on math, Mom. I’ll be down in twenty minutes.” George had a screen open in front of him, working through differential equations. He didn’t take his eyes off his work, even when he heard the handle turn and the door swing open. “I really have to concentrate on this.”

“You can’t put it down for an old friend.” Constance shut the door behind her and smiled. She’d caught him at his desk, with his tie loose, and his sleeves rolled up. Seeing him so casual in his own space filled her belly with warmth. When his shocked smile turned toward her, her pussy quivered, and she forgot about presenting him with flowers. She dropped them to the floor.

“Mrs. Haversham?” George slowly stood.

“At one point during our stay in the hotel, we talked about my stopping by your house for a date. I’m not sure if you were serious.” She removed her hat and hung it by his door. She pulled the pin out of her hair and shook it loose. “I wanted to give you that date as a surprise. I even brought flowers.” She frowned at the bouquet on his carpet. “Which I apologize for littering your room with.” She looked at him, and her face brightened. “We can’t go out or anything. I would get recognized. The press would have a field day if I was spotted with one of the other survivors. But ... here I am. For a date. Surprise!” She thrust her hip to the side and struck a pose.

“You look even more beautiful than I remembered.” George quickly closed the gap between them, pulling her into his arms.

“You’ve gotten taller. I ... mmmpppphhhhhhhhhh.” Constance was now eye to eye with him, or lip to lip as they kissed, their tongues dancing. She placed her legs on either side of his thigh and rubbed against him, enjoying his strong hands on her ass. It had been difficult to plan this visit, but she could tell it was going to be well worth it.

Downstairs, Anna paused near the oven when the thumping began from upstairs. It started slow, but it picked up rapidly. She knew the cadence of her son’s hips well, and it seemed that Constance had visited for another tumble. Anna chewed on her lip. She

wasn't sure how she felt about it. On the one hand, her son was still a teenager. Maybe she should let him have his youthful pleasures. On the other hand, Constance was older and not eligible for courtship.

Anna paced the kitchen for a while, listening to the steady rhythm of mating, and Constance's muffled cries. She eventually decided to let them be. They were alive, home, and he had a right to enjoy himself. She went upstairs to change her panties and put in a pantie liner, but she didn't disturb them. Then she went back to fixing supper.

In George's room, Constance bounced eagerly on the teenager. They were both naked now, their fine clothes strewn about the room. "Courting any ... ah ... ah ... ah ... girls ... at school?"

"No ... I haven't ... had the time." George smiled up at her. He grabbed one of her modest breasts and squeezed. Her bust was bigger than Lillian's, but smaller than his mother's swelling bosom. He massaged her flesh and decided he thoroughly enjoyed all three versions of femininity. "You know ... with varsity tennis ... schoolwork ... and my mom."

"You and she ... are still ...?" Constance's hips sped up. What a delightful young man George had turned out to be. She would make an effort to visit more often.

"We're thick as ... thieves." George rolled her nipple with his fingers.

"And the baby ...?"

"It's mine." George watched the orgasm wash over her normally composed face. It was wonderful to have someone to share his maternal secrets with. Especially, since Constance seemed to thoroughly enjoy hearing about them.

Their date lasted several hours. Finally, exhausted, they lay in each other's arms on the floor.

"Would you like to stay for dinner?" George ran his fingers along her back, feeling each neatly defined muscle.

"I think I'd better go." She kissed his cheek, disentangled herself, and stood. Slowly, she dressed. "Thank you for this. For making this possible."

"You saved my life, too." George shrugged. He tended to be modest when his actions at La Belle Île en Mer came up with his sister and mother. There was no need to brag. They all knew what had happened.

"Regardless. Thank you." Constance finished buttoning her bodice. "I'm living my life to the fullest. I know what happened to Roy could have easily happened to me. But I'm here." A dark cloud passed over her face and cleared. She smiled at him. "You should come to a match. Would you like that? I could get tickets for you and your mother."

“That would be splendid.” George stood and pulled on his underwear. “But even more than that, I’d like to see you again ... for another date. You and I ... fit well together. Don’t you think?”

“I concur, Mr. Zaal.” She nodded an affirmative and gave him a mock serious face. “I’ll give you a wave when I’m in the neighborhood again, and we can have another date.” She smoothed out her skirts and stepped over the zinnias. She was already leaking his seed into her panties. She prayed that her underwear would dam the reservoir until she could properly drain herself. “Sorry I dropped your flowers.” She found her hairpin and hastily wound up her red hair.

“It’s the thought that counts.” George crossed the room, drawn by her beauty. He took her into his arms again and pressed his lips to hers. They kissed for several minutes before breaking apart.

“Well, now. You do make a strong pitch for more dates at the Zaal house.” Constance retrieved her hat, gave him a friendly pat on the rump, and opened his door. “Until next time, George.”

“Goodbye, Constance.” George watched her descend the stairs. He then went back to his room and started back on his math homework.

~~

“Mom?” George was reading in the living room on the couch. He looked over to the overstuffed armchair where his mother read her novel. She wore only a long, sleeveless nightgown. A sartorial decision women would usually reserve only for their husbands. When she glanced over at him and smiled, his heart melted.

“What is it, sunshine?” Anna placed her bookmark and set the book down on the table beside her.

“Would you mind if I had another date with Mrs. Haversham? I had a lot of fun today.” He gazed into her gentle eyes. As always, they were the color of the sea after a storm.

“I would rather that you focused your ... um ... vitality on courting a suitable young woman.” Her smile widened. “Don’t look so worried.” Anna’s laugh filled the quiet room like soft chiming bells. “I would rather that was the case, of course. But you’re nineteen now and free to make your own decisions. Regardless of what you choose ...” She got up from the armchair, holding her burgeoning belly with one hand, and crossed over to the couch. She moved his book aside and sat in his lap. His penis delightfully poked her butt

cheek. She encircled his neck with her arms, his hot, sweet breath in her flaring nostrils. "You decide whether to see her again. I'm your mother, and I'll always love you."

"You're my bitch, Mom. Always." George lowered his trousers and underwear, and lifted her nightgown. She wasn't wearing panties. Her wetness made it easy to slip inside her pussy. She was still facing sideways, with both legs to one side, so she wasn't able to bounce herself easily. He lifted her up and dropped her down on his dick repeatedly.

"Oooohhhhhh ... uuuggghhhh ... and you're my stud ... Georgie." Her eyes grew distant, and her mouth went slack as she let her son manipulate her on top of him. "And I'm your ... bitch ... oooooohhhhhhhhhh ... always."

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George's Diary April 2, 2198

By next Saturnalia, I will likely be a father two times over. My mother is wonderfully round now, her enormous belly even making her boobs small by comparison. It is such a joy to watch her move about, carrying the baby I will soon meet. And my sister is pregnant now, too. Lillian and I have decided to keep my likely parentage a secret, since our coupling is something only she and I share.

Constance has continued to visit every month, but I won't be a father thrice. She sealed her tubes a long time ago.

I know my mother still has nightmares. I hear her whimper in her sleep sometimes. I have nightmares, too. I see the faces of everyone I couldn't save. My father is the worst. Not only because of my love for him and the horror of what happened to him, but because I have now replaced him. Had he not succumbed to the Newest Guest, would I still have taken his half of the bed away from him? My mother is too perfect. I surely would have. I think that's why his specter haunts me most of all.

I am starting to grieve for Nossy, too. She should have shown up here by now, wearing some gorgeous woman's zaftig form. It darkens my heart not knowing. I hope she's living it up on Luna, tricking some unknowing human into the hump of his or her life.

~~

"I'm not sure he'll like this. And frankly, it's unsettling." Anna looked into her own eyes. But she wasn't standing in front of a mirror or a screen. And the woman looking back at her wasn't pregnant. "This is so strange."

"You said he liked Mrs. Haversham's surprise. We'll only have one shot at one-upping that moment. He doesn't know I'm here. And I doubt he'd think you'd ever agree to this." Kapnos smiled warmly, wearing a copy of Anna's body.

"He's not alone. I can't believe I agreed to this." Anna straightened her poorly fitting lingerie. "Are we really going to do ... everything with him? It's ... so surreal talking to myself."

Kapnos adjusted her well-fitted lingerie. It was form perfect, because she had made it herself. Out of herself, really. "Now is not the time for cold feet. I hear him at the front door."

"Mom! We won the tournament!" George was sweaty and smiling as he dropped his backpack and tennis equipment by the front door. He removed his shoes and strolled down the hall. "We won, Mom. Where are you?"

"I'm in my bedroom," Kapnos called in Anna's voice. "Come on up, sweetie."

"I never call him 'sweetie.'" Anna whispered. "Both he and Lillian are my little drops of sunshine."

"My mistake." Kapnos held up her bare hand in apology.

"I won my match two sets to one. My opponent was slicing the ball like crazy and I thought ..." George stopped in the doorway. His jaw dropped, and his head swiveled as he looked back and forth at his two mothers. One was just as pregnant as she'd been when he'd left for school that morning. The other looked as she had months ago.

"Surprise!" Anna held her arms wide. As she did so, her right boob popped out of the overmatched lingerie. She quickly stuffed it back in. "Look who I found."

"Nossy?" George's face lit up. "You came back." He rushed over and hugged the nongravid version of his mother.

"I'm sorry it took me so long. I had to be sure you weren't being watched." She reached her hand to the front of his trousers and squeezed. "There it is. My boyfriend's cock."

Anna cleared her throat.

"Forgive me, other Anna." Kapnos's smile broadened. "But I just found my boyfriend's glorious penis. And you agreed to share it with me. At least for today." She dropped to her knees and began unbuckling his trousers.

“You ... what?” George’s brows knitted in disbelief. Was this for real? He’d maintained a moratorium on Kapnos copying his mother when they were at the hotel. But if his mother had agreed, maybe ...

“When she contacted me and pitched this ridiculous surprise, I told her ‘no’ quite quickly.” Anna stepped over to him and removed his jacket. She then slowly loosened his tie. “But when your friend, Nossy, mentioned that she knew how much you loved me. And how special it might be to be gifted with two of me ... I still thought it ludicrous. But somehow, I said yes. If it doesn’t make you happy, we can call this off. I do find it very strange to ...” She looked down to see Kapnos eagerly blowing her son’s hard penis. “It is very, *very* strange to watch myself suck you. But I can see why you might like it.”

“Thank you for arranging this, Mom. You’re the best.” George pulled his mother into a deep kiss. His mom’s sweet mouth was pressed to his lips and bobbing on his cock at the same time. *I’m glad I survived Belle Île to be here for this.*

An hour later, they were all naked on Anna’s bed.

Kapnos was riding George in reverse, her hands clutching his thighs.

Anna lay next to them, cum slowly trickling out of her asshole. Her gaze was fixed on her son’s long, thick cock and the way the alien’s rear end rippled and shook with each impact. *It’s not Nossy’s butt, it’s mine. This is what George sees when I ride him backward.* “My gosh, my body looks small on top of you like that, Georgie. Where does all that penis go?”

“I wondered ... the same thing ... uuuggghhhhhh.” Kapnos’s blond hair was loose and bouncing in the air around her shoulders and over her face. It became weightless for a split second at the apex of each thrust. So did her giant boobs. Kapnos reached up with one hand and fondled her nipple. “And ... I love how sensitive ... your breasts are ... Anna.” Her eyes rolled back, and her hips went even harder.

“Do you like the way she rides you? I don’t think I’ve ever been ... so vigorous.” Anna put a tentative hand on Kapnos’s butt cheek and held on as it bounced violently. A thrill went through her. “I don’t think I could ride you like this now. But after the baby arrives, would you like me to try?”

“Yes ... ugh ... ugh ... ugh ... yes ... Mom ... I’d love to ... see you bounce ... like that.” George reached over for his mother’s heavy tit and played with her nipple.

“I have so much to learn about sex. I don’t think I was doing it right before you and I started, sunshine.” Anna bit her lip and shivered, tendrils of pleasure reaching out from her son’s touch on her breast.

“Please ... don’t compare yourself ... to me ... Anna.” Kapnos looked over at the woman and gave her a feral smile. “I’ve been mating humans for over ... ah ... ah ... ah ... a thousand years. I’ve had ... uuuuuggghhhhhh ... lots of practice.” She rhythmically tightened her pussy around his cock. In addition to practice, she had a few tricks up her sleeves humans did not.

“Aaaaahhhhhhhh ... Nossy ... Mom ... I’m going to cum.” George’s left hand gripped Kapnos’s ass cheek right next to his mother’s hand, and his right tightened its hold on his mother’s tit. His hips bucked. “Cuuummmmmminngggg ... aaaaahhhhhhhhhh.” He unloaded into his alien girlfriend.

“Oh my ... yes ... yes ... George ... finish inside her. I love watching you do this.” Anna trembled as she saw more and more froth on his shaft collect with each thrust. Her son’s hot sperm was mixing with Kapnos’s juices. She was witnessing her son seed another woman. And that other woman had her body. She felt dizzy.

“Yessssssssssssss.” Kapnos kept her hips moving even after she would have stopped with most other men. She knew he always paused at the end of his orgasm, but there would be a little more to milk out of him. *There it is!* How lovely it was to be back with the Zaals. She collapsed on top of George when he finished and let out a long sigh. It was good to be home.

They took a break for dinner. They sat around the table with wine, authentic potatoes, and manufactured beef. They had all cleaned up and wore appropriate attire for dinner. Although, scandalous as it would seem to an outsider, both women decided to forgo gloves.

“This is better than Aubergine. Better than anything the hotel had in the suites.” Kapnos smiled warmly and cut her beef demurely with fork and knife. “Simply delicious. You are an exemplary cook, Anna.”

“Thank you.” Anna nodded and smiled. She sipped her wine, feeling a bit tipsy. “How does my cuisine compare to my son’s cum?” When she realized what she’d said, she put her hand to her mouth and her eyes went wide.

“Mom!” George nearly knocked over his wineglass in surprise.

“I’m sorry. I don’t know where that came from.” Anna would have reprimanded her son for such an outburst. She’d committed so many sins lately, maybe they were becoming second nature to her.

Kapnos let out a long, pretty laugh. It was with Anna’s voice, but the chime of it was more robust. “I don’t know why you’re asking me. How much of your son’s seed have you imbibed? I dare say you’ve had more than me, and thus, you should be a better judge.” She laughed harder.

Anna giggled, she couldn't help it. The mirth built in her. Soon, she let out long peels of laughter, holding her bouncing belly.

George's smile widened and eventually he was laughing with his two mothers. It seemed a perfect moment to him, even when his guffaws caused him to spill his wine on his mother's gorgeous tablecloth.

That night he slept in his mother's large bed between Kapnos and his mother. They snuggled up on either side. No nightmares dared visit.

The next morning, Kapnos taught them a new position.

"Ohhhhhhhh ... gosh ... oh ... gosh ... I can just see your butt rising again and again ... past my belly." Anna was on her back with her legs spread. Her flowing blond hair was pressed against the headboard. Her son pounded her vagina facing the opposite direction, his head near the foot of the bed. Kapnos had needed to walk them through the position step by step. It did not come naturally to mother or son. But they were getting the hang of it.

"Wow ... Mom ... it looks wild ... from here." George's arms were extended, holding himself up. He dropped his head so he could look underneath and see his cock pulverizing his mother's pussy. "If my ... penis wasn't so long ... I don't think we could do this." It was true, he wasn't penetrating her fully, but he was smashing directly into a new part of her womb.

"It's not deep ... but that spot ... that spot ... eeeeeeeeeiiiiiiiiiiiiiii." Anna wondered if he would try this position on Constance too, or a new girlfriend when he was finally ready to court. Of course he would. He had been gifted with a splendid penis and athletic ability. Now he would learn every fornicating secret there was. As she climaxed, she thought about all the hearts he would break in his day. She was upping her previous estimate. When her climax passed, she wiped her sweaty brow and smiled. The one heart he wouldn't break was his mother's. She was confident that they had found happiness together and had built the trust to navigate whatever adventures life would throw their way. "Yes ... yes ... keep ... humping me ... Georgie ... just ... like ... that ... eeeeeeeeeiiiiiiiiiiiiiii." Another orgasm swept through her. Life was good.

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Kapnos's Diary May 23, 2198

Baby Noah has arrived healthy and happy. George is a proud brother/father. He is doing his best to help his mother. I/we have earned enough of Anna's trust that she has allowed me/us to change diapers, sing lullabies, and generally be useful as well.

I/we tapped one of my/our anonymous funds and bought a house down the street from them. It's a lovely neighborhood. I/we no longer take Anna's form, of course. That was just a one-time thing. I/we appear as a beautiful woman who I/we found in the coroner's office on Luna. Unfortunately for the woman, she passed at the age of thirty-three. But I/we kept a sample of her in cold storage, and I/we should get to wear her beguiling dark skin and raven hair for a while.

George and I/we are very close, but I/we try to give his mother lots of room. I/we don't want Anna to grow jealous. I/we have seen it before. Constance visits from time to time. I/we still haven't been able to coax her into bed. However, it wasn't difficult to seduce Lillian with my/our new form. She and I/we have kept the affair secret from the others. I/we don't like keeping secrets from George, but I/we understand Lillian's position. She doesn't know what I/we truly are. Apparently, George tried to tell her a while back, and she wouldn't believe. That's fine with me/us. It certainly doesn't change the way she shrieks on my/our tongue.

While living in the suburbs is not ideal for my/our lifestyle, I/we expect to stay a long time. It seems safe enough, and I/we certainly enjoy my/our life with the Zaals. While large hotels have been useful in the past, I/we may stay clear of them in the future.

I/we scour the news for anything on the Newest Guest, but I/we find nothing. I/we feel confident that it didn't survive, but I/we worry about the lab it escaped from. Perhaps someday, if I/we summon the courage, a trip to Venus might be in my/our future. I/we feel ashamed that I/we almost left the Zaals. This makes me/us rethink some things. I/we wouldn't want to abandon humanity to its more nefarious members. Perhaps it's time I/we became more involved.

I/we hear the baby crying. I/we must comfort him while Anna naps. His little screams are so plaintive. I/we feel like a second mother to him already. Maybe someday, when he turns eighteen, I/we will get a taste of the ambrosia that Anna drinks. I/we must go to him. More later, Diary.

THE END