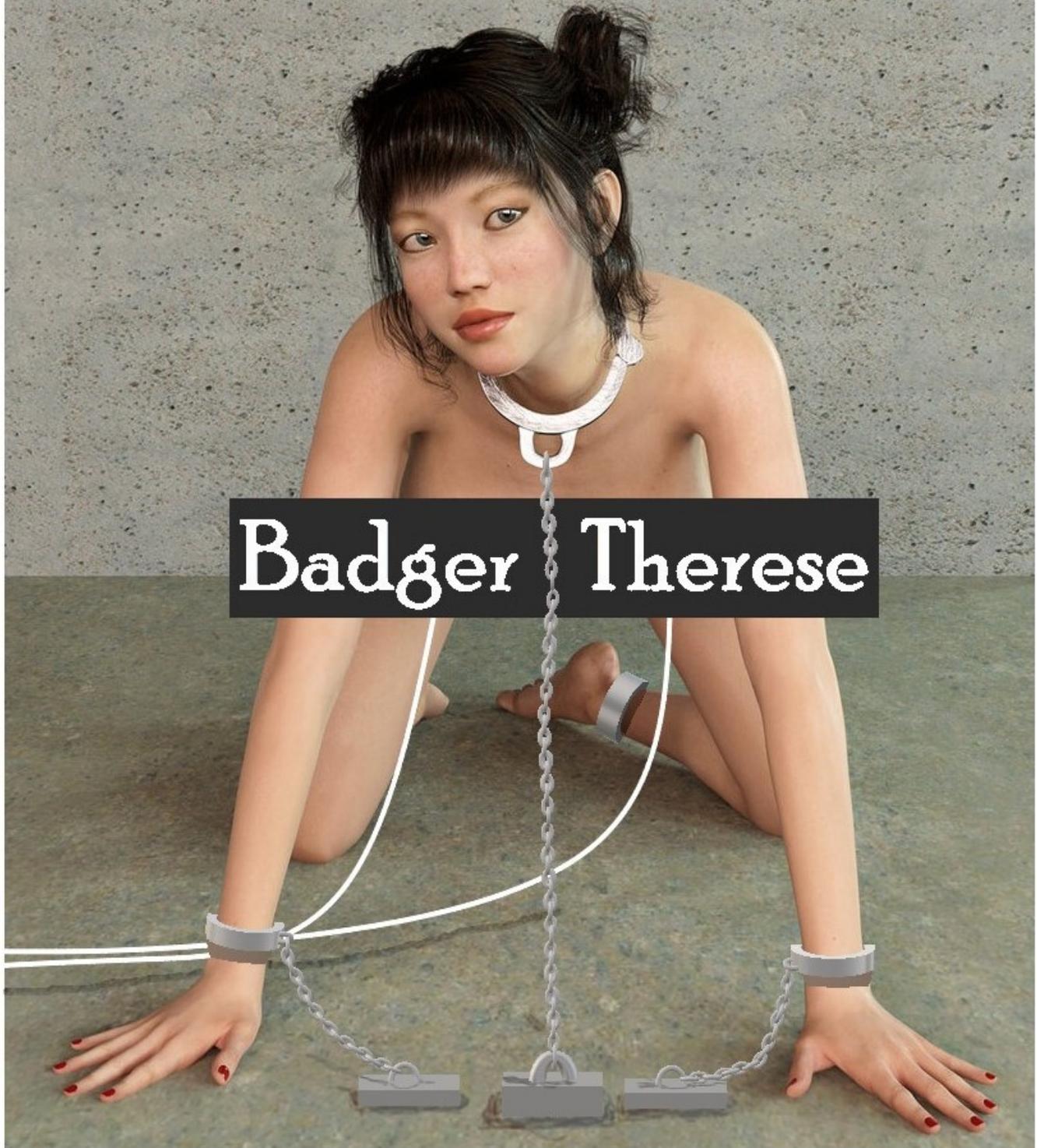


The Production Contract

Badger Therese



The Production Contract
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12292018

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Epilogue

Chapter 1: A Disappointing Letter

Gabrielle DeBeers, always stoic, always practical, took the bitter news of her temporarily crushed dreams calmly.

“Mom,” she called from her bed, where she had sat to open the letter from Brown. “I’m not going to school this fall!”

Gabrielle heard the water in the kitchen shut off, the clink of a pan being set in the sink, and she waited.

Soon enough, Mrs. DeBeers appeared at her bedroom door, wiping her hands on a towel

She looked at her daughter carefully before she spoke, trying to gauge her distress, probably. Gabrielle, knowing that’s what her mother was doing, tried to look normal, if not placid.

“What does it say?” she finally asked.

“It’s not terrible,” Gabrielle said, and she held it up. “My scores are very good, like they’ve said before. I almost made it in this fall. And if I want to reapply for the spring, I’ll probably get in.”

“Okay . . .” Mrs. DeBeers began, pausing because she seemed to want her daughter to continue speaking.

“So, okay, I have to figure this out. But I won’t be leaving July 1. At least, not for college.”

“We’ve already got your room rented out,” Mrs. DeBeers said.

“I thought that was tentative,” Gabrielle said.

“We got her deposit a few days ago.”

Gabrielle looked at her mother, understanding her full meaning. Practicality ran in the family, and it was something Gabrielle loved about her mother, and sometimes hated. She understood, though. She was a woman now, 18, and she needed to make her way.

“I could sleep on the couch, once she moves in. You said that’s where I’ll stay when I visit.”

“No,” Mrs. DeBeers said simply. Her answer wasn’t surprising. No one, including Gabrielle herself, wanted her living on the old couch in the den for nine months.

“It’s May second,” Mrs. DeBeers said. “You’ve got two months to find a job and get an apartment.”

“I’ll be in school until June 12, and I have papers and finals,” Gabrielle protested.

Although her hands were dry, Mrs. DeBeers continued working the towel as she stared at her daughter with the mix of love and unyielding expectations that had always defined their relationship.

“Then you’re going to be very busy.”

Gabrielle sighed, no longer feeling practical.

“No one is hiring right now. That pipe factory closed, and then that other place. There are no jobs.”

“Then you must have asked everyone?”

“No,” Gabrielle replied. “So, are you still mad that I didn’t apply to any other schools?”

“Not mad,” Mrs. DeBeers. “Disappointed.”

“I’m only going to Brown. It’s there or nowhere.”

“Well, then, you’ve made your decision. So now you’ll have to deal with the consequences.”

“What if I’m homeless?” Gabrielle asked.

“You’re an adult,” Mrs. DeBeers said. “You’ll figure it out.”

Gabrielle looked hard at her mother. She’d known this day was coming. She’d been warned about it often enough: that day when Mom would cut the apron strings, push her only child out of the nest, set her up on her own two feet and tell her to walk

A day of stupid clichés.

Still, it was hard. If Brown had accepted her for the fall, none of this would be happening. She’d be about to leave for college, where she would get by on school loans and an assistanceship.

She looked at her bookbag, weighed her options, returned to practicality. Graduating from high school with as close to a 4.0 as possible would remain her first priority. Getting a job – or several jobs, most likely – that paid well enough to cover rent and food would be a close second. If she couldn’t find anything by July 1, maybe she could find a roommate.

Mrs. DeBeers was still at the door, but Gabrielle ignored her, slid off her bed, dropped the letter into the trash and grabbed her bookbag, plopping it on her desk and unzipping it.

“You could go back to A&P.”

“They never gave me more than 10 hours a week,” Gabrielle countered. “And then there was that thing, where they didn’t pay me for my

time, remember? You were upset too.”

“You were good. Maybe they’d take you back. And if the machine doesn’t stamp your time card, go to a supervisor.”

“Okay, I’ll ask,” Gabrielle lied.

“Oh, and I ran into Mrs. Arnold at the store a few days ago, she asked what you were doing.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said.

“She asked what you were doing after graduation,” Mrs. DeBeers clarified. “When I said your plans weren’t definite, she said you should call her.”

“You mean, to work there?”

“I assume so,” Mrs. DeBeers said.

“I know nothing about farming.”

“There’s all kinds of jobs you can do on a farm.”

“She wasn’t specific?”

“No. We were both in a hurry. Just call her.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle agreed

The next three weeks were a blur. Assignments, graduation party planning, frustrating interactions with her boyfriend, Roger, who asked Gabrielle out more than once and cancelled, who seemed distracted on the one real date then went on, to a movie and dinner. There were times she wanted to have sex with him, but he was busy too with end-of-year assignments, and there were the usual obstacles of parents and lack of privacy, so she had to settle for kissing in his car twice.

And hanging over her head throughout, like a dark black cloud, was the need for a full-time job where she could earn enough to pay the rent, to be independent. She had planned to call and visit prospective employers for an hour per day, but after the third day of nothing but no’s and sorry’s, the mere thought of trying drove her into despair.

At lunch on a Friday, the last day of May, the black cloud turned to deep panic.

“Dad says I can work in his shop over the summer,” Betsy Driver had said.

“I wish my dad had a shop,” Gabrielle blurted. “I wish he could do something besides just sit there, or limp around the neighborhood.”

“Is he getting any better?”

“Ups and downs. But he still can’t work.”

Gabrielle paused, looked at her food. “You know they’re kicking me out July 1, right?”

“Yeah. That sucks about Brown.”

“If I got a job tomorrow, I wouldn’t get paid for probably three weeks, and it wouldn’t be enough to pay the first month’s deposit. And I’m not going to get a job tomorrow. So in a month I’m going to be homeless.”

“Have you been calling?”

“Oh yeah, I called places. That sucked too. No one’s hiring.”

“Don’t your parents know anyone?”

“No,” Gabrielle said. “Well, like, farmers.”

Betsy laughed. “I can so see you driving a tractor and herding sheep.”

“Seriously. I mean, Mom said they asked about me, though.”

“Who?”

“Grace Arnold.”

“You mean, at Arnold Farm? How do you know them?”

“Their farm is right down the road from us, so we’ve always known them.”

“Don’t they have a daughter?”

“Yeah, Doria. My age, and we used to hang out a lot, but she had sort of a learning disability, so her parents sent her to a special high school out of state. I don’t see her that much anymore.”

“You know someone supposedly saw Cameron Flasche there.”

“Where?”

“At Arnold Farm.”

“What do you mean?” Gabrielle demanded.

“I don’t know. He was there, they said.”

“When were you going to tell me that Cameron Flasche had been seen a quarter mile from my house?”

“I heard about it a few days ago. I swear I was planning to tell you, just slipped my mind with everything else going on.”

“There are some things that don’t slip people’s minds.”

“Yeah, if I’d seen him, I would have called you on the spot. But it’s, like, just a rumor. Third hand. Someone told someone, and that someone told my mom, and then my mom mentioned it, casually, like ‘You knew Cameron Flasche, right?’”

“Duh,” Gabrielle said. “Who didn’t know Cameron Flasche?”

“So I said yeah and she said that he’s still in town, but out at Arnold Farm. I mean, that’s weird, right? It doesn’t make sense. So I tried to be casual too, just like ‘Oh, who said that, Mom?’ and she couldn’t remember who told her, maybe at a party or something. And then, it was even weirder, because she said she wasn’t supposed to know, or the information was confidential or something. And so it didn’t even make enough sense for me to really remember. You know, like not top-of-mind memory.”

“Yeah.”

“So it was more like lower-in-the-mind memory. Like, with my underwear and socks.”

“And your dildos,” Gabrielle quipped, because talking about Cameron Flasche brought out her randy side.

“Oh, yeah,” Betsy said, trying to change the subject before she started blushing. “Okay, you have to call them then. Just to find out if he’s really there.”

Gabrielle laughed dismissively, and the first thing she did when she got home from school was open her bookbag and look at the highlighted sections of her *Biology II* textbook. But soon enough, she pulled her cellphone out of her back pocket and found the home number for Doria Arnold.

On the second ring, a woman’s voice said “Hello?”

“Mrs. Arnold?”

“Yes?”

“It’s Gabrielle DeBeers. I—”

“Gabrielle! How are you?”

“Very good, thank you,” Gabrielle replied.

“How’s your mother and father?”

“Mom’s great, and Dad’s doing as well as can be expected.”

“Yes . . . I saw your mom last week. She said you might be going to Brown. She’s very proud of you.”

“Well . . . that’s the thing,” Gabrielle said, wanting to get to the point of the call now and get it over with. “I’m not going to Brown.”

“I’m sorry to hear that.”

“Not in the fall, anyway. Hopefully spring. I didn’t get in for the fall.”

“I’m sure you’ll do very well. I believe I’ve seen your name in the paper every time they publish that scholar athlete list.”

“Oh, thank you for noticing!” Gabrielle said, just wanting to get to point and not knowing how.

“Of course,” Mrs. Arnold said, falling silent.

“So . . .” Gabrielle began awkwardly, “so the reason I’m calling, is Mom said she saw you a few weeks ago, or a I guess last month, and . . .”

“I did,” Mrs. Arnold confirmed.

“And you seemed . . . or she thought . . . maybe I should . . .”

“We could really use you,” Mrs. Arnold said.

Gabrielle laughed, awkwardly again, because Mrs. Arnold had used a strange expression.

“To work? Like for a job?”

“Yes,” Mrs. Arnold replied. “In a sense. Would you like to visit with us Sunday? Mr. Arnold and I can tell you what we need in person.”

“Yes, that would be great,” Gabrielle said. “But, um, one thing . . .”

“Yes?”

“I know nothing about farming. You know that, right?”

“Of course. Two on Sunday?”

“Yes, see you then.”

Over the next two days, Gabrielle boomeranged between hope and despair. For every positive outcome she could imagine for Sunday’s visit, she imagined a dozen outcomes that did her no good. Maybe they just wanted to see how she was doing, or wanted her to reconnect with Doria, or wanted her to get involved in some pyramid scheme, like Amway or something.

But that Sunday she stayed in the dress she wore to church, a modest cream gown that highlighted her long, straight, black hair, draping her shoulders. She was a tall girl, five foot eight, slender, with pale skin and delicate features.

No one who looked at her, of course, would see a girl who should be doing anything on a farm, she thought self-consciously. She pulled up her hem and tried to keep it out of the dirt as she crossed the road from her modest neighborhood of two-bedroom tract homes and climbed the hill that led to the Arnold’s front door.

The house was comfortable, ornate but not a mansion, surrounded by a yard of grass and a dozen tall, stately trees: walnut, oak, elm.

The farm itself, the fields and orchards and barns, was almost invisible from the road, but as Gabrielle walked up the tree-sheltered front walk, she could see the fences and pastures, the two silos of brick and tin, a smaller barn that had always been there and, farther back, a very large barn built about seven years ago, its sloped roof at least three stories high.

Beyond the structures were hundreds of acres of land, a pond, a small woods. Gabrielle and Doria had explored all of it when they were younger.

Just before she knocked, Gabrielle reminded herself that no, she would not be asking about Cameron Flasche. The most beautiful boy she knew of or had ever seen would not be a topic of conversation today, even if there were 10 minutes of awkward silence.

When in doubt, bring up the weather.

Chapter 2: An Awkward Interview

Mrs. Arnold, also in her Sunday finest, greeted Gabrielle at the door with a hug and a kiss, and ushered her into the parlor, where Mr. Arnold leaned against the jamb of the door leading into the kitchen, holding a sheaf of papers.

“Hello, Gabrielle,” he said.

“Hello, Mr. Arnold,” she replied, sitting down in the middle of the loveseat. Mrs. Arnold sat in a chair facing her, a coffee table between them, on it resting a pot of tea and enough scones for a dozen people.

As long as she had known him, Mr. Arnold had seemed old. Older than Mrs. Arnold, older than he should have been to be Doria’s father. It wasn’t that he looked old, exactly, but he was tall and gaunt, and bald. And his back stooped a little, as if he’d been alive so long that gravity had taken its inevitable toll.

Mrs. Arnold, by contrast, was round and youthful, red-haired and rosy-cheeked, like a child in some ways, although on this sunny afternoon, the lines in her face were clear to Gabrielle as the woman bent over to pour Gabrielle’s tea.

Mrs. Arnold was, however, the more serious of the two, something that had struck Gabrielle since she had been old enough to notice. There was a wryness to Mr. Arnold, a twinkle that would appear in his eyes that prefaced a joke, a humorous observation, a retort.

Gabrielle picked up her tea with two careful fingers, trying to appear sophisticated, or efficient, or whatever it was the Arnolds wanted to see in the girl they hired.

It was June the second. In thirteen days, Gabrielle would graduate from high school. Fifteen days after that, she would need to find another place to live. If the Arnolds hired her today at a decent salary – say, 10 dollars an hour – she could probably manage 15 hours a week now, full time as soon as she graduated. That would be \$1,100 before taxes, probably \$800 after. Any decent apartment she looked at cost at least \$600, and they all wanted a full month’s rent plus half up front, so at least \$900. And then, water, electricity, internet – they all wanted deposits up front. And she’d need food. No way it would work, at least not on her own. Maybe she could

find a roommate who'd accept what she could pay for a few weeks. Or months. But she knew no independent people that well. How did one find roommates? So maybe she'd just be homeless until she could get to Brown. She had sometimes of late imagined being frozen somehow, passing through the half year after graduation in a state of suspended animation, waking in late December, in time for Christmas, to learn that Brown was waiting for her, that she'd be starting school in two weeks.

Really, though, she didn't have to be asleep. She'd spend the next 6 months in a box if she could just be fed a few times a day.

"So, you're looking for something to do until next January?" Mrs. Arnold asked.

"Yes," Gabrielle replied. "I'd be glad to learn how to do anything you needed done here."

"What we really need," Mrs. Arnold began, and Gabrielle detected a twinge of awkwardness as the woman paused.

This wasn't going to be a normal job, Gabrielle despaired to herself. It might not be a job at all.

"We grow corn here, and alfalfa, and lettuce, and a lot of other things," Mrs. Arnold said. "And we also produce breastmilk."

"Yes," Gabrielle said. "I know you've always had a lot of different things going on. That's always—"

"Breastmilk," Mrs. Arnold continued. "Human breastmilk."

Gabrielle smiled. "Oh, wow. You mean, for babies to drink?"

"Yes, it has a lot of uses."

"More than you can shake a stick at," Mr. Arnold quipped from his place by the door.

"You make it here?" Gabrielle asked.

"Yes," Mrs. Arnold said. "We're managing 43 production females right now."

"You mean . . . people?" Gabrielle queried.

"Yes," she replied. "It's still the only way to make it."

"Okay," Gabrielle said. "So I could help with that? Or with something else?"

"How would you feel about producing?" Mrs. Arnold asked, raising her tea to take another sip.

"Producing what?"

"Producing milk."

“I’d be glad to help wherever you needed me,” Gabrielle said.

Mrs. Arnold smiled patiently. “So you’d be producing milk,” she said, raising her hands to her breasts, cupping them.

“Oh, oh,” Gabrielle stammered, laughing, realizing that the conversation had taken a sudden, completely inappropriate turn. “I’m not nursing. Oh, god. I’ve never had a kid. Oh. I mean, I could help out in other ways, but not . . . I’m not . . .”

“You’d take hormones,” Mrs. Arnold said.

“Take a week or two to get you going,” Mr. Arnold said.

“So I’d . . . I’d make milk for you?” Gabrielle asked. The idea seemed preposterous, but she was willing to humor them until her tea was gone and she could excuse herself and walk back home.

“Yes,” said Mrs. Arnold, confidently now, the embarrassment of broaching the topic past.

Gabrielle looked down at her breasts, perky and decent-sized, C cups. “I’m not sure I’m big enough,” she said.

Mr. Arnold laughed. “Size doesn’t matter,” he said. “At least for that.”

Gabrielle laughed, looked at him, met his eyes. He wasn’t leering, wasn’t ogling, but his gaze was steady, practical, as if he were assessing her.

“Well,” Gabrielle said, drawing in her breath, hating the next question she needed to ask. “How much does it pay?”

“Five hundred a month,” Mrs. Arnold said. “Plus a small bonus for surplus production and good behavior. And profit sharing.”

“How much time would it take?” Gabrielle continued, trying to hide her disappointment. Five hundred dollars would be a nice supplement, but it wouldn’t come close to paying the bills. She’d still need to find at least one other job – a job that let her leave to be milked. Or maybe she could milk herself?

“Most of our girls are milked six times a day,” Mrs. Arnold said.

“How long does it take?”

“A half an hour, on average.”

“It’s done here?”

“Oh, yes,” Mrs. Arnold said.

Gabrielle worked through the challenges quickly, realized the impossibility of it all. No employer would let her leave multiple times during her shift, disappearing for close to an hour at a time.

“Yeah, that wouldn’t work,” Gabrielle said. “Not with any other job, probably.”

“You have another job?”

“No, but I’d need one.”

“Why?”

“I’m moving out on July first. Mom’s renting out my bedroom. So I’ve got to pay rent, and get food. And everything else.”

“You’d stay with us,” Mrs. Arnold said.

“Here?” Gabrielle said, looking up at the ceiling. All the bedrooms were on the second floor.

“In the barn, with the other girls,” Mrs. Arnold said.

“Oh, wow. How much is rent?”

“It’s free.”

“Oh, wow. Free?”

“Yes.”

“Okay, okay. What’s the food situation? Utilities?”

“All free. Medical too.”

“How?”

“It has to be done that way,” Mrs. Arnold said. “Reliability and quality are very important to the companies we sell to. That means things have to be done a certain way.

“By the book,” Mr. Arnold said. “By *all* the books.”

“Books?” Gabrielle repeated, not sure if he was being serious.

“We’ve got the highest accreditation from the National Board of Alternative Dairy, and that’s a whole book right there. The USDA comes through every six weeks, and their book would take a lifetime to read. There’s research you have to know and follow, unless you’re a fool. A lot of things I’ve learned, and that’s my book. And every customer has rules.”

“Who are your customers?”

“Everyone,” replied Mr. Arnold proudly. “Hospitals, food service, pharmaceuticals, schools, day care, labs. Some we don’t even know what they are. But our milk’s good. Damn good.”

“Can I see how it works?” Gabrielle asked. Her tea was almost gone, but she wasn’t ready to leave yet. She was taking the first steps toward trying to imagine a job doing nothing but producing milk. The terms seemed too good to be true.

“You can’t,” Mr. Arnold said. “Trade secrets.”

“An NDA will be part of your production contract,” Mrs. Arnold said.

“NDA?”

“Non-disclosure agreement,” she clarified. “You can’t say anything about how we do things, or what you saw. Or even *who* you saw.”

Gabrielle’s mind went briefly to the alleged presence of Cameron Flasche. Was that why no one was supposed to know he was here? Because of an NDA?

Gabrielle returned to the kinds of questions she thought she could ask.

“Can you say more about what my life would be like? I really couldn’t make a decision without knowing more. What kind of apartments are they?”

“You won’t have an apartment,” Mrs. Arnold said, and she smiled in the slightly awkward way that Gabrielle recognized as the precursor to more difficult information. “You’ll be confined. Usually with three other girls.”

“Confined?”

“You’ll be allowed out, on schedule. In restraints.”

Mr. Arnold cleared his throat. “Probably all we can say about any of that. You’d be treated just like everyone else.” He paused, then quipped, “I hope you’re not modest.”

Mr. Arnold looked at his wife, and Mrs. Arnold smiled her most awkward smile at Gabrielle.

“Okay,” Gabrielle said, setting down her empty tea cup and staring into it, near tears. She had been so close to something that would have worked. Beautifully. But in light of this newest information, she wanted nothing to do with it.

Mrs. Arnold seemed to sense Gabrielle’s decision, and now her smile was confident again.

“Unhappy girls don’t make as much as happy girls do,” she said. “We run a very strict facility, because we have to, but very fair. We do our best to keep everyone comfortable and contented.”

“Eight percent more,” Mr. Arnold said. “On average. Our females produce eight percent more than girls at other farms. You don’t get that if they’re not happy.”

Gabrielle looked up at Mrs. Arnold, then at Mr. Arnold, and did her best to smile in a way that said no.

“Thanks very much for considering me,” she said. “I’m not quite what you’re looking for, but it sounds like a nice opportunity for the right person.”

Mr. Arnold stormed out of the room. Gabrielle heard him slap something down on the kitchen counter, and knew she’d burned at least one bridge. Mrs. Arnold was still smiling warmly. Surely she wouldn’t blame Gabrielle for rejecting the offer.

Gabrielle slid to the edge of the loveseat, wanting to extricate herself now, as quickly as possible. Mrs. Arnold didn’t move, and Gabrielle wondered with a growing sense of alarm if the bridge to her was about to burn as well, and this was how it would happen. She would just sit and smile and let Gabrielle show herself to the door. Gabrielle desperately didn’t want things to end this way. She would be seeing the Arnolds again, and the thought of being ignored by old friends was too much to bear.

“How’s Doria?” she blurted, in a desperate bid for reconnection, no matter how tenuous.

“She’s very well,” Mrs. Arnold said. “She does ask about you. Please come by and say hello, she’ll probably be around.”

“I will,” Gabrielle promised, hope returning. Would Mrs. Arnold have made that invitation if she never wanted to see Gabrielle again?

Mr. Arnold burst back into the room, so abruptly it startled Gabrielle. He was smiling again, holding a sheet of paper in his hand.

“You don’t have to decide now,” he said, handing the sheet to her. “But if you want to pursue it, here’s the next step.”

It was just a note to Dr. Anatoli, a general practitioner with a clinic not far from the high school. The note, neatly handwritten and signed by Mr. Arnold, asked him to consider Gabrielle DeBeers for a prescription of Prolactanil.

“This would help me . . . produce?” Gabrielle asked.

“It would make it easier to start,” Mr. Arnold said. “We’d still have to do some things. But the quicker you start, the quicker you’re eligible for production bonuses.”

“The monthly pay – the five hundred dollars – starts on the day your residency begins,” Mrs. Arnold added.

“Okay,” Gabrielle said, rising, ready to leave, deeply relieved that her relationship with the Arnolds seemed likely to remain intact, whether or not she did anything for them. She would definitely be catching up with Doria this summer, she decided, and what happened in the barn would have to be a discrete topic of conversation.

Mrs. Arnold stood, stepped around the table to hug Gabrielle, and Mr. Arnold offered his hand.

“One more thing,” Mrs. Arnold said. “Could you keep what you’ve learned today to yourself? Whether or not you want to do this, we’d appreciate your confidence.”

“I will,” Gabrielle promised sincerely. Forty-three girls were being kept here for their milk. How had such a thing stayed secret? But if the word got out tomorrow, it would spread quickly, and the Arnolds would know who had talked.

Chapter 3: Dr. Anatoli

Back home, Gabrielle tossed Mr. Arnold's note to the doctor into the trash, told her mother the Arnolds were doing well but didn't really have a job she felt she could do, and she sat at her desk and thought about the businesses that were open on Sundays, that she could call or visit today.

She started a list, put names on it: an ice cream shop and a department store on the edge of town. She pondered them, felt the hopelessness spread in her stomach, and retrieved the letter from the trash.

It wasn't until the following Friday, eight days before graduation, that the steadfastly unemployed Gabrielle DeBeers darkened the door of the Anatoli clinic on the walk home from school. She gave Mr. Arnold's note to the receptionist, who slipped behind a door, reemerged 15 seconds later and returned to her desk.

Dr. Anatoli appeared less than five minutes later, sat down next to Gabrielle in the reception area, asked her where she was in her cycle, and handed her a set of small blue and yellow pills stuck in a package that looked like a calendar, with a short instruction sheet: "Take three pills per day, one with each meal, starting with the first yellow pill tonight. Express as often as possible, up to eight times per day for 20 minutes."

That was it. She didn't have to take off her clothes, didn't have to have her breasts examined, barely had to talk to Dr. Anatoli other than to confirm that she was about to graduate from high school and her father was doing as well as could be expected.

She didn't ask Dr. Anatoli what "express" meant. Nor did she really want to. She looked it up at home and confirmed that it meant squeezing her nipples.

That night, immediately after dinner, she took the first pill despite her unyielding certainty that she would not be going to the Arnold's farm after she graduated. She was, she told herself, merely curious.

She and Roger went to a movie and then to a desolate road that, they believed, only they knew about. In the back seat of his father's car, he pushed his pants to his knees and sat back, and she pulled up her skirt and slipped off her panties, mounting him quickly. It was two days before her period, so she was comfortable taking him in bare.

As she moved up and down slowly, he slipped his hands under her tank top, raised it and pushed up her bra.

Gabrielle stopped moving, frozen by a sudden panic. What if the pill had already done its work? What if Roger sucked her and got milk?

“You okay?” he queried from beneath her, moving in and out of her with shallow thrusts now that she wasn’t doing the work.

“Yeah, yeah,” she sighed. “Just a little sore.”

“Your pussy?”

“No, my nipples.”

“Why?”

“It’s right before my period. Don’t suck too much, okay?”

“Okay.”

Roger did suck too much, of course, nursing desperately until he groaned as if he were dying. She dropped down so his semen would squirt as deeply as possible into her chamber, reducing the mess.

She knew she was being irrational, that one pill wouldn’t make her produce. So, with his cream safely deposited inside her body, she returned her breast to his mouth, focused on her own pleasure and quickly came, pelvis shaking and grinding long after the orgasm had subsided. Finally sated, she slid off his penis and pulled her panties up so she wouldn’t leak onto his back seat.

Over the next week, despite the whirlwind of pre-graduation projects – receptions, recognition, ceremony rehearsal and planning the graduation night party – she took the pills diligently.

She expressed only sporadically however, nothing approaching the recommended eight sessions per day. She remembered once or twice in the shower, a few times on the toilet, and all four times when she masturbated, since she normally massaged her breasts then anyway.

Most of her focus was on graduation day, she told herself, as it should be. But her first thoughts as that day broke were dismal ones: Still no job, still no viable job prospects, the only occupation even remotely possible a strange and frightening one – and her preparation for that lackluster as well. Even if she’d wanted to work for the Arnolds, she’d expressed less than 10 times in a week. She should have done almost that much every day.

From there, her mood only worsened as the day wore on. What was supposed to be the best day so far in her young life was the opposite, an

anticlimactic parade of pageantry, official recognition for achievements she'd already been recognized for, and speeches that droned on and on.

Her perspective lightened at a party after all the festivities, when she and Roger volunteered to get more ginger ale, with the understanding they'd go to that abandoned road first, and she crawled into the back seat with him and yanked off her panties with the first real enthusiasm of the day.

As always, she mounted him, exposed her breasts and moaned while he took her left nipple deep into his mouth.

"Oh, god," he said, pulling away.

"What's wrong?" she asked, still sliding up and down.

"Somethings coming out. I think you're bleeding."

"Shit. Did you bite me?"

"Oh, god. It's milk. It's milk."

"Oh, shit," Gabrielle said. She'd completely forgotten about the purpose of the pills she'd been taking. It had become just another thing she did, like brushing her teeth.

"Why is milk coming out?" Roger demanded.

The movement of their hips had stopped, and Roger began to soften with her.

"I – I don't know," Gabrielle stammered, scouring her mind for any reason, no matter how implausible, that Roger might believe.

"I've been . . . I've been taking this new supplement. Yeah. My mom said I should. It's supposed to make you smarter. But it can make milk happen too. If you touch a lot. Or suck a lot. Which you kinda do."

Roger was silent, so Gabrielle added, for good measure, "My mom warned me about that."

More silence, before the completely flaccid Roger stirred beneath her, drew in his breath, spoke: "Your mom warned you that if I sucked too much, milk would come out?"

"No, not you," Gabrielle flailed. "Anyone."

"Who?" he demanded. "Who else?"

"Oh, god, no one. No one else. You're misunderstanding."

Roger reached down between Gabrielle's thighs to pull up his pants. She stayed in place, and he stopped and, in the near blackness of the night, turned his face up to her, drawing in his breath sharply now.

"Oh, my god, you're pregnant, aren't you?"

“No!”

“Why didn’t you tell me? When did you know?”

Now Gabrielle was done too. She whirled off Roger, nearly sitting on his feet before he moved them out of the way. He pulled up his jeans and buttoned them, his belt clinking in the darkness, and she searched around her feet until she found her panties, pulling them up her knees, up her thighs.

“Girls don’t give milk because they just got pregnant.”

“So you are?”

“No.”

“Why are you talking about what happens when girls get pregnant then?”

“I’m just stating a scientific fact. So look, milk’s coming out. I’m not sure exactly why. It’s just a thing that happens that’s kinda weird. Like hail. Weird if you want it to be weird.”

“It’s weirder than hail.”

“You know I just finished my period, right? I haven’t emptied my trash yet. Want to see my used tampons?”

“I’m not the father, am I?”

Gabrielle found her flats, put them on with two quick jerks, fumbled for the door latch, pulled it open and exited Roger’s father’s car, her feet denting the damp earth.

“Gabrielle, wait!” Roger demanded.

Gabrielle paused, hand around the door.

“You need to tell me who the father is!”

She slammed the door and staggered away, heartbroken under the grossly misguided suspicions of her first and only lover.

Too furious to cry, she picked her way down the road in the light of a half-moon, ignoring Roger, who had stepped out of the car and kept shouting the same thing, “Who was it? Who was it?” like a strange forest creature that only called at night.

She estimated it was less than a quarter mile to the highway, then another two or three miles back to town. She could go back to the party and hope Roger didn’t show up, or go home. Home was at least four miles away. Either way, the first mile would occur on a relatively untraveled road. She could hide when she saw headlights. Or she could stick her thumb out and hope the first person who stopped wasn’t a rapist or axe murderer. Or

she could hope for a quick death, which would spare her from at least a half-year of homelessness.

She heard Roger start his car, squinted when his headlights blazed, moved to the edge of the path as he pulled up beside her. She thought at first he would simply drive past her, but he slowed. She glanced at him, saw his window was down.

“I’ll take you home,” he said.

“If you ask me who it was, at any moment from here to my driveway, I will open the door and leave,” she warned. “I don’t care if you’re going 45. Or if you say anything else. Anything else at all.”

Roger responded with silence, which she chose to interpret as assent. She opened the back door and got in. He gunned his car, bucking over the ruts toward the highway. He never spoke a word, even as he deposited her at her parents’ house 10 minutes later.

She got out, slammed the door and marched to her front door.

Mom and Dad were where they always were, in front of the TV, huddled in the darkness, watching an old sitcom, something they used to watch new when they were young lovers.

“Gabrielle?” Mrs. DeBeers said.

Gabrielle went to the bathroom, peed, flushed and crossed the hall to a bedroom that, as of today, she was merely borrowing from her parents.

“Gabrielle!” her mom shouted.

“Yes?” she replied impatiently.

“That’s no way to answer your momma, Gabi,” her dad said.

“Yes, Ma’am?” she said, trying to scrub the impatience from her tone. She just wanted to lie down, pull the covers up over her head and forget everything. Getting in a fight with either parent when they were together ensured they would gang up on her. She could rarely win against either of them alone. Together, there was no hope at all.

“Before you do anything else tomorrow, we need to have a chat.”

“About what?”

“I think you know about what.”

The TV was laughing. Apparently, whatever episode her parents were watching had reached the climax of hilarity, meaning a rapid-fire laugh track that only furthered Gabrielle’s torment.

“Okay,” Gabrielle said evenly. At this moment, she would have agreed to anything just to be alone.

“Are you okay?” her father asked.

He was always the more sensitive one, even after the accident. At this moment, though, she had no use for either one of her parents.

A lot of her classmates went to dinner with their parents tonight, before the parties. Her graduation – with a 3.9 no less – was barely acknowledged.

“I’m fine, I’m fine,” she choked out, shutting her door and heading straight for her bed.

The next morning, after a fitful night’s sleep that even masturbating couldn’t help, began even more dismally. The July 1 deadline still loomed. She was fighting with Roger, over something she didn’t want to explain. Her mom was going to sit her down and talk about the future.

Lying on her back in the nude, she felt a trickle of liquid along the side of her breast, rolling through the crease between her side and her arm. She passed her finger through it, brought it to her mouth. It was warm, thick, surprisingly sweet – nothing like the two-percent cow’s milk her family drank.

She turned toward her window, the first morning light peeking through around the blinds and the curtain, and decided this might be good news. Her body had done what it was supposed to do. Going to work at Arnold Farm was a viable option, even if she was still leaning mostly against it. The Arnolds had told her there would be confinement and restraints. What did that mean? Those words continued to echo in her head over the last five days, amid all the commotion of graduation week, and they didn’t sound promising.

And then, Mr. Arnold had said he hoped she wasn’t modest. She wasn’t, really. She and Roger had gone skinny-dipping more than once, and one time, other people showed up, guys and girls, and she didn’t care. He did, though, so they dressed hastily and left.

Of course she’d have to expose her breasts if she went to work there. They milked their girls six times a day, she recalled. But just topless? Just while she was being milked? How did they milk the girls, anyway? By machine? By hand? There was simply too much she didn’t know.

She rolled out of bed, retrieved last night’s clothing from the floor where she’d dumped it, brought it into the bathroom to separate it for the wash while she peed. And she gasped in shock when she noticed the two faded white stains on her black tank top. The milk had gone through her bra

and soaked her top while Roger was driving her home, apparently. Overall, it was funny, she thought with a brief moment of perspective. She might even laugh about it someday. But right now, it was an emergency. She couldn't be leaking. She flushed and went to her sink, leaned over and grabbed her breasts. After a few tries, she figured out how to get her milk out, and she squeezed frantically, first her right nipple, then her left, spraying it into the sink, squirting onto the faucet and counter, wiping it off after every second squirt.

"Gabrielle, come to breakfast, we need to talk!" her mother yelled from the hall, so loudly it sounded like she was in the bathroom.

"Ah!" Gabrielle shouted, too startled to say more.

"Are you okay?"

"Yes, I'm fine," Gabrielle said. "I'll be there in a second."

"Are you throwing up?"

"What?"

"Are you throwing up?"

"Why would I be throwing up?"

"It happens. After graduation."

"God, Mom, I had I think two beers all night."

"You don't seem yourself."

"I just got up."

"I mean, last night."

"Me and Roger had a fight. I'll be fine."

"Kitchen in five?"

"Yes, I'll be there."

Surprised by the quantity she'd produced, puddling in the bottom of the sink, she studied it for a moment before she ran it down the drain and rinsed the towel. She'd express again in the shower, she decided, and try to stay close to a bathroom all day. And then, knowing she was about to eat, she took a pill. She wasn't sure why.

She pulled on a pair of black shorts, her thickest bra and two white shirts, and looked at her phone.

Roger had texted three times already, each a variation of "We need to talk."

Breakfast was even more horrible than she could have anticipated. Through a long, painful hour of back and forth with her mom and dad, she admitted she had virtually no job prospects yet, nor had she done much to

improve them over the last month. And, instead of sympathy, her mother gave her a new move-out date: June 27. They needed three days to get the room ready for the renter.

Back in the refuge of the room she was about to lose forever, Gabrielle cleared two more texts from Roger without reading them, and called the Arnolds.

“Hello, Mrs. Arnold,” she said, speaking quietly but doing her best to sound enthusiastic. “I’m sorry for calling on a Sunday.”

“That’s perfectly fine,” Mrs. Arnold replied. “How are you doing?”

“Well, I’m making milk,” Gabrielle said. “Because of those pills.”

“Oh, that’s lovely. Had you been expressing?”

“Yes, a little. It kind of surprised me, though.”

“We’d like to have you with us. Have you considered it any further?”

“Yes, I think it would be best,” Gabrielle said. “What should I do?”

“Can you be here tomorrow morning? Say, 10?”

“Yes. Just come to your house again?”

“That’s right.”

“And, then, will I be . . . staying?”

“You will.”

“Is there anything I should bring?”

“Nothing at all.”

“My phone?”

“You won’t need that.”

“Okay.”

“Are you on any prescriptions?” Mrs. Arnold asked.

“No,” Gabrielle replied. “Well, an iron supplement. And some samples Mom brings home from the store, like ginkgo biloba or whatever. Not really prescriptions, though.”

“That’s fine. You don’t need to bring those.”

“Will I ever leave the farm?”

“Not during your contract.”

“What should I tell my parents?”

“What have you told them so far?”

“Nothing. Because you told me not to. They don’t even know I’m making milk.”

“Would you like me to call your mother?”

“Yes,” Gabrielle replied without thinking.

After a few final pleasantries, Gabrielle hung up, looked at her phone and immediately regretted telling Mrs. Arnold to call Mom. What would Mrs. Arnold say? What would Mom say? Would the topic of restraints come up? Would Mom say no? Maybe Mom already knew what was done on the farm. Maybe everyone did. Or at least, all the adults in the county. If the kids knew, they would talk. Absolutely.

Gabrielle nearly fell off her bed when the phone in the kitchen rang. She didn't want to be here for this. She didn't want to hear either side of the conversation. Certainly not Mom's side. She threw on a pair of sneakers and dashed out of her room, reaching the kitchen just as Mrs. DeBeers answered the phone.

Gabrielle looked on in horror, but it wasn't Mrs. Arnold after all.

“Hi, Sal,” Mrs. DeBeers said, glancing at Gabrielle. “Yes, I'll get him.”

“I'm going for a walk,” Gabrielle said.

Mrs. DeBeers said “Sure,” without turning, and Gabrielle was free.

She walked away from Arnold Farm, toward the little park with the stream and the woods where she used to go all the time. Life had grown more complicated since those days, she thought. Too complicated.

Now, it was about to get simpler. For half a year, she would do whatever it was girls did at Arnold Farm. Her job would take no intelligence nor, indeed, any work at all. How much effort would it take to be milked?

Rent and board would be taken care of, and five hundred dollars a month on top of it. Except for the final complication of the call between Mrs. Arnold and her mother, this was a done deal. And it was, perhaps, the perfect solution. The long list of reservations she'd felt after calling on the Arnolds two weeks ago had evaporated.

The day was already warm and Gabrielle was already sweating. She reached the park, the first visitor here today, as far as she could tell. She crossed the parking lot and the baseball field to get to the creek, slipping off her sneakers and her socks. She sat in the grass on the bank and put her feet in the water, watching her toes shimmer under the ripples. Two tiny fish swam together up to her left little toe, regarding it curiously, it seemed, and she thought about Roger and tried not to cry. At their best, they had been like two little fishes, curious about the world, exploring their little town

together, walking into Parham's as if they could afford the clothing there, driving into Eubenville for ice cream, learning about each other's bodies in furtive, breathless backseat trysts.

She could have just told Roger what was going on. But, in the end, she didn't trust him. Not completely. He was changing. They both were, and they weren't understanding each other well enough for trust to be assured. What if he made fun of her for taking a job that involved giving milk? What if he was just disgusted, even if he never said anything? There was a gulf between them she hadn't noticed before. Maybe it had always been there. Maybe it was new. But it was on full display last night, when his mind immediately leapt to pregnancy and infidelity.

The sun climbed the sky, the park grew noisy with families, and Gabrielle sat and stared across the water, smiling at the children who approached but otherwise lost in thought. Brown University awaited, and that remained the goal, and the thing her mind settled on toward the end of her reverie. She would endure the next six months, whatever happened, and then she would throw herself into school, and knowledge, and the rest of her life.

Briefly, she thought about sex. She could probably go six months without it, if she had to. There were times it had been disappointing and times it was all she wanted in the world, awkward as it sometimes had been with Roger. Sex was complicated.

She couldn't go without masturbation, however. She was sure of that. Would she have privacy? Unless she had to share her bed with another girl, she could probably get relief discretely a few nights a week. You had to share a room, if not a bed, with other girls in college dorm rooms, after all. So, no matter where she went, she was going to lose some privacy.

Fine.

Guessing it was lunch time, she pulled her feet out of the water and let them dry in the sun. She assumed Mrs. Arnold had called by now, and she walked home hungry and ready to fight. But neither parent said anything about the Arnolds or farms or milk or the future in general over lunch. Perhaps they believed they'd exhausted the topic of Gabrielle's destiny at breakfast.

Clearing the dishes over lunch, rinsing plates and thinking about nothing, she noticed that her breasts hurt, a strange ache she'd never felt

before. And her bra wasn't fitting her properly. Tight on the sides, binding underneath.

She squeezed her breasts in the shower, surprised by how much milk she was producing, wondering what it was worth. Room, board and \$500 per month, apparently.

Showered and drained, she took her bike to the roller skating rink and ran into the rest of the gang: Betsy, Devin, Paula, Don, Tamina, a half dozen more. Some were leaving for school or jobs or vacations this week, chattering excitedly about plans. That Gabrielle had a place to go as well made everyone else's plans far easier to listen to, but she chose to keep her own arrangements to herself. She hinted that she might be doing an extended visit in a nearby town for job interviews, and that was good enough. No one pressed her for more information, all too full of their own plans to hear about a future that, as far as anyone knew, was still being formed.

Roger usually went fishing with his father and brothers on Sunday afternoons, so Gabrielle didn't expect to see him. She wouldn't have cared, though. She was still angry, and very ready to give him the iciest of cold shoulders.

But she left the rink at 6 with a lump in her throat. Things were ending. They'd all agreed to get back together later in the summer, and Betsy'd promised to organize it. But Gabrielle guessed she wouldn't be there. And even if things fell through at Arnold Farm, nothing would ever be quite the same.

Dinner was a replay of lunch – talk of the weather, the neighbors, Dad's next doctor's appointment, but Gabrielle sensed a sort of pain in her parents' eyes, a sympathy she usually didn't find.

Back in her bathroom after dinner, she almost screamed when she looked at her shirt, two dark ovals on her pink tank top. Surely they were there throughout dinner. Surely her parents saw them. And now that she was seeing them too, the communication was complete. Everyone knew what everyone else knew. Her engorged breasts had said all that needed to be said.

She opened a book she'd bought because it was part of Brown's freshman reading assignment – *Walden Pond* – and she lost herself in the words for an hour. She said goodnight to her parents and put herself to bed before 11, masturbating both for pleasure and in the hopes of a sound sleep.

Sleep was, however, fitful again. She woke up several times, looked at the clock, pondered the day that lay ahead of her and wished it could be morning.

Chapter 4: To Arnold Farm

At 8:30, still groggy but knowing if she fell asleep again, she might sleep past her 10 o'clock appointment, she dragged herself out of bed and went to the sink, desperate to relieve the ache in her breasts before she emptied her bladder. The milk kept coming, and she wondered if she should leave at least some of it there, uncomfortable as it was. Would they milk her today? Would they want her to bring full breasts to the farm? Walking to the farm with wet nipples wasn't an option, however, so she squeezed what she estimated would be replaced by 11. If they didn't milk her by then, she'd leak, but she was sure that wouldn't surprise anyone at the farm.

She had breakfast alone, showered, trimmed her black pubic hair just in case anyone asked her to undress, and left her bedroom at quarter 'til 10, wearing jeans, a black t-shirt and sandals. She left her phone, blinking with what she assumed were more messages from Roger, untouched on her dresser.

Mr. and Mrs. DeBeers were in the living room, but the TV was off, and when she entered, they both stood – Mom quickly, Dad haltingly, struggling to get upright.

Dad did his best to stifle his tears, his eyes wet and his voice choking. Mom was entirely stoic, but her hug lasted, her arms squeezing Gabrielle's breath out of her lungs. Both wished her well, asked her to write, said they'd be waiting for her, and then she was gone, out the door, up the street, across the road and to the Arnold's front door.

As before, she was hugged, escorted to the loveseat, offered scones and tea, but this time, Mr. Arnold handed her a stack of papers stapled in the upper corner while Mrs. Arnold sat and looked on in silence.

The top of the cover sheet read "Production Contract between Gabrielle DeBeers ("Female") and Arnold Farm LLC." It listed their addresses, Gabrielle's birthdate, and the purpose of the document: "The collection and commercial exploitation of Female's breastmilk."

"Take all the time you need," Mr. Arnold said, standing against the door jamb.

Much of the document was legalese that meant little to Gabrielle, but there were common-sense sections as well, about doing as she was told,

conforming to all rules and procedures, being polite to all staff and other females. There were promises of nutrition, humane treatment, adequate lodging. There was a long section entitled “Non-Disclosure” that said she couldn’t tell anyone about how things worked at the farm, her experiences, even whom she met there. Toward the end, there was a paragraph headed “Discipline,” which said only that punishment would be administered fairly and as quickly as possible in accordance with the “Discipline Protocol” posted in the facility’s common area. Under the License Termination section, three events were listed that could lead to the end of her time at the farm: Conclusion of the contract term, inability of Female to produce acceptable milk, or significant medical or psychological issues. The female’s wish to be released was not listed as a reason for the contract to end, Gabrielle noted.

On the final page, just above her signature, the term was listed as beginning today and concluding on January 5 of the next year. She’d have about two weeks to get ready for Brown.

She looked up, nodded, and Mrs. Arnold handed her a pen and a second copy of the contract. She signed both, set them on the coffee table and looked up, first at Mrs. Arnold, then at Mr. Arnold, and felt such a rush of nerves she couldn’t speak.

She had known the Arnolds all her life, been to countless Christmas parties, wandered every corner of their farm, slept over at least a hundred nights, sat with Mrs. Arnold in her Sunday finest at the wake when Mrs. Arnold lost a beloved aunt. But now, there was a piece of paper between them that had never been there before, a production contract that gave them unknown powers over her body.

Finally, Mrs. Arnold spoke.

“It might be simplest if you undressed in the house, Gabrielle,” she said, smiling.

“Undress?”

“Yes. You’ll stay naked while you’re with us.”

“How naked?” Gabrielle queried.

“Completely,” Mrs. Arnold replied.

“You want me to . . . undress here?”

“Yes, if you don’t mind,” Mrs. Arnold said, and tilted her head toward the foyer, where the door to the guest bedroom stood. “You can change in the bedroom.”

“Okay, um,” Gabrielle said, trying to imagine taking off her clothes, unable to. “And then . . . what would happen?”

“Mr. Arnold will take you to the bay,” Mrs. Arnold said.

“The bay?”

“All the girls start there,” said Mr. Arnold, not smiling, just stating a fact.

“The bay . . . like, part of the barn, right? The big barn?”

“Yes, it’s the main entrance.”

“And that’s where I’ll be . . . staying?”

“Yes,” Mrs. Arnold said. “We’ll get you processed, do a little training and hopefully get some milk out of you this afternoon.”

Gabrielle stood, torn between running home and doing as she was told. If she left, they’d probably just tear up the contract and never mention it again. But if she left, she’d be homeless in two weeks.

She willed her feet to point toward the guest bedroom, her legs to carry her there. She wanted the walk to last an hour, but she was at the door to the little room in what felt like seconds. She shut the door with a brief, chimeral sense of relief, followed immediately by the knowledge that if she didn’t come out nude in a reasonable amount of time, she might as well walk home.

She looked at the bed where she’d slept more than once, looked at the mirror over the dresser where she could see her upper half, stared into her eyes, sucked in her breath and pulled her t-shirt over her head, tossing it onto the bed. She unhooked her bra and slid it off and set it next to her shirt. She kicked off her sandals, unbuttoned her jeans and slid them together with her panties down her legs, stepping out of them. She looked in the mirror and immediately regretted the half-hearted job she’d done on her pubic hair, the top line cut unevenly.

Forcing her feet and her legs to move again, Gabrielle went to the door, opened it a crack.

“Is there something I should do with my clothes?”

“There should be a bag on the bed,” Mrs. Arnold replied.

Gabrielle shut the door, searched for something that should be obvious, finally found it up by the pillows, a black canvas bag with three letters that meant nothing.

Slowly, deliberately, she picked up her sandals and put them in the bottom of the bag, folded her jeans and put them in next, then her bra and

panties, then her t-shirt. She considered pulling everything out and putting it in again, folding her jeans over and over until they were perfect, but instead, she turned to the door, opening it a crack.

“Jewelry too?”

“Yes,” Mrs. Arnold said.

Gabrielle slipped off her watch and a silver bracelet, pulled out her earrings, and dropped all that in the bag.

“Will you be taking everything back to my parent’s?” she asked.

“Yes,” was Mrs. Arnold’s quick reply.

“Okay,” Gabrielle said. “I’m . . . ready.”

She heard Mr. Arnold say something to Mrs. Arnold, and then footsteps, coming not toward her but toward the back of the house.

“Gabrielle, Mr. Arnold’s going through the kitchen, waiting for you.”

Trembling with vulnerability and the fear of a strange new unknown, she stepped out of the bedroom and went the long way to the kitchen, through the front hall and the den. The kitchen door creaked. Mr. Arnold was already outside.

Heart thumping, breath coming in shallow gasps, she moved through the kitchen, out the door and down the steps.

Mr. Arnold was facing the barn, but he turned his head briefly, glanced at her out of the corner of his eye and began walking.

Gabrielle followed, a few steps behind, hoping he wouldn’t stop to let her catch up or, worse, let her walk ahead. Fortunately, the ground sloped down behind the house, so she knew she wasn’t visible from the road, or even the front yard. She desperately hoped that none of the help would appear. The Arnolds employed, depending on the time of year, from a handful to a few dozen people to work the fields. Most of them men.

“I saw your dad on Scotchdale,” Mr. Arnold said, continuing to walk, staring straight ahead.

“Yeah, he sometimes gets that far,” Gabrielle replied, her nerves recovering slightly. “He walks mostly in the yard, though.”

All the main paths between the house and barns were covered, sheltering Gabrielle’s head and shoulders from the slanting sun, but leaving her left side exposed to the rays, from her feet to just under her breast. Would she be feeling the sun again before January 5?

“I understand your mom’s doing well at Kashier,” Mr. Arnold said quietly as they rounded the small, older barn, the new barn coming into view.

“She just got moved to assistant manager,” Gabrielle said, trying to speak normally. “She’s been wanting that job all year.”

Gabrielle stayed about three feet off Mr. Arnold’s right shoulder, and he seemed fine with that, knowing she was there because she was talking to him. Surely he knew how awkward this was for her, and this was his way of accommodating: walking ahead, letting her follow, talking quietly.

“She has some ideas about how to set up the shelves,” Gabrielle continued, soothed by her own voice even though she was speaking from ignorance, from partial memories of a half-heard conversation from a few weeks ago. “She said they should try to put the most popular items at the ends of the aisles.”

“Good your mom’s there,” he said. “Bring some common sense.”

The path here afforded a view of much of the rest of the farm – fields, orchards, the pond – and Gabrielle was relieved to see no employees, no one driving a tractor or doing maintenance or painting or standing there looking. Just the back of Mr. Arnold, making his way to the big barn, red and imposing, a raised, covered platform on the side that Gabrielle knew must be the bay he’d mentioned.

A tall chain link fence, topped with barbed wire, surrounded the barn, and Mr. Arnold pulled out a key and opened the pedestrian gate leading into the enclosure, locking it once Gabrielle had passed through. Beyond that, a short flight of steps led from the walkway to the bay, and Mr. Arnold took it two steps at a time, striding toward a cabinet and opening the creaky door.

Gabrielle climbed the steps one at a time, waiting for him to turn, to look at her, to speak to her. He’d been polite so far, but she knew that was going to have to end, he was going to need to acknowledge her, or do something to her, before she could enter the building.

She strode toward the middle of the bay, looking up at the aluminum beams that held up the roof, glancing toward the double doors that led into the building, looking down at the bare concrete, her feet, her legs, her belly. A single drop of breastmilk pearly up on her left nipple, and she quickly wiped it away, not sure why it embarrassed her.

Mr. Arnold turned, and she watched his eyes carefully.

Standing 10 feet away from her, in front of the cabinet, he took her all in, from her feet to her face, without leering. They milked girls here, she reminded herself, so she knew he must have seen naked girls a hundred times a day. Or topless, at least. She was just another employee, and now they were in the workplace where this was how things were done. Half her anxiety, she realized, was over being nude in their house.

He stepped toward her, a chain looped around his hand.

“Mrs. Arnold mentioned restraints,” he said. “Do you remember that?”

“Yeah,” she said, trying to sound casual, her nerves jangling again. “That’s fine.”

Was he really going to chain her up, now? Was that truly a requirement of the job?

“We use this,” he said, holding up the end of the chain. “It has to be in you before you go through the doors.”

“*In me?*”

“It . . .” Mr. Arnold began, with a rare pause before he continued, “It goes up your bottom.”

Gabrielle just stared, certain at first she’d misheard. But Mr. Arnold stepped closer and she studied the end of the chain, which bore a thin black rod, about four inches long, with a slightly flared tip.

“Why?” Gabrielle choked out.

“We can’t get accredited if we don’t have systems for knowing where every producing female is, all the time. And that means restraints. Much as I respect every one of you girls, if we leave you to your own devices, god knows where you’ll end up or what you’ll get into. At least, that’s what the Alternative Dairy people think, and we’ve got no choice to agree if we want to keep our standing.”

“Okay,” said Gabrielle. “But why . . . um, there?”

“A lot of places chain their girls,” he said, holding his hands out in front as if he were wearing handcuffs. “Chains on their hands, chains on their feet. God, I just hate that. I’ve seen it done, did it for a little while here, couldn’t abide it. This is simpler and quicker, you can take normal steps, you can swing your arms. You ask any female in there, and they’ll tell you it’s for the best. They hardly notice it after a few days.”

“Do they slip out sometimes?” Gabrielle asked.

“No,” he said, holding up the rod, his thumb on the base. She heard a click and the tip expanded to an intimidating girth. “Once it’s in you, that’ll keep you from taking it out.”

“That’s going to hurt,” Gabrielle observed, trying to sound calm.

“It expands in your rectum, not your anus,” he said. “You shouldn’t have any problem holding it.”

“What if I . . . what if someone needs to go to the bathroom?”

Mr. Arnold laughed, comfortably, and Gabrielle guessed this was a conversation he had all the time, answering questions like hers a routine matter.

“It’s just to get you from place to place,” he said, fishing a ring of keys out of his pocket, selecting what looked like a narrow pin and pressing it into the base of the rod. The tip returned to its original size. “It never stays in that long. But alternatives are available if there’s a problem.”

Gabrielle decided she didn’t want to know what he meant by “alternatives,” nor did she have any other questions. So she just stared at the chain Mr. Arnold was holding, no idea what to do next.

“Turn around and bend over,” he said, guessing correctly that her questions were done. “Hands on your knees, and feet about eighteen inches apart.”

She obeyed, turning and bending slowly, parting her legs, looking back at Mr. Arnold briefly, looking forward and biting her lip anxiously when he stepped behind her. He put one hand on her rump to steady her, his touch warm and confident, and Gabrielle reminded herself that he must have done this many times.

Still, she flinched when she felt the tip of the leash at her anus, stepping forward in a half stumble, regaining her balance and stepping back. But her efforts to accept the leash proved futile, her hole resisting the object with all its strength.

“We used to tell girls to relax,” Mr. Arnold said, “but all that did was make them tighten up more. So we learned to just be patient with the new girls, until they got used to it.”

As he spoke, he continued to apply steady pressure to the rod, and Gabrielle’s opening eventually yielded.

“It’s in,” Mr. Arnold said. “Okay so far?”

“Yes,” Gabrielle said, staring at her feet.

“Now I’m going to push that little button. You’ll feel it thicken, and it may surprise you a little, but it shouldn’t hurt.”

“Okay.”

She heard the click, the sound muffled now by her body, and felt the tip expand inside her.

“Uh,” she grunted.

“Still good?”

“It feels like I need to go to the bathroom,” she said. “It doesn’t hurt, though.”

“This is the smallest size we have,” he said. “We always start girls off this size, then fit them during processing. You can straighten.”

Gabrielle stood upright, looked at the building, then at Mr. Arnold, the end of the leash looped around his left wrist.

“What if . . . someone trips?” Gabrielle asked. “Or it gets pulled out some other way?”

He looked directly into her eyes as he spoke. “Every kind of restraint has its risks. So you balance that against the need to maintain security and order. Handcuffs and shackles are more dangerous, really. Easier to trip. With the leash, everyone who walks you is trained to keep plenty of slack in the chain, and there’s some give in it too, too, so you’ll feel it pull before it starts leaving your chamber.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle agreed, not particularly reassured.

“And it’s designed to hurt, just a little, if the leash goes taut. Hold still.”

He stepped behind her and pulled the leash. She stepped back reflexively.

“Stay still,” he repeated. “I want you to know what it feels like when there’s tension.”

“Sorry.”

He pulled her leash again. This time, she held still and felt slight jabs in three or four places on the inside of her anus.

“Ow.”

“Feel the pins?”

“Yes. Is that what they are?”

“Not pins, technically, but they’re designed to get your attention.”

“Okay.”

“Now, if it does come out, it’ll hurt, but I’ve only seen that a few times, because a girl was being careless or whatnot. It won’t do permanent damage, and we’ll use other restraints until you recover.”

He stepped before her, uncoiling the leash from around his hand, letting it drop against her thigh.

“Any other questions?”

“What happens now?”

“I’m going to take you into the barn for processing.”

Gabrielle looked at the doors that led into the building, feeling nervous again.

“What’s processing like?”

“You’ll meet a few people, get weighed, get some things done to you. It’ll take about an hour.”

“Will anything hurt?”

“A little.”

“You said you have, um, 45 girls here?”

“43. And now with you, 44.”

“How long have you been doing this?”

“Off and on for 10 years, but we got serious seven years ago, put up the barn to industry standards, got accredited, bought our first residential producers.”

“Bought?”

“In a sense,” he said. “The first ten girls, I bought their contracts from other farms. And then I’ve done a lot of my own recruiting. Me and Mrs. Arnold, we’re both good at it.”

“Do they all come through your house?”

“No, that almost never happens,” Mr. Arnold replied, chuckling, and he pointed up the drive to a gate in the fence. “Most are driven in, through there.”

“Who drives them?”

“Friends, parents, other dairies. Police sometimes. Prison transport.”

“Prison?”

“Yes,” Mr. Arnold said. “Some of my best producers were in jail when I recruited them.”

“In jail for what?” Gabrielle demanded. It hadn’t occurred to her she might be sharing space with criminals.

“Don’t worry, don’t worry,” Mr. Arnold assured quickly. “No one gets in without thorough vetting. Interviews, drug tests, complete history.”

Gabrielle just looked at him doubtfully. Standing there nude with a leash in her anus, she had something else to worry about.

“You want to know who the best producers are?”

“Yeah.”

“Girls convicted of drug trafficking.”

“How so?”

“Most of ‘em are innocent. Got roped in by their boyfriends, or their parents often enough. And traffickers don’t take drugs. In fact, by the time they get here, the last thing they want to see is any kind of narcotic. They’re used to the restrictions, and they follow orders and don’t complain, ‘cuz they know how much worse it could be.”

“Are drugs a problem here?”

“Not at all,” Mr. Arnold assured. “It’s why we’re so strict. It only takes one hit of heroin or meth to ruin a batch. I’ve seen ten gallons go down the drain because a girl got into something she shouldn’t have.”

“Did that happen here?”

“Oh no,” Mr. Arnold replied, giving Gabrielle’s leash a shake. “Oh no. And it never will.”

When Gabrielle had taken the job at A&P soon after her 16th birthday, she’d thought she’d be doing one thing: standing at the cash register and ringing up sales. Instead, she discovered a whole world of things she hadn’t anticipated: orientation, procedures, meetings, training, a complex and unreliable time-keeping system, good managers and bad managers, and a district office with its own strange rules, customs and culture.

This place would be the same, she realized. She wasn’t just going to be milked six times a day. The industry that used women’s bodies for the production of breastmilk had its own ways of doing things, most of which probably made sense, some of which maybe did not.

“Think you’re ready to go inside?” Mr. Arnold asked, swinging her leash once so it tapped against her thigh.

“Yes,” Gabrielle replied, mostly honestly.

He moved toward the doors and she turned to follow him. He stopped and looked at her, and she stopped as well.

“When you’re on the leash, stay a foot back and a foot to the left of your handler. If they stop, you stop. Never try to lead, even when you know where you’re going.”

“Okay.”

He opened the door and went in and she did her best to follow his instructions, keeping just off his left shoulder.

Inside was a reception area, a door that said “Restroom/Changing” at the far end, a half-dozen chairs along the wall facing a counter where a blonde woman in her late 20’s sat before a computer. She looked up at Gabrielle, then at Mr. Arnold.

“This is Pam,” Mr. Arnold said. “Pam’s our office manager and our receptionist.”

Gabrielle, trying to ignore the awkwardness of the situation, stepped toward the woman and offered her hand.

“You must be Gabrielle,” Pam said, rising. “I understand you did very well in school.”

“I did okay,” Gabrielle said. “But thanks for saying that.”

“She’s just being humble,” Mr. Arnold said, handing Gabrielle’s leash to Pam. “Runs in the family.”

“A good trait,” Pam observed. “You want me to take her to Bruce?”

“Yes, standard intake and processing,” Mr. Arnold said. He looked at Gabrielle. “We told you we’d be treating you like everyone else, didn’t we?”

“You did,” Gabrielle agreed.

Mr. Arnold stepped around the counter and used a card at his hip to beep himself through the door. He held it open, and Gabrielle let Pam guide her through it.

They entered a long hall lined with doors, Mr. Arnold striding well ahead, reaching another door that required his card to unlock.

This next room was large, with a bare concrete floor and a high ceiling, filled with equipment and supplies and fixtures whose purpose Gabrielle could only guess. Mr. Arnold turned to her and offered his hand.

“Welcome aboard,” he said, smiling.

“Thanks.”

Gabrielle watched him walk to a door on the far side of the room, passing through it just as Pam touched her shoulder, steering her steps

toward a door in the other corner, marked with a nameplate that read “Bruce Cartwright.”

Pam knocked, waiting for the male voice inside to say, “Come in,” before she opened it, leading Gabrielle through.

Chapter 5: Initial Interview

The man Gabrielle assumed was Bruce Cartwright was at his desk, talking on his cellphone. He looked up, nodded, and pointed to three metal rings set at hip level in the wall beside his door, an open padlock dangling from each, a half dozen chairs in a line.

Pam motioned Gabrielle closer to the middle ring, closed the padlock around the end of her leash, turned and squeezed her shoulder.

“Great to have you with us,” she whispered. “He’ll be right with you. Just wait here.”

Gabrielle looked at Bruce, looked away when his eyes turned toward her, began to feel increasingly uncomfortable.

He was a big man, large-boned and with heft on top of that, and he appeared vaguely familiar to her, as most people in town did. Had they met before?

His office was relatively large, with a small conference table in addition to his desk, a floor lamp and coat stand.

She wanted her leash out. It was starting to hurt, in addition to making her feel like she needed to go to the bathroom. And she wanted this done, the processing or whatever it was that was supposed to happen before she could begin her time here.

Bruce seemed to be talking to his wife, discussing something about the house, a problem with a contractor or something. Gabrielle, still standing, looked down self-consciously, her arms moving with a will of their own to provide meager cover – one hand over her black pubic hair, one arm casually draped in front of her breasts, as if that position was simply more comfortable.

“Just tell him we’re not paying until he does it right,” he said, pausing. “No, getting it half right doesn’t count. All the way right or not a penny.”

He looked at Gabrielle, covered his phone and mouthed the word “Sorry,” then pointed to the chair under the ring where she’d been fastened. She looked down at it dubiously, having assumed that sitting was impossible while the leash was in. But, with Bruce watching, she lowered herself gingerly, finally settling her full weight onto the chair. The leash

plug went deeper but didn't become any more uncomfortable, so she leaned back, crossed her legs and waited.

He looked at her again, first into her eyes, then down at her breasts, and he smiled, stood and, still talking into the phone, grabbed a paper towel from a stack on his desk and stepped over, holding it out.

She looked up at him, wondering if he wanted her to sit on it, but he pointed to his own chest and she noticed she was leaking again, a drop of milk on each nipple, a white splash on her thigh, a smear on her belly.

She nodded her thanks to him as he returned to his seat and she wiped it quickly, realizing that she'd been too distracted to notice much since she'd undressed at the Arnold's. Now that she was paying attention to her body, she felt her breasts aching, longing to be emptied, and she thought briefly about expressing into the paper towel, but she knew she'd make more than it could hold, and she'd end up spilling.

Frustrated by new discomforts, she set the paper towel on the seat besides hers and sought distraction with another inspection of Bruce's office.

Bruce was dressed casually, in jeans and, despite the warm weather, a flannel shirt. Behind his desk was mounted a large portrait of himself and his wife, him behind her, holding her around her waist. She was as sturdily built as he, and Gabrielle wondered if she knew the full details of his job, that nude girls were brought into his office, that one was sitting in it now. There were three rings set into the wall, a half dozen chairs below. Were leashed girls brought in groups to his office? Why?

A sports theme emerged elsewhere on the walls, a picture of a football player dodging defenders, a photo taken from high above of a stadium crowded with people.

Just behind her on the wall, a calendar had been hung, and she leaned forward and twisted around so she could get a better look at it.

It was still set on May, with a picture at the top that Gabrielle recognized, after studying it for a moment, as a breast cup, used for the extraction of milk. She stood, put her knee on the chair, grabbed her leash when it clinked against the back of the chair, and took in the picture and the words appearing around it:

“Collector C-15,” it said at the top, with a bulleted list of features underneath:

- Ideal for extended collection (up to an hour)
- Compatible with copper, acrylic and plastic lines (sizes: 1/8 to B15)
- Adheres with minimal draw
- Nipple-friendly fit and materials
- Meets or exceeds ALL standards of the National Board of Alternative Dairy

Gabrielle raised the page to June, pinned it in place. The product for this month was a metal ring, engraved on one side with random letters and numbers, identified as an “ID/Tracking Ring.” The list of features didn’t help Gabrielle at all in understanding its purpose:

- Hypoallergenic
- Engrave up to 15 characters with Engravermax™
- Lightweight
- RFID-compatible
- Heat close/cauterize with Crimper Series 5

She reached for the next page to see what the product was for July when she heard Bruce say “Okay, okay,” and guessed he was about to hang up. She turned and dropped carefully down on the chair.

“Tonight, or no later than tomorrow,” he said. “Okay, okay, love you, bye.”

He set the phone on his desk and stood.

“Really sorry about that, emergency at home.”

He rounded his desk and held out his hand. Gabrielle stood and took two cautious steps forward, mindful of the range of her leash, allowing Bruce to close his large hand around hers.

“So, Gabrielle DeBeers, right?”

“Yeah,” she said. “And your door says Bruce.”

“That’s me,” he said. He looked at his calendar and laughed.

“Thanks for getting me to the right month.”

“I try to be helpful.”

He put his hands together and looked her up and down.

“First time on an anal leash?”

“Yeah. I’d like to get it out.”

“We’ll get you on the poles as soon as we can, but can you chat first?”

“Sure.”

He returned to his desk and Gabrielle sat down, this time without pausing.

Bruce didn’t seem remotely uncomfortable with her in his office, so she chose to approach things the same way. This was just like any meeting with a new supervisor.

“How long have you been producing?” he asked.

“Since the day I graduated from high school. Two days ago.”

“Congratulations.”

“For what? Graduating? Or making milk?”

“Both,” he replied, smiling. “Most girls spend at least a week pink-tagged after they get here.”

“Pink tagged?”

“We code our girls based on status. More on that during processing.”

“Okay.”

“So,” he said, leaning back, chair squeaking under his weight, “I’ll just get right into it.”

“Sure.”

“You’re here because your breasts can make milk. It’s as simple as that.”

“Okay,” she said.

“And it’s as complicated as that.”

“Okay,” she said again, raising an eyebrow.

“Now, let me explain. We work with the whole girl here. The industry’s found that girls who are comfortable, who have diversions, who can exercise and recreate, are better producers. So the Arnolds take that very seriously, and they’ve even extended the science a little here and there. Mr. Arnold has authored something like, uh, 10 papers.”

“Papers?”

“Yeah, like research, techniques. He tries out something new and measures the results, and then he publishes an article.”

“He said he gets eight percent better than average.”

“He told you that?”

“Yeah, last week.”

“He wants 10 percent. No one’s ever hit 10 percent. At least, not with almost four dozen females. It would be a big deal.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said. For a moment, she feared Bruce was going to ask her how she was going to help reach that goal. Instead, he changed the subject.

“You go way back with the Arnolds, don’t you?”

“Family friends all my life.”

“And they said you’re smart.”

“Book smart, maybe,” Gabrielle agreed. “I got a 3.92.”

“That’s smart.”

“I apply myself,” she said, looking down. She noticed her exposed black pubic hair, and was suddenly so surprised by her nudity she wondered if it were a dream.

No, she told herself, everything felt too real. Strange, but real.

She looked back at Bruce. “You seem familiar,” she said.

“You went to Lakemore High, right?”

“Yeah.”

“I was the school nurse for two years, I guess when you were a freshman, and into your sophomore year. And I was an assistant football coach then.”

“That’s where I saw you!” Gabrielle exclaimed. “Oh my god, Crash Cartwright!”

He grinned.

“You did defense, right?”

“I did.”

“That’s what the guys who played for you called you. Coach Crash. ‘Crash! Crash that line!’ Every game! I could hear you from the stands!”

Bruce’s laughter boomed out. This was clearly something he enjoyed remembering.

“But you said you were in the clinic too?” Gabrielle asked.

“Yeah, trained as a nurse.”

“Do you use that training on this job?”

“It doesn’t hurt. Part of why they hired me.”

“You’ve been here three years?”

“Almost.”

He smiled, leaned back.

“Okay, where was I? So, like I was saying, we work with the whole girl. The whole girl. But always with the goal of getting as much milk out of you as we can.”

“Okay.”

“Now, what that means, is everything that happens to you here – everything you eat, everyone you, um, interact with, how much you sleep and exercise and, um, entertain yourself – that’s all tracked, and if something seems to help you, that will be encouraged. And if you do as your told and follow the rules, that means rewards. If your production goes up, that can mean rewards.”

“What kinds of rewards?” Gabrielle asked.

“All kinds of things. It’s on a point system. More on that later.”

“Do I get punished if it goes down?”

“No,” he said firmly. “But if it goes way down or stops, we might sell the rest of your time to another dairy, or let you go.”

“Yeah, that was in the contract.”

“You read it?”

“Parts of it,” she said, pulling her leg up and wrapping her hands around her ankle. “There was something in there about punishment, or discipline, but it was kind of vague.”

“There’s a whole writeup in the commons.”

“The commons?”

“The common area.”

“What kind of things are listed?”

“Single pen, swats, restraints,” he replied.

“Swats?”

“On your bottom.”

“God, like a spanking?”

“It’s done.”

“For what?”

“Breaking the rules.”

“Obviously,” Gabrielle said. “Which rules?”

“It’s more complicated than that. You sometimes get choices. But any disobedience can get you a swat or two, or any other punishment.”

“I don’t want that to happen,” Gabrielle said, stating the obvious.

“It’s not a big deal,” Bruce said. “Every girl here gets into trouble regularly. We’re strict but fair, and we keep our girls happy. We wouldn’t be

at eight percent if we didn't."

"Well, can you give me some guidelines?"

"Okay," Bruce said, leaning forward, planting his elbows on his desk. "The big three: Don't steal the milk. Don't pollute the milk. And don't do anything that reduces production, yours or anyone else's."

Gabrielle laughed before she could stop herself. "Uh, those weren't things that would have occurred to me," she said. "What about talking back, being rude, fighting?"

"Yeah, yeah, all that too," he said, waving his hand dismissively. "But listen. That doesn't impact milk production. Stealing does. Polluting does."

"Okay," Gabrielle countered gamely. "How would I steal it then?"

"You'll be penned with one other female," he said, as if that explained it.

The answer didn't make sense, and Gabrielle decided not to pursue it. "And then, polluting?"

"Mr. Arnold is very touchy about drugs. Very touchy."

"Yeah, he mentioned that."

"Good. He hates meds. If it's medically necessary, that's okay, as long as it's on the approved list. Some stuff metabolizes before it comes out in the milk, and that's fine. Some doesn't matter, like most vitamins. But whatever you're given or prescribed, you keep to yourself. Sharing food, sharing supplements, sharing anything is a big no-no. And sharing meds, that's a week in the single pen, or the equivalent."

"What's the single pen?"

"Basically like solitary. You come out to give milk, go back in."

"Okay, I get it," Gabrielle said, not wanting to hear any more.

"Bottom line," Bruce said, his eyes taking on a severe cast, "Mr. Arnold considers the milk in your breasts to be his property. He probably won't put it that way, but that's how it is. He's feeding you, he's sheltering you, he's dedicating all the resources of this facility to helping you make as much milk as you can. And since the milk's inside your breasts, your breasts are his property too. And since your breasts are part of you, everything about you is his concern. I know you're family friends, but you signed the contract, and that's how it works."

"Okay," Gabrielle agreed, trying not to think about the ache in her breasts.

Bruce opened a manila folder on his desk, glanced over it.

“Your paperwork says you were taking an iron supplement?”

“Yeah, Mom said I should. I’m not sure I needed it.”

“Okay, we’ll get a look at everything, and you’ll be fed and supplemented accordingly. We’ll be taking blood, other samples.” He smiled. “Fringe benefit of the job is you’ll get the best analysis money can buy. We’ve found anemia, thyroid problems. We’ve found cancer three times.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said, not particularly concerned about being analyzed. She considered herself to be exceptionally healthy.

“Any questions before you go to processing?”

“No, I don’t think so. Can I ask things during processing though? If I think of something?”

“Most of the time, yes,” Bruce replied.

“Will I get the leash out?”

“Yes, as soon as we get you on the poles.”

“When will I get milked?”

“Is it hurting?”

“Yes.”

“As soon as you’re processed. In less than an hour, we’ll get you in the training room, and you’ll get your milk out there. And sampling is part of processing, so you’ll get a little relief on the poles too.”

“What are the poles?”

Instead of answering, Bruce picked up his desk phone.

“Esther, meet me in processing in, like, five?”

He hung up, opened his drawer, pulled out a ring of keys and stepped over to Gabrielle. She rose and moved out of his way so he could open the padlock that held her leash, and he wrapped it around his wrist and stepped toward his office door.

She followed on his left, keeping pace with him on the walk back into the big room where, Gabrielle guessed, processing and probably lots of other things happened.

Chapter 6: Processing

Bruce led her to the corner at the other end of the room, where a row of posts stood, a dozen in all. As they drew closer, Gabrielle sucked in her breath. A cuff of leather and dull metal hung by a chain from the top of each post. A second cuff was secured to the bottom of each post.

“Wait,” Gabrielle said. “What are those for?”

“Processing,” Bruce replied.

“You’re going to chain me there?”

“Yes,” he replied without apology.

“Why?”

“It’s policy. Every girl is processed the same way.”

“How long will it take?”

“Less than an hour.”

“What are you going to do to me?”

“Sample your milk, take your blood, get you fitted, install your rings,” he said. “And so forth.”

“Will it hurt?”

“Some of it might sting for a moment.”

“How much?”

“You ever been to the dentist for a filling?”

“Yeah.”

“About that much.”

“What are you going to do to my mouth?”

“Nothing. I mean, look at it, but just for major problems.”

“Why did you mention that then?”

“Mention what?”

“The dentist. What are you going to do to my mouth?”

“Nothing. I’m just comparing how it will feel to the dentist. You’ve had a Novocain shot, right?”

“Yeah. I mean, it wasn’t Novocain, but yeah.”

“Kinda hurt?”

“Yes, it did.”

“Well, some of this will kinda hurt. Like a shot.”

“Where?”

“Where what?”

“Where is it going to hurt?”

Bruce looked over Gabrielle’s shoulder. “Hey, Esther.”

Gabrielle turned to see a thin woman in her 40’s, kind-eyed, with dark hair, in blue coveralls.

“Hey, Bruce,” she said. “And this must be Gabrielle.”

She offered her hand, Gabrielle took it.

“She’s got a lot of questions about processing,” Bruce said.

“That’s normal,” Esther assured, looking into Gabrielle’s eyes.

“You’ve never been in a dairy before?”

“Not at all,” Gabrielle said. “Ever.”

“Are you nervous?”

“I am,” Gabrielle said, stating the obvious. And yet, Esther was helping. Women have a magic way of comforting each other that men simply can’t conjure.

“Bruce said it would hurt,” Gabrielle said, “like a visit to the dentist.”

Esther laughed. “Depends on the girl. But we’ll do our best to manage your discomfort.”

“I have to be, um, held?”

“We need to put you there,” she said, gesturing toward the posts. “I know it looks awful, but it’s how things are done here, and we’ll hurry.”

Gabrielle nodded, not quite convinced.

“Okay?” Esther asked gently. She held out her hand and Bruce slid the leash off his wrist and handed it to her.

“Okay?” she asked again, stepping slowly to the posts but holding out her hand to maintain slack in the leash.

Gabrielle edged sideways, not quite taking a straight path, but not resisting either.

As at the Arnold’s earlier, things were happening too quickly. Suddenly, she was between a pair of posts, looking up at the cuff dangling from one.

Esther, still holding the leash from behind, put her hands on Gabrielle’s shoulders and turned her slowly, lining her up with the posts, the leash swinging against her back and bottom.

“Now, arms up. That’s right, arms up and out a little.”

Gabrielle raised her arms, allowing Esther and Bruce to fasten the cuffs around her wrists, closing them tightly.

“Now, we’re going to raise you just a bit, okay?” Esther proposed, letting the leash go.

“Okay.”

Gabrielle heard a slight hum, and gradually but inexorably, the posts rose from the concrete, pulling her chains taut, lifting her off the floor until just her toes were touching the bare concrete.

“Ah!” Gabrielle gasped.

“Everything okay?” Esther asked, stepping around the post to stand in front of Gabrielle.

“I’m okay, I’m okay,” Gabrielle said unconvincingly, panting. “Just an hour, right?”

“We’ll try to keep it to around 45 minutes, okay?” Esther said.

“Okay, okay.”

“Now, can you spread your legs a little for us?” Esther asked.

Gabrielle obeyed, and Esther and Bruce each grabbed an ankle, tightened a cuff around it and shortened the chain, stretching Gabrielle and forcing her legs apart.

“Oh,” Gabrielle gasped. “Oh, God.”

Esther looked Gabrielle up and down, reached up to check the fit of her wrist cuffs and, apparently satisfied there, walked toward a row of carts along one wall, selecting one and returning to the posts, pushing it before her.

Bruce stepped behind Gabrielle, and she felt his hand on her leash.

“I’m sure you’re ready to get this out,” he said.

“Yes,” Gabrielle agreed. “Please.”

She felt the tip shrink down, the leash plug leave her body, but the relief wasn’t instant.

“It feels like it’s still in.”

“That’s normal,” Bruce said.

Esther picked up a tablet from the cart, waited while the screen flashed on, turned toward Gabrielle and looked at Bruce, who was standing behind her.

“Weight?”

“124,” he said.

“You can see that?” Gabrielle asked.

“There’s a scale in the posts,” Esther said.

Gabrielle had weighed 125 pounds during her period. She usually lost three pounds when it was over, not just one. But then, this was the first end of a period accompanied by making milk.

Esther tapped her weight into the tablet, set it down, knelt before Gabrielle and reached up between her legs, sliding a thermometer up her anus.

She stood and looked into Gabrielle’s eyes. “Can you open your mouth?” she asked.

Gabrielle obeyed and Esther peered in, touching her teeth and gums.

“Three fillings?”

“Four.”

“Good.”

The thermometer beeped, Esther removed it, squinted at it, set it on the cart without entering the data, picked up a small package and tore it open.

“Can you raise her for sampling?”

The posts hummed and Gabrielle’s body rose another foot. Esther stepped up, swabbed Gabrielle’s nipples with an alcohol wipe, raised her left breast and pulled her nipple into her mouth, sucking for five seconds, letting the breast drop and closing her eyes.

“Oh,” Gabrielle gasped, more startled than embarrassed.

“Do you eat a lot of sweets?” Esther asked.

Gabrielle laughed. “Is it obvious?”

“I can always tell,” Esther said.

“And then, maybe a multivitamin? Minerals?”

“Yes,” Gabrielle said. “And iron.”

“You’re good,” Bruce said.

“A lot of training,” Esther said. “Very good milk. Very lean. Maybe a little too sweet, but you won’t get candy anytime you want it here. Can you lower her to where she was?”

The poles dropped, taking Gabrielle with them, and Esther turned toward the cart, picking up what Gabrielle immediately recognized as a breast pump, a small bottle attached to it.

“You passed the taste test,” she said. “With flying colors. But I can’t do a chemical analysis with my mouth. That’s what this is for.”

“Does anyone ever fail the taste test?” Gabrielle asked. Strange as this moment was, she was getting used to it, to talking through it.

“Most girls aren’t producing yet for processing,” Esther replied. “Unless we bought them from another dairy. So you’re kind of a rarity here. But I’ve had my share of bitter girls. God, some places have no idea what they’re doing, feed their females anything, never check for quality.”

Esther raised the pump to Gabrielle’s right nipple and pulled out the base, sucking her breast into the cup, drawing the milk out of her nipple in a thick spray.

After three pulls, she labeled the bottle and got a second pump and bottle, repeating the process on Gabrielle’s left nipple.

Her breasts still hurt, but not as much, and her anus had recovered from the violation of the leash. She looked up at the ceiling, at the girders that held it up, and thought about Roger. She wondered if he was still texting her, or if he’d call her mom or dad and ask what had happened to their daughter. Would they tell him the truth? If they did, would he try to see her at the farm? How would that work, anyway? How could she even expect to see her parents in a place like this?

From that thought, her mind turned instantly and vividly to Cameron Flasche. She’d forgotten all about him until this moment, but now her mind was filled with terror. What if it were true that he worked here? What if he walked in, right now, and looked at her? And recognized her? They’d only talked once, but he might remember her, and now he’d be seeing her nude, chained between two poles, her nipples wet with breastmilk.

She scanned the great room for doors; there were close to a dozen: The door she’d come through, from reception. The door Mr. Arnold had walked through. Other doors to other parts of the building. Bruce’s office door. Other office doors. What if right now, Cameron were behind one of those other office doors, working? What if he needed to go to the bathroom? He’d step into the room, notice Bruce and Esther processing a new female, and he’d walk over to say hi and meet her. In all the fantasies Gabrielle had entertained, of the ways she might discover Cameron Flasche after he’d disappeared last fall, a rendezvous like this had never crossed her mind.

“Doing okay, Gabrielle?” Esther asked.

“Yeah,” Gabrielle replied absently.

“We’re going to take some more samples,” she said, picking up a small package from the cart, tearing it open.

“Like what?”

“Blood. And urine and stool.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said.

She was raised again, poles humming and rising from the concrete, and Bruce stepped to her left thigh with a blood pressure cuff while Esther knelt to look at the top of Gabrielle’s foot.

With the distraction of the cuff inflating around her thigh, Gabrielle barely noticed the sting of the needle as it entered a vein a little past her big toe. She watched as her blood ran into a tube. Esther looked up, their eyes met and she smiled.

“You’re not squeamish at all, are you?”

“Not really,” Gabrielle replied. “I’ve given blood a few times. It’s never bothered me.”

Esther pulled the needle out, dabbed a sticky, clear fluid on the wound and put a bandage over it.

Bruce removed the blood pressure cuff, entered some data in the tablet on the cart, and opened another package, this one containing a thin, clear tube, with a small bottle at one end.

“Catheter,” he said. “You know what it’s for?”

“Yes,” Gabrielle replied, resigned to this next invasion.

Bruce knelt, looked at Gabrielle’s vulva, spread her lips and raised the tube. She sighed but tried not to tense up as she felt it sliding up her urethra.

Esther was behind her, and she felt a finger on her anus.

“You’ll barely feel this, but I’m just letting you know it’s about to happen,” Esther said.

“Okay.”

Gabrielle closed her eyes and winced as the collection rod entered her anus, went deep into her rectum, moved within her bowels and then was withdrawn. She kept her eyes closed until she heard the sound of a lid closing and knew that whatever had been taken from her was safely stored.

Bruce was still in front of her, and she looked down to see the first stream of her urine rush down the catheter and into the bottle.

As soon as the bottle was filled, Bruce withdrew the catheter, clamped it closed and put everything into an envelope.

She heard the poles hum and was lowered until her feet rested on the floor, her shoulders and elbows still aching.

“I’ll get these to the lab,” Bruce said, picking up everything they’d taken from Gabrielle’s body and heading for the same door Mr. Arnold had walked through.

Esther stepped to the cart and grabbed the tablet.

“You’re doing great, Gabrielle,” she said, nodding encouragingly.

“How close are we to being finished?”

“More than halfway through,” she said. “Now, I need to ask you some personal questions.”

“Okay.”

“Are you sexually active?”

“Yes. With one guy. So far.”

“Male only?”

“Yes.”

“Do you consider yourself straight, bi . . . ?”

“Definitely not lesbian,” Gabrielle said. “I like boys.”

“Do you masturbate?”

“Um . . . yeah.”

“How often?”

“Well . . . four times last week, ‘cuz I was on my period. More than that usually.”

“When did your period end?”

“Thursday.”

Gabrielle watched the door, hoping that Bruce – or any other male – wouldn’t show up while Esther was asking about this. But Esther seemed to be finished with this phase of processing. She tapped the tablet, set it down, opened a drawer on the side of the cart and pulled out a pair of rods, each about three feet long.

“How many people work here?” Gabrielle asked.

“Close to 30, if you count part-time.”

“Will I meet everyone?”

“Probably not,” Esther said. “No reason for you to meet the bookkeepers, for example. Or the people in the lab.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said. The thought that Cameron Flasche might walk in on her like this was horrible. The thought that he might be working

here, a few steps away from her, on the other side of a door she would never pass through, was worse.

She'd talked to him once, when she was a junior and he was a senior. It was spring, a Saturday night in late April, as she recalled, at the Founder's Day festival. Her parents were always invited, because both were direct descendants of the people who'd founded the county 145 years ago. Cameron was there to make a speech on behalf of the Lakemore High student body. Because he was president. Of course.

He spoke beautifully, his dark, deep-set eyes surveying the room, the adults laughing when he wanted them to laugh, nodding when he wanted them to nod. She couldn't remember the overall theme of his talk, but she remembered vividly his reference to a football injury – the team doctor said he might have a broken bone in his foot, and he'd asked if the other bones around it could pick up the slack so he could keep playing. The point was something about unity, as she recalled.

Afterwards, he'd slipped away by himself to the second-floor balcony at the back of city hall. Gabrielle had been watching him all night, and she ended up out there as well, looking out at the lights of the little town, as if that's all she'd wanted to do. But when Cameron turned toward her – she wasn't staring at him, but girls have a sixth sense about this kind of thing – she looked at him and smiled. He smiled back which, in hindsight, Gabrielle should have known was just a reflex, but she took it as an invitation and sauntered over to him, her black, sequined gown trailing behind her, rented for this evening only, the most beautiful thing she had ever worn.

There were many things she could have said. Many things she wanted to say. Instead, she settled for the first thing that came to her mind.

“Nice speech,” she said. “Did you practice it?”

“Kind of,” he replied. “Some of it was extemporaneous. But I worked out the major ideas beforehand.”

Gabrielle realized she was lost. She had no material. She had no idea what to say next. Why hadn't she prepared her next words?

“I'm Cameron,” he said, and he turned toward her and offered his hand.

“I'm Gabrielle,” she said, taking his hand, feeling his flesh and bones for the first time, confirming that he was real, and not just an

apparition, a mist, a spirit seen from across the school cafeteria, across the plaza, on the other side of main street, in his car.

No, he was real, and the feeling was real, and the electricity in his hand was real, and now she knew what to say: “I look at your creation every day, you know.” And Cameron would ask, “What creation?” and she’d say, “That big chart you made a few years ago, for Mrs. Simon’s business class, about making a profit. It’s hanging right in the front of her classroom, and she points to it all the time,” and Cameron would look down humbly with his dark, deep set eyes, because that’s the kind of person he was, and somehow, from there, they’d realize they had some mutual interest, in business, or the prospects of their town, or coffee, and he’d propose they get together and he’d ask for her number.

But none of it happened.

“Camboy!” someone screamed from the door, so loudly Gabrielle almost jumped off the balcony, almost fell to the sidewalk a story below, and it would have been Cameron’s stupid friend’s fault, so Cameron would have had to come down and tend to her. Chest compression and mouth-to-mouth might have been appropriate.

Gabrielle didn’t fall, however, and Cameron looked at her apologetically when his stupid friend told him they were late for something. She smiled back at him, not quite despairing, because at least they’d met, at least they’d touched. She could build on that. He’d recognize her in the cafeteria, in town, when they passed in the hall, and they could continue their conversation.

The opportunity never came, however. He was always surrounded by friends. Some were girls. His age. Rich. He never looked her way on the rare occasions when he wasn’t completely distracted by someone else. And after two weeks, she realized that that was it. There would be no further meetings. School was almost over. He was graduating, then he’d leave for college. That was her one chance at Cameron Flasche, and she had failed. Or fate had conspired against her.

Who was she, anyway? Just another girl. Not rich. Not beautiful. In a rented gown.

Two weeks after she’d met him, she faced the truth, cried hysterically to herself for an hour, fell asleep with her hands clutching her pillow to her face, woke up at three in the morning incredibly thirsty, and went back to sleep, numb, almost dead.

Two weeks after that, she met Roger, a solid, handsome young man, her age, from a good family.

Less than a month after that – her father in the hospital, her mother shuttling between her husband and her job – Gabrielle gave Roger her virginity, bouncing up and down on him in the back seat of a car parked in the dark woods. He came. She didn't.

“Okay, Gabrielle,” Esther said, kneeling with one of the rods in her hand. “We’re going to size your anus now.”

“What do you mean?”

“So we can get you on the right leash size,” Esther explained, fastening the bar to Gabrielle’s ankle cuffs.

“Is it going to hurt?”

“No,” Esther said. “It’ll be a little uncomfortable, but no worse than the leash.”

“Has the thing that was supposed to hurt the most . . .” Gabrielle stammered, “that Bruce mentioned . . . has that already been done?”

“No,” Esther replied. “Ringing is last.”

Esther picked up the second rod, attached it at the middle of the first rod, pointing it up so it was aimed at the place between Gabrielle’s legs. The end of the rod held a sort of cone, sharp at the tip, growing wider.

“Can you tell me what’s going to happen?” Gabrielle asked.

“This is a sizing cone,” she replied. “I’m going to put it up your anus and release the catch, and it’ll push inside you for a few minutes. Then we’ll see where it stops, and that will tell us what size leash you should be wearing.”

Gabrielle said nothing, just waited for what she knew was coming, the tip of the cone against her anus, then a click, and then pressure as it began forcing itself into her body. It didn’t hurt, but like the leash, it was unpleasant and she wanted it out.

After she set the cone in place, Esther turned back to the cart, tearing open packages and picking up tools whose uses were a mystery to Gabrielle.

Bruce returned from the lab a minute or two later.

“How long’s the cone been in?” he asked.

“Long enough,” Esther replied. “What’s her size?”

Bruce’s knees cracked as he knelt to look at the place between her legs. “Small,” he said. “One point three.”

Esther tapped on the tablet, and Bruce removed the cone and the two rods and stepped behind Gabrielle to raise the posts several feet. He joined Esther at the cart, picking up two very recognizable things: a can of shaving cream and a disposable razor.

“Have you ever been shaved down here?” he asked, gesturing toward her mound.

“I trim, but I’ve never shaved,” Gabrielle replied, trying not to be embarrassed by the conversation.

Bruce covered his hand with shaving cream, rubbed it over Gabrielle’s pubic hair, in front and between her legs. He worked slowly, deliberately, removing all the hair from the top of her mound to around her opening. With no way to prevent it anyway, Gabrielle relaxed, enjoying the attention, finding it mildly stimulating, even though it stung a little where her skin was thinnest, on her inner labia and around her clitoris.

His work finished, Bruce set the razor back on the cart and disappeared behind her. She heard the squeak of what she guessed was a faucet, then water splashing onto the floor, then Bruce stepped in front of her, raised a small hose to her middle and washed off her sex with cold water, spreading her lips to get the water into her opening as well as around her folds.

“God, that’s cold,” Gabrielle protested.

“Well water,” Esther explained.

Gabrielle looked down to study her sex, bald for the first time since her hair emerged when she was 13.

Bruce set the hose down over a drain set in the floor beneath her, shut off the faucet, moved to the cart, and Esther turned to Gabrielle, who was beginning to appreciate the intricate choreography of processing, each person doing their part with precision and efficiency.

“Do you ever process more than one person?” Gabrielle asked. Her arms were starting to ache again. Talking helped.

“We had eight girls come in on one day,” Bruce said.

“There are, what, six sets of poles?” Gabrielle said. “Did you have a girl at every position?”

“Four and four,” Esther said. “And just three of us doing the processing. We moved like clockwork.”

Esther, a tool in her hand that looked like a dildo, round and thick and pointed, peered at Gabrielle’s sex organ, spread her lips, ran her finger

along Gabrielle's opening.

"What's next?" Gabrielle asked. She suspected she already knew the answer, but she wanted it stated. If she was going to be penetrated while she hung helplessly, she needed at least the illusion that she had some say in things.

"Vaginal sizing," Esther said. "Quick insertion, and then we'll be finished with that part."

"Finished with everything?"

"Almost."

"You're going to put that in me?"

"Yes. Just checking you for depth and minimal width."

"Why is that nec—?" Gabrielle said, her last word choked off as the object was pushed into her sheath. "Oh, damn, oh," she grunted. "It's kind of thick."

Bruce joined Esther in front of Gabrielle, both watching the progress of the tool as Esther pushed it deep into her body.

"Uh, uh, uh," Gabrielle panted, writhing between the poles, rocking her pelvis as much as her bonds would allow.

"Sensitive," Esther observed.

"It's big," Gabrielle countered with another groan, the ache in her arms all but forgotten. "I'm not used to this."

Gabrielle could feel the tip of the device bumping against the depths of her sex organ and guessed it was at her cervix, a place that had been touched only twice in her life, by her gynecologist.

"Maybe a little tight," Bruce observed. "But I'm going to put her down as full capacity."

"Yeah," Esther agreed, looking up at Gabrielle.

"Okay, that's it," she said, withdrawing the rod, setting it onto the cart, tapping more data into the tablet.

Gabrielle, noticing that the rod was covered with her lubrication, was surprised she was wetting herself like this, before she'd started ovulating. She guessed it was the natural result of a series of unfamiliar sensations: the anal leash, being shaved, being nude in front of strangers, being hung and penetrated.

Esther tore open another small package, turned back to focus on Gabrielle's genitals, carefully wiping both sides of her vulva – inner lips,

outer lips, and then passing several wipes down from her clitoris to her sex opening, spreading her slot to clean inside the hole.

Finished cleaning, Esther stepped back while Bruce reached up and pulled Gabrielle's inner lips away from her body, tugging hard enough on each to make the girl wince with discomfort.

"She's got a good set," he said to Esther. "This should go fine."

Gabrielle looked at Esther, who returned her gaze.

"Okay, just about done," Esther said.

"This is where it hurts, right?" Gabrielle asked.

"Yes, it's gonna sting a little," Esther said.

Chapter 7: Tagging

“Do you want to know what to expect?” Bruce asked, looking up at Gabrielle, still suspended almost two feet above him.

“I don’t know,” Gabrielle said. “Should I want to?” She was trying to stay calm, but she could feel her heart thumping, and her breath was coming in quick gasps despite her attempts to control it.

“Some girls do, some don’t,” Esther said.

“Tell me,” Gabrielle said.

“We’re going to install a data ring in your right labia,” Bruce said. “We’ll be putting two small holes in your lip, then passing a ring through them, then doing what’s called a heat seal.”

“Heat seal?”

“Yes,” he said. “We’ll pass electricity through it, make it hot enough to fuse the metal, and it’ll cauterize you too. That’s what’ll hurt the most, but you’ll heal faster.”

“How bad? How bad will it hurt?”

“At worst, it’ll be about five seconds of severe pain,” Bruce said. “Most girls shout a bit. Then it’ll just hurt, for another 30 seconds. Then, you’ll feel it, but you’ll be able to tolerate it.”

“That’s worse than the dentist,” Gabrielle asserted accusingly. “I’ve never screamed at the dentist.”

“Some people yell at the dentist,” Bruce said. “I have.”

“Can it wait?” Gabrielle said. “Can we do this tomorrow?”

Panicking, she pulled at her wrist restraints, as if she believed she just needed to tug hard enough to free herself. Then she’d unbuckle her ankles and return to Bruce’s office, or reception, or the Arnolds’ home, and come back when she was ready.

“This can’t really wait,” Esther said, and there was sympathy in her voice, mixed with a tone that said this would be happening now.

“No. God no. Please, don’t.”

Bruce turned to the cart, picked up something small, returned to Gabrielle and pulled her right lip away from her body, raising a small tool that looked like a fork.

“No!” Gabrielle screamed. “No, stop!”

He jabbed the little tool through her lip, making what felt like a single giant hole in her flesh, but when he withdrew it, she saw two little spikes, one with a drop of her blood on the tip.

“Okay, okay, okay,” Gabrielle gasped, babbling uncontrollably. “It’s okay, it’s okay.”

Bruce went back to the cart, picked up a ring with a small gap in it, pulled her lip out again and, while she groaned in fear and discomfort, he worked it through the two holes he’d just created.

“Okay, almost done, Gabrielle,” Esther said. Gabrielle stared at Esther, suddenly seeing only her face, and the fear in her face. Esther was wincing, as if she were the one being pierced and cauterized.

Gabrielle sensed, from somewhere beyond her vision, that Bruce had a new object in his hand, a tool on a cord, like a curling iron, or a drill, or something, and he was pulling at her lip again for some reason, but she could only see Esther’s face clearly, not Bruce or what he was doing or what he held.

Suddenly, all was still, all was silent. And then there was pain at her middle that seemed to be breaking the world, bending space, opening the roof over her head and letting in the terrible red light of a strange, foreign sun.

“Ah, god damn it NO NO NO!” Gabrielle screamed, pulling with all her might against her chains, buttocks tightening, hands balling into fists, toes curling. “Eeeeeeeh!”

And then, the excruciating pain was over, replaced with a fierce burn that was also intolerable, but so much better than the agony she’d just passed through she no longer needed to scream.

“Uh huh,” she muttered to herself. “Uh huh. Uh huh.”

She’d lost track of time, but the pain ebbed again, as Bruce had promised. He’d said thirty seconds. It had been no less than that. Maybe it had been five minutes, Gabrielle wasn’t sure.

Now her vulva was just stinging, all of it, not just where the ring had been installed. But at least the pain was no longer all-consuming. She looked about the room, seeing the same things she had before, equipment and doors and a high ceiling that was fully intact and had not, apparently, been removed in the midst of her agony.

She could see Esther clearly again, no longer grimacing, standing serenely in front of her while Bruce sorted things in the cart. Esther reached

up to examine the ring, inspecting Bruce's work, touching it gently, pulling her hand away when Gabrielle flinched. She held a small tube in her other hand, and she uncapped it, squeezed out a thick white cream onto her finger, reached up and dabbed it on Gabrielle's lip, around both holes.

It stung for less than a second, and Gabrielle cried out, "No!" and then she felt a delicious numbness, a relief that was almost complete, an overwhelming coolness that seemed to spread from her lips to her vagina to everywhere else at her middle – anus, hips, belly, ribs.

She felt something cool against her feet and realized she'd been dropped again, that the posts had been allowed to sink back into the floor. She knew her arms would be registering relief if she could feel them, but she couldn't yet.

"Very close to being done," Esther said. "Very close."

"What's next?" Gabrielle asked quietly.

"We need to tag your left ear," Esther said, "but it will go through your existing hole, so this should be minor."

Bruce stepped up, swabbed both sides of Gabrielle's left earlobe with an alcohol wipe, and then Esther held Gabrielle's head steady while Bruce put something through the hole, raised the tool on the cord and brought it to her ear.

Gabrielle heard a faint crackling, then felt a brief, terrible burn, but the pain eased before she could cry out.

Bruce turned away, then came more cooling cream from Esther's tube, relief up to her scalp and down to her neck.

With another quick turn to the cart and back, Esther held something new, a piece of metal about an inch long, a ring through a hole in the top, pink on one half of its length, white on the other.

"How are you doing, Gabrielle?" Esther asked.

"I'm okay," Gabrielle replied, surprised at how weak her voice sounded, how scratchy. Like she'd been yelling for three hours at a football game.

"You've done beautifully," Esther said, standing in front of her and smiling. "I know it was hard."

Already, the memory of the pains was subsiding, and Gabrielle allowed herself a few moments of celebration, the completion of something difficult but necessary. She didn't deserve any credit, though. The chains that held her stretched out ensured her cooperation.

“You’ll get pink and white for two weeks,” Esther said.

“Why those colors?” Gabrielle asked, trying to recover her voice. “Is there some meaning to it?”

“Pure pink means you’re new and not producing yet. Pink and white mean you’re new but you are producing. Then, most girls wear white tags after their first two weeks. That just means regular production.”

“Okay. Are there other colors?”

“Yes,” Esther replied. “Red during your period, light blue if there are special instructions, and a few other colors, like black for punishment.”

“You’re just tagging my ear?”

“And your genitals,” Esther said. “So we can tell your status from either end.”

“You’re going to tag me . . . down there . . . now?”

“Yes,” Esther replied. “But you’ll barely feel it.”

Esther stepped close to Gabrielle, pulled the ring in her ear to the side, and Gabrielle heard a faint jingle of metal, the turning of a tiny screw. Done, Esther let the tag go, and it swung against her neck.

Esther knelt, a second pink and white tag in her hand, and Gabrielle looked down and bit her lip, certain as soon as her ring was touched she’d be returned to the agony of a few minutes ago.

The tag went on with almost no sensation at all, however, Esther using a tiny screwdriver to close the ring on the tag around the ring in her labia.

Still kneeling, she looked up at Gabrielle.

“No tag switching,” she said. “Ever.”

“You mean, switching tags with another girl?”

“Yes,” she said, standing, looking at Gabrielle severely. “One of those rules you don’t break.”

“Why would anyone ever –?”

“I don’t know,” Esther interrupted. “But it’s happened a few times, so we deal with it. Harshly. Just possessing one of these little screwdrivers is a violation. Only staff can put your tags on or take them off. If you think you’re wearing the wrong tag, tell someone. And if your tags don’t match, tell someone.”

“I can’t see my ear tag, though,” Gabrielle noted.

“There’s a mirror in your stall,” Esther said. “And all the tags are coded by touch. Run your finger along the edge if you’re not sure. You

should feel the same bumps on your labial tag and your ear tag. If you don't, you let someone know immediately."

"Okay," Gabrielle said.

"Mismatched tags are a violation, if you don't report them," Esther added.

"Okay."

"Now," Esther said, smiling again. "Just a shower left to get done."

She looked at her phone. "Thirty-nine minutes."

"It felt like three hours," Gabrielle lamented, but there was relief in her voice, almost joy.

She heard the squeak of the faucet behind her, then a sudden blast of icy water against her rear.

"Ah!" she cried, straining again against her cuffs.

As she gasped, Bruce ran the hose from her bottom to her lower back, then upper back, then along each arm and each leg, and finally a hard squirt against her anus and a softer stream against her vulva. The water on her new ring stung slightly, the effects of the cream wearing off already. She wondered how much it was going to hurt over the next few hours, the next few days.

Once Bruce had soaked her, Esther stepped up with a bowl of cold soapy water, large sponge floating on top, and she scrubbed Gabrielle thoroughly, starting with her toes, up each leg, around her middle, then belly, back, breasts, neck, and up her arm to her hands.

Gabrielle looked down, saw that as soon as the sponge was done at her breasts, both nipples started pumping again, drops of white fluid collecting there, adding a pale whiteness to the water running down her belly.

With another blast of cold water from the hose, Bruce rinsed her off, front and back, between her legs and down to her feet, the suds running to the drain.

Esther pulled a towel from the cabinet in the cart, stepped up behind Gabrielle and began drying her, from her hands and arms down to her feet. She was still shivering when Esther put the towel down and released her left hand from its cuff. She felt Bruce's chest against her back, looked down with surprise when he wrapped his arms around her waist, as if he was posing for the same picture that was taken of him and his wife.

When Esther freed her right hand, Bruce's hold on her tightened, and she realized that he was making sure she didn't fall.

Still, it was awkward to be held like this.

"Do girls sometimes faint at this point?" Gabrielle asked.

"It's happened a few times," Esther said, releasing Gabrielle's left ankle. "We don't want you hitting your head."

"I feel fine," Gabrielle said, rubbing her wrists, but when she looked down at the floor, she felt a slight wave of wooziness. "Well, the blood's kind of rushing back to my head again."

"Yeah, that's normal," Esther said "Now, before we let you out of your last cuff, we need to get you back on a leash."

"Okay," Gabrielle agreed, seeing the anal leash as a far preferable restraint to the posts.

Esther picked up the tablet and poked at it.

"Your anus measured one point three, so, you'll be wearing the closest size we've got, a 1.5," she said. "It's a little thicker than what you had in before, but it might actually be a more comfortable fit."

"Okay."

"We should have a leash that size in the supply closet, I'll be right back."

Gabrielle watched her go, realized that she was feeling very tired and a little dizzy.

"Can I set you down?" Bruce asked.

"Sure," Gabrielle said, and she allowed Bruce to lower her to the wet floor, his hands squeezing her upper arms until she was seated. She crossed her free leg over the leg still chained to the post, the water cold on her bottom and thighs, and she looked down at her bare sex, the silver ring set firmly into her flesh, the pink and white tag dangling from it, resting against the folds of her vulva.

She reached up and felt the tag in her ear, found three distinct bumps along the side, cautiously confirmed that the tag hanging from her vaginal lip had the same three bumps. She leaned forward to study the ring passed through her lip, noticed that it wasn't a simple loop of metal, but had a wide, flat surface on one side, with tiny numbers engraved into it. She uncrossed her legs, raising her right leg and carefully pulling on her vulva to turn the edge of the ring toward her. She bent, peering at the metal, squinting to read what had been carved into it: "1512-083."

A ring like this was June's featured product on Bruce's calendar, she remembered. She wished now she had gone through every month. Or maybe it was better she hadn't. Who knows what further cruelties she would have discovered?

Esther emerged from a door on the far side of the room, walked back to Gabrielle. Bruce, finished tending to the items in the cart, stepped behind Gabrielle.

"Okay, think you can stand?" Esther asked.

Chapter 8: Training

Gabrielle rose clumsily, still chained by one ankle, holding the post to steady herself, Bruce's hand brushing her arm, ready to assist but not grabbing. Fully upright, she looked back at Esther, who was waiting expectantly, so she bent and put her hands on her knees. She tried not to flinch or tighten when the leash tip was pressed against her anus, and she held still as it was pushed slowly into her cavity. She couldn't help issuing a small cry of surprise, however, when Esther expanded the tip. It was definitely larger than the first leash she'd worn that day, and it was just as uncomfortable.

Esther, leash wrapped around her wrist, bent to open Gabrielle's ankle cuff.

"Follow me," she instructed.

Gabrielle stepped to Esther's left, the leash around her thigh, trailing as Esther made her way toward the doors on the other side of the room.

The new tags, in her ear and vulva, swung against her flesh as she walked, but neither bothered her. Indeed, they felt like badges of a kind, not quite of honor, but of connection perhaps, to the girls who had gone before, chained to the posts, pierced, screaming, and then done – off to produce milk.

"Where are we going now?" Gabrielle asked, wanting to get all this over with, to meet the other girls and get to work.

"We just need to do a quick training," Esther said. "For the production room."

"Okay."

"I think you said you're ready to get that milk out," Bruce observed.

"Yes, please," Gabrielle said, suddenly aware again of the pain in her breasts. "For, like, the last two hours."

They arrived at a door that said "Production Training." Esther unlocked it and entered first.

The room was no bigger than a closet, and Gabrielle took in the contents quickly: A shelf with non-descript supplies, a pair of clear milking

cups on the floor connected to tubes that ran to a machine against the wall, and five chains secured to the floor with metal plates, four short chains ending in small, open cuffs, a fifth longer chain with a large steel hoop that Gabrielle suspected was a collar.

“You’ll be in restraints any time you’re giving milk,” Esther said. “No exceptions.”

“Why?” Gabrielle asked. She was trying not to sound argumentative, but her mind went immediately to what had just been done to her vulva while she was stretched between the posts. Would she be tortured like that again, six times per day, every time she was being milked?

“It’s so the collection won’t be interrupted,” Esther said.

“Nothing bad’s going to happen,” Bruce offered. “The goal is to get the milk out of you as quickly as possible.”

“Exactly,” said Esther.

“Unrestrained girls tend to move too much, or adjust the cups, or try to be helpful when no help is needed,” Bruce added. “It’s human nature. So the restraints are just there to keep you focused.”

“Okay,” said Gabrielle. It hardly mattered if she were restrained or not, she thought to herself. She knew she was going to have to hold still for 20 minutes, six times per day. Did she care if she were told to hold still, or forced to hold still?

Esther grabbed a small hair band off the shelf.

“Do you think you’ll want to keep your hair long?”

“Yes, probably,” Gabrielle replied.

“First step, then. Tie your hair up.”

Gabrielle reached up, collected her hair and wrapped the band around it, while Esther moved to the pair of cuffs that Gabrielle assumed, given their placement, were meant for her ankles.

“You’ll be restraining your own feet,” Esther said, crouching and motioning Gabrielle to do the same.

Gabrielle dropped, her leash clinking against the floor. She slid it away from her feet and looked as Esther raised one of the ankle restraints.

“Take a look.”

Gabrielle took the cuff from Esther and studied it. It was stainless steel and very simple, one half of the cuff with a series of catches, the other with a slot. Gabrielle closed the cuff, the catches clicking through the slot, locking in place. But it didn’t require a key. She could open the cuff by

pushing on the catches, so she closed and opened it several times and looked up at Esther.

“It doesn’t lock?”

“No reason for any of them too,” Esther said. “Put them both on.”

Gabrielle slid into position, kneeling, reached back and closed the first cuff around her right ankle, the catches clicking three times before the cuff was tight enough to hold her.

She repeated the process on her left ankle.

“Now, get on your hands and let me check.”

Gabrielle dropped to her hands and knees and Esther inspected the fit. “Very good,” she said. “Three catches on each ankle. Not two. Not four. This is something you’ll be expected to get right. If you accidentally go to the fourth catch, open it and try again. If you go to the second, push one more.”

“It’s one of those rules you’re not supposed to break?” Gabrielle said, deciding to keep a mental list of the things that could get her into trouble.

“It is,” said Bruce. “Not the worst thing you can do, obviously, but if either ankle is not on the right catch – too tight or too loose – there’s a good chance it will be noticed, and there will be consequences.”

Esther stood, handed Gabrielle’s leash to Bruce, and he stepped behind her, holding her restraint so loosely it swung against her vulva, precariously close to her ring.

“Could you pull it up a little?” she said, looking back at Bruce. He immediately wrapped it around his wrist with two quick loops, pulling it taut enough that she felt a slight tug at her anus.

Esther stepped to the other side of the little room, knelt and picked up one of the remaining cuffs.

“A staff person will handle the rest of your restraints,” she said. “Just put your hands within range of the cuffs, and I can take care of it here.”

Gabrielle slid her hands forward and Esther closed a cuff around each wrist, the catches clicking four times on each cuff.

“Not too tight?” Esther asked.

“No, it’s fine,” Gabrielle replied.

“Four catches on your wrists, then,” Esther said. “Three catches on your ankles. You need to remember both of those numbers.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle agreed.

Esther picked up the collar, opened it wide.

“Now, this is for your neck,” she said.

“Probably pretty obvious,” Bruce said.

She looked back at him, wondering if this was the kind of joke people told here, or he was being serious. He returned her gaze, face expressionless, and then he winked.

Gabrielle turned back to Esther, who raised the collar to her neck and closed it. Like the other restraints, it ticked off the catches as it tightened. Gabrielle counted the clicks.

“Four,” she said. “Is that another number I need to remember?”

“Not really,” Esther said. “It doesn’t have to be exact. It’ll hold you at pretty much any setting.”

Gabrielle heard Bruce’s knees pop, felt her leash swing, and guessed he was kneeling behind her.

“At this point, usually, your leash comes out,” he said.

“Okay,” Gabrielle said. She heard the click of the lock, felt the plug shrink, felt Bruce withdraw the object. She wasn’t sure she could get used to that.

Esther stood, grabbed something from the shelf, and knelt at Gabrielle’s left side. Holding a pair of wipes in one hand, she reached up with the other and cupped her hand under Gabrielle’s breast.

“You definitely feel full,” Esther said, massaging the breast, pinching the nipple.

Gabrielle grunted, not feeling a comment was necessary at this point. Her need to be milked had already been established.

Esther passed the wipe over Gabrielle’s nipple, raised the collection cup, wiped that and put the cup on her nipple.

“It’ll stay in place on its own for about a minute if you don’t move too much,” Esther said, moving to Gabrielle’s other side to repeat the process. “After that, the suction will keep it on.”

With both nipples cupped, Esther slid over to the machine against the wall and turned it on.

It hummed quietly and, within a few seconds, Gabrielle felt a tug on her nipples and looked down, watching them get sucked into the cups, filling the little chamber at the bottom, milk gushing forth a moment later.

The relief of releasing her milk came immediately, but there was a second pleasure too, of having her nipples stimulated. She liked being sucked by Roger. Often enough, feeling his mouth there during sex had helped her to orgasm. It hadn't occurred to her however that a machine could provide the same pleasure, or at least an okay imitation of it.

She felt the warmth of mild arousal, suspected that her clitoris was firming up, that her lubrication was starting to flow, but she assumed Bruce wouldn't notice, or would respect her privacy if he did.

She looked down, confirmed that the tubes were filling with her milk, two white streams that raced each other from her breasts to the floor and across to the machine.

"Twenty minutes, right?" Gabrielle asked, trying to picture having this done six times per day, reminding herself that the alternative was quite likely homelessness.

"Twenty minutes is the average," Esther said. "But it will keep going until you're emptied. Some girls last closer to 45 minutes."

"That much milk?" Gabrielle asked.

"Or less flow in the nipple," Esther replied.

"How much should I be making?" Gabrielle asked.

"There's no required amount per female," Esther said, "but we do set a fairly aggressive target overall."

"Mr. Arnold told her about the eight percent," Bruce said.

"Good," Esther said. "The average mom produces something like 24 ounces a day. The industry average is 30.5 ounces a day. And we're getting right at 33 ounces a day now, if you look at just the last six months."

"So that's like, 8.2 percent better than the industry," Bruce said. "But he wants 10."

"What happens at 10?" Gabrielle asked. She didn't care about the answer, just wanted to keep talking, because being naked, chained and milked in silence seemed unbearably awkward.

"He'll get recognition, and bragging rights," Bruce said. "But it can also mean consulting. People paying to study his operation."

"That already happens," Esther said.

"Yeah," Bruce agreed, "but he can actually license what he's doing. Have other dairies pay him to follow his methods exactly. There's a whole new revenue stream in that, and it'll be added to profit-sharing."

"So if I'm under 33 a day, I'll bring the average down."

“Don’t worry about that, ever,” Esther said.

“Just do as you’re told, follow the system, and your production will take care of itself,” Bruce said. “It’s a good sign that you’re already producing, for what that’s worth.”

After a brief silence in which Gabrielle could think of nothing to say or ask, Esther spoke again.

“Doing okay, Gabrielle?”

“Yeah,” she replied. Her knees were getting a little sore, arms tired of holding herself up, but she was able to shift somewhat in her chains, and that helped.

“In the collection room, there will be forty stations,” Esther said. “So it’s this, what you’re doing now, plus a lot more commotion. Girls being brought in, girls leaving, employees doing their jobs, normal conversation.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said. “Can we talk during milking?”

“You can,” Esther said. “You can talk to the girls on either side of you if it’s not too noisy, and anyone else you’re interacting with. We frown on yelling, though, and the staff are there to get things done, so you won’t just be shooting the breeze with them.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said, stifling laughter as she imagined herself, restrained, her milk flowing through the tubes, trying to engage employees in a conversation about the weather.

“Now, one other thing,” Esther said. “In the collection room, you’ll notice a few extra fixtures – a hole where a short post can be set, between your knees, and a ring for restraints there, and in front too.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said.

“Most girls respond to stimulation,” Esther said. “There can be a measurable bump in output when there’s pressure on the sex organ or anus, or penetration.”

“Penetration?” Gabrielle asked. “You mean, like, something, um, inside?”

“Yeah,” Esther replied, “I’m only bringing this up because you’ll see it happening sometimes in collection. Good chance it will be happening today. But it’s strictly optional. Strictly optional. If you want to try it, great, we’ll let you and we’ll see how it affects production, but it’s up to you.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said, having a hard time imagining what such a thing would look like, or how any girl would be willing to get pleasure in a

room full of people and commotion.

“It’s optional,” Bruce echoed, “and you can’t do anything during the first two weeks anyway.”

“Yeah, we need you to get settled in,” Esther said. “After that, you can give things a try.”

“Am I seeing some arousal now?” Bruce asked, and she heard his knees pop and guessed he was bending to look at her female opening.

“I, uh, I don’t know,” Gabrielle stammered. She wanted to keep talking, but not about this.

“It’s a little pinker then when you were on the poles,” he said. “Mind if I touch?”

“That’s fine,” Gabrielle lied.

Esther stood and Gabrielle looked up to watch her pull a bottle of hand sanitizer off the shelf. She passed it over to Bruce and Gabrielle heard a squirting sound, then Bruce rubbing his hands together.

Next, she felt a finger on her slit, touching her tentatively.

“You’re not going to touch my ring, right?” Gabrielle asked.

“I’ll be careful,” Bruce promised, and she felt him gently part her lips, place one finger inside the mouth of her vagina, circle her hole and withdraw.

“Are you usually wet?” he asked.

“No,” Gabrielle said. “Well, during ovulation, yes, but not unless I’m stimulated at other times of the month.”

“You’re pretty well-lubricated right now,” Bruce observed.

“I noticed that,” Gabrielle said, blushing slightly even though she knew there was nothing to be embarrassed about. “I think maybe just having everything done down there. Or being nude or whatever.”

“It’s a good sign, though,” Esther said. “Whatever the reason. Some girls just dry up during processing, and they don’t get it back for days, or weeks.”

“I guess every girl is different,” Gabrielle said, immediately feeling ridiculous for being inane.

But Bruce agreed enthusiastically. “They are, they are,” he said. “You can’t predict anything.”

Esther leaned over to the machine, still humming, and Gabrielle noticed a narrow window in the side of the machine, the bottom half white.

“Wow, still going strong,” Esther said. “Four and a half ounces so far.”

“So . . .” Gabrielle began, doing some quick math, “I want to do, like, six ounces per collection?”

“Yeah, about that,” Esther said. “But it will vary through the day. More in the morning, usually, and then some girls will give another good round in mid-afternoon, or whenever they’re getting stimulated.”

The machine beeped quietly and Esther leaned over to look.

“Okay, you’re about done,” she said. “Four point nine ounces. Very good, especially for training.”

Gabrielle didn’t try to hide her disappointment.

“I was hoping for more,” she said.

“Don’t worry about that,” Bruce laughed. “We have a hundred ways to get more milk out of you.”

Esther turned off the machine and pulled the collection cups off Gabrielle’s nipples.

“Ahh,” Gabrielle sighed. It didn’t exactly hurt to have the cups removed, but the feeling was unexpected, a sudden release, a coolness after the warmth of the cups and the flow of milk.

Esther nodded to Bruce.

“Okay,” she said, “leash back in, and let’s get you to your stall.”

Gabrielle tried not to tense up when she felt the tip of the leash plug at her anus.

Once it was locked in place, Esther removed the collar and opened the wrist cuffs.

“As soon as your neck and wrist restraints are off and your anal leash is locked, you can free your ankles,” Esther said.

Gabrielle reached back to open her ankle cuffs, then stood, the leash swinging between her thighs.

“And now the hair band,” she said.

Gabrielle pulled it out, handed it to Esther.

“What color ribbon do you want?”

“Um, white?” Gabrielle said, not caring.

They left the training room, Bruce handed Gabrielle’s leash to Esther, and he turned and offered his hand.

“I think you’re going to do well here,” he said. “Been great to meet you today.”

“Thanks,” Gabrielle replied, not sure what else to say.

“Thanks, Bruce,” Esther said, turning toward the same door Mr. Arnold had passed through, the door she guessed led to the rest of the facility.

Chapter 9: To the Stalls

Gabrielle took up her position at Esther's left, following her to the door, waiting while she used a card to open it, passing into a hall with doors to the right that said "Staff Room," "Lab," "Laundry," and "Kitchen," and on the left another locked door, with a glass window, through which Gabrielle could see an elevator and a flight of stairs.

"AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY," said a sign on the door above the window. Esther, clearly authorized, used her card to get them through. "We're taking the stairs," she said, guiding Gabrielle past the elevator.

On the landing halfway up the flight to the second floor, Gabrielle heard footsteps, male and female voices, the faint rattling of chains, and her heart jumped with the fear of the unknown.

"Stop for a second," Esther said, taking Gabrielle's arm in her hand.

Gabrielle turned, all her attention on Esther, not sure how to read the woman's tone, wondering if she'd done something wrong. But Esther smiled before she spoke her next words.

"What you're about to walk into is unlike anything you've ever seen, most likely. Some girls go into shock for a few days. Or a few weeks."

"Okay," Gabrielle responded, not sure what could shock her more than what she'd already been through since she sat in the Arnold's living room this morning.

"The best way to think of it," Esther continued, "is like a big family."

"My family was kind of small," Gabrielle admitted, and she heard herself using the past tense, and she didn't care that she had done so.

"There are all kinds of policies, and customs, and things you're not supposed to do, and privileges that might surprise you. Okay?"

"Okay."

"And you're just going to have to learn through experience."

"I think I can do that."

"You're a quick study, aren't you?"

"You mean, I can learn fast?"

"Yeah, that."

“I do okay,” Gabrielle said. “I try to apply myself.”

“Okay, great,” Esther said. “Just absorb, observe, ask questions, and don’t judge.”

“I really try not to judge,” Gabrielle said. At the tender age of 18, she had already learned there were a lot of different kinds of people, and being different didn’t mean they didn’t deserve respect.

Gabrielle looked into Esther’s eyes, and Esther stared back, searchingly, as if trying to guess at the girl’s reactions to what waited, half a flight of stairs above them.

Maybe it was her youth that had Esther particularly concerned.

“How many teenagers are there?” Gabrielle asked quietly.

“Five,” Esther replied. “No, four. We had a birthday last week. Oh, five again with you. But most of the production girls are in their 20’s. Some in their 30’s. Your stallmate is 32.”

“Stallmate?”

“The girl who will be sharing your stall.”

“A stall?”

“Yeah, it’s what we call it” Esther said. “Basically, where you’ll be kept. When you’re not somewhere else.”

Gabrielle wanted to know more, but Esther held her hand up to interrupt. “Let’s just get you there, and you’ll know more than I can ever tell you.”

Gabrielle laughed, partly nervous, partly sincere. It was sort of a game at this point, she tried to tell herself, whatever this life she’d signed up for was going to be.

She looked at Esther, waiting for further instructions, and Esther turned toward the last half of the stairs, and Gabrielle followed, trying not to be nervous.

By the time they reached the door that opened to the second floor, however, Gabrielle was breathing heavily, casting her eyes about, wondering whom she’d see, who would see her, if she’d be the only one nude, or leashed, or female.

At the moment, there were voices, and the other sounds people made, but no people visible.

That was a relief.

Esther used her card again to open this next door.

Gabrielle had passed through at least four locked doors, she thought. Maybe more. She was losing count.

Two halls stretched on the other side of the door, a short hall ahead and a longer hall to the left.

Gabrielle looked down the short hall first, a pair of doors to the left and, on the wall straight ahead, an incongruous photograph or poster or something of a boy and girl, visible – and naked – from the waist up, sitting facing each other, staring down at something, as if they were playing a board game.

Gabrielle looked to the left next, down the longer hall, where the voices were coming from. On the right side were office doors. On the left side, there were barred doors, like the doors of prison cells, some wide, some narrow. The wider doors were open, the narrower ones closed. The narrow door nearest to her held an assortment of things – she noticed towels and what looked like medical supplies, before something new caught her attention, a female staff member stepping through one of the wider doors with a leash in her hand, closely followed by a nude blonde girl.

The staffer and the girl were chatting, as if they were colleagues, classmates, friends, and Gabrielle stared at them as they approached. Her eyes quickly took in the girl's full breasts, puffy nipples, and the white tags hanging from her ear and her genitals, the lower tag almost hidden by a thick coat of black pubic hair.

“Hey, Arwen,” Esther said. “Come meet Gabrielle.”

The staffer, who Gabrielle guessed must be Arwen, was dressed in blue coveralls, like Esther. She lead her girl over to them, the leash slack, rounding the blonde girl's thigh.

“Hey, Esther,” Arwen said. “Hi, Gabrielle.”

“Hi, Arwen,” Gabrielle said, wondering if Arwen was going to offer her hand. She didn't, instead turning to the girl with her. “This is Jill. Jill, Gabrielle.”

“Hi, Gabrielle!” Jill said enthusiastically, and she stepped up, not to shake hands but to embrace, pressing her breasts against Gabrielle's, her tag swinging against Gabrielle's thigh.

She wrapped her arms around Gabrielle's upper back and Gabrielle reciprocated as best she could, with a tentative hug around Jill's middle. So this was one of the customs, Gabrielle thought. Girls who gave milk hugged each other. Like a family.

And then, as quickly as the introductions had begun, they were over, Arwen and Jill agreeing that it had been nice to meet Gabrielle, then passing around the corner and down the short hall, opening one of the double doors on the left. Gabrielle noticed that the door had a large window, but because of the angle, she couldn't see anything happening within the room. She wanted to see.

"Jill's going to be milked, if that's not obvious," Esther said.

"That's where it's all done?"

"Yeah," Esther said. "Twenty stations."

Gabrielle studied the doors with a new appreciation, wishing she could see inside. Six times a day for the next six months, she would pass through it, get milked, leave. That much made sense.

"Okay, let's put you in here for a few minutes while I get your supplies," Esther said, and she moved down the hall toward one of the narrow doors. She unlatched the door, opened it and looked at Gabrielle expectantly.

This little space was tiny, about a foot square. Enough room to stand up in, and that was it.

"This is what's called a holding pen," Esther said. "They're just for convenience. You'll never be in one more than 15 minutes, unless you're being punished."

"Okay," Gabrielle said. She sidled in reluctantly, turned to face Esther. Esther, still holding the leash through the bars, eased the door closed and shut it with latches at floor and eye level.

She held the end of the leash at the bars, and Gabrielle took it.

"Pass it between your legs, so it's in front," she said, and she demonstrated, parting her legs and reaching down.

Gabrielle released the leash, allowed it to fall behind her and then, with some effort, opened her legs, reached between her thighs and found the leash. She pulled it forward, letting the links slide through her fingers.

When her hand reached the end of the leash, she passed it back through the bars to Esther, who pulled it up, taut.

"I don't want it to touch me," Gabrielle protested. "I mean, um, down there."

Esther nodded but said nothing, wrapped the leash around a peg in the wall, looped the end around a hook lower down, allowing just enough slack in the leash so if Gabrielle pressed her belly against the bars of the

pen, the leash touched her vulva but put no pressure on it. She turned slightly so it would press only the left side of her sex.

“How does your ring feel?” Esther asked.

“It’s stinging a little. Kind of everywhere, but the worst on the right side. I think the cream’s wearing off.”

“How about your ear?”

Gabrielle reached up. She’d forgotten her ear had been ringed and tagged too. “I’m glad I already had a hole there,” she said.

Esther nodded.

“Okay, I’m going to have to leave you here by yourself, so that means one more thing,” she said. “Be right back.”

Esther stepped across the hall to one of the offices, unlocked the door, went in and returned after a few seconds with a pair of handcuffs.

“Put your hands out through the bars,” she said. “Here and here.”

Gabrielle obeyed and Esther cuffed her wrists together.

Something in Gabrielle’s eyes triggered Esther’s sympathy, because she smiled again, in a pained way. “I promise it’ll be no more than ten minutes. And I’ll try for five.”

“Okay.”

Esther went back into the office, stepped out, locked the door and, with a quick glance at Gabrielle, moved around the corner and into the hall with the door to the milking room.

Gabrielle bit her lip and fought the urge to cry. How often would this be done to her? She was virtually immobilized, shuffling on her feet uncomfortably, hands at the bars. She wanted to sit, to lie down, to sleep. She’d begun the day tired, and nothing that had happened since had made her feel any less so.

She heard voices, chains, the sounds of metal doors clanging shut, and she leaned toward the bars of her little cage and tried to see what was happening down the hall.

She expected to see a single staffer and another female, being walked to the milking room. Instead, coming toward her, noisily, like a surreal parade, were three nude females and two nude males, all wearing leashes that ran from between their legs to a long chain held by a female staff member.

Gabrielle couldn’t help but stare, looking into every face, running her eyes up and down each body.

One girl was black, one white, one olive-skinned, all in their 20's perhaps, or early 30's. The white girl was shaved, the black girl sported a full bush, and the olive-skinned girl wore a thin strip of hair. How they wore their pubic hair seemed to be an individual option, and Gabrielle decided she'd let hers grow back. The olive-skinned girl's tag was red, indicating, Gabrielle recalled, that she was on her period. The other two girls wore white tags.

Finished looking at the females, she studied the males. What were they doing here? Why were they going with the girls to the milking room? Her mind cast about for an explanation, arrived briefly at the conclusion that they were chaperones, as if everyone were going on a field trip.

One of the males was fully erect, his penis bouncing with every step. It that embarrassed anyone, they weren't showing it. But no, he definitely wasn't a chaperone.

"I bet you hardly ever talk," the black girl said to him, apparently continuing a conversation.

"You'd be surprised," he replied, making her laugh.

As the assemblage passed, the white girl turned her head and noticed Gabrielle. Her eyes went wide and she smiled.

"Oh, hi!" she said.

"Hey," Gabrielle said, moving her hand up and down with the best wave she could muster.

The other eyes turned toward her – the staffer, the other two girls, both males.

"Hi," some of them said.

"Hey," she heard more than once.

"Gabrielle," someone whispered, talking about her, apparently. Had they all been told a new girl was coming? Had they all been told her name?

"Hello," she said, hoping she was speaking loudly enough for everyone to hear, trying not to think about what they saw, reminding herself that they were all naked and bound as well, and didn't seem ashamed.

They rounded the corner and she heard the door to the milking room open, although she couldn't see it from where she'd been confined. She heard the door close, and the voices went silent.

Boys? she said to herself. Boys? What were boys doing here?

Alone again, she replayed the picture she'd seen earlier, at end of the hall, of the boy and girl facing each other.

It wasn't a picture, she realized. They had moved. The boy had moved his arm, and the girl had moved her head. Gabrielle just hadn't noticed it because movement made no sense. A live male and female playing a board game in the nude – or topless, at least – was just so far beyond expectations she couldn't fathom it. Now, she believed it was real, not a picture.

She'd just seen two other boys. For some reason, they were here.

Esther appeared, holding a small tote bag, bulging with whatever she'd put in it.

"How are you doing, Gabrielle?" she asked, moving to one of the little doors on Gabrielle's side of the hall, opening it and grabbing something Gabrielle couldn't see.

"Okay," Gabrielle lied.

"Just a few more minutes."

"Okay."

Esther walked into several offices, returned to Gabrielle's pen.

"Do you use a dildo?" she asked.

"What?"

"To masturbate with."

For some reason, Gabrielle found this question more embarrassing than anything else that had happened that morning. She blushed, looked down, looked back up to find Esther smiling with understanding.

"I'll just give you an average size, and you can swap it out later if you need to," she said.

"Sure," Gabrielle replied.

Esther turned and headed back into one of the offices, quickly reemerging.

"Okay, all set," she said. "Ready to go home?"

"Home?" Gabrielle asked, raising an eyebrow. Home meant one place to her, and she didn't think she was going back there anytime soon.

"Your home away from home, let's say," Esther clarified, and she set down the bag, opened Gabrielle's handcuffs and freed her leash from the hook in the wall.

"So, you mean, where I'm staying here?" Gabrielle asked. "Didn't you call it a stall?"

"I did," Esther replied. She unlatched the door of the holding pen and opened it, picked up the bag and stepped back, motioning Gabrielle to

step out.

“You’ll be in block 3,” she said. “Stall 5. You’ll be with Roxanne.”

“The 32-year-old?”

“That’s right,” Esther confirmed. “She’s usually paired with the newest girl, at least for a month or two.”

“Why?”

“She’s just very sweet, very patient, loves explaining how things work.”

“How long has she been here?”

“She was one of the original 10,” Esther said. “Been here from the start.”

“Seven years?”

“Ten,” Esther said. “The Arnolds started out in the other barn.”

“Oh, yeah,” Gabrielle said, and a sudden memory struck her. She and Doria used to play all over that barn, and then Mr. Arnold made it off limits, when she was eight or nine. Doria just said her dad was trying some new stuff, but Gabrielle thought it was strange.

Esther stepped further down the hall and Gabrielle followed. Her leash was still in front, passing under her vulva, but Esther was holding it loosely, allowing it to swing harmlessly between her thighs as she walked.

“Quick tour,” Esther said. “This is what’s called the residential wing. To the right, that’s storage, then the shift manager’s hall, then more storage and the assistants’ spaces, then the program manager next to that, and the nutritionist’s office at the end.”

“Okay.”

“Now, on the left, that’s where everyone lives,” Esther continued. “The big doors, that are open, you see six of them?”

“Yes,” Gabrielle said, counting.

“Each of those doors leads into what’s called a block. A block holds eight stalls, and there are two girls in each stall. So a maximum of sixteen people per block.”

“Okay.”

“Now, see the little doors between each block?”

“Yeah.”

“Those open up to service halls that run along the backs of the stalls. You’ll get your food through there, mail, reports are filed there, you’ll —”

“Reports?” Gabrielle interrupted.

“Yes, morning reports. Ask Roxanne.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said.

“So, girls are in blocks one through three,” Esther said, pointing to the four doors closest to them. “Blocks four and five are usually empty, but they can be used for quarantine, or punishment, or alone time. And then, block six, at the other end, is the males.”

“Why are there boys here?” Gabrielle blurted.

“Companionship,” Esther said simply.

“Companionship?” Gabrielle repeated. “Like, boyfriends?”

“There are 44 girls here now, counting you,” Esther said. “We have five males. So, you do the math.”

Gabrielle laughed, surprising herself, and apparently Esther as well, judging from her startled expression.

“Sorry,” Gabrielle said. “It’s just, you said, ‘Do the math,’ and I did, and it seems like the boys are way outnumbered.”

“They are,” said Esther. “Males are very expensive.”

“Huh?” Gabrielle queried.

“They don’t make milk,” Esther said. “They’re an expense.”

“Why do you have them?”

“Companionship,” Esther said again.

“I know, but I’m not sure what that means,” Gabrielle said. “I mean, in this context. I saw two boys walk by. They were with girls. I guess they’re just friends, then?”

“Yes, just friends,” Esther said. “But friends who are expected to engage as often as possible.”

“Engage?”

“Ask Roxanne for the details,” Esther said.

“Okay,” said Gabrielle, and her imagination turned to what Esther meant by “engage,” and she felt a twinge at her vulva, possibly from the ring.

“And then, we have some storage here too, on this side, and of course the holding pens, three of those.”

Esther moved further up the hall. Now they were in front of the first block door. Gabrielle heard female voices, looked in, saw more bars and at least three naked girls behind them. These were the stalls, no doubt. Across from the stalls, she saw drawings, graffiti, posters – real posters this time –

of flowers, a boy's face, a unicorn. She caught a snippet of conversation: "—and then, you're being moved up, so—"

At the end of the block, there were two shower spaces, without curtains, just showerheads sticking out from the wall, drains below.

The second block held the same thing, one of the girls noticing her from her stall, looking between her bars into Gabrielle's eyes, a half-smile on her lips, Gabrielle moving too quickly to smile back.

Heart thumping again, she reached the door of the third block with Esther, followed her in, trying to see everything at once.

The stalls were to the left, a long wall on the right. The wall had been divided by thick, black tape into 16 spaces, one for each girl, corresponding presumably with where each was kept, a name at the top: Sandra, Debbi, Vanessa, Carmen. The spaces were a mix of the practical and the whimsical, a number and a list of what Gabrielle assumed were milking times written in erasable marker under the girl's name, the rest of each space given to greeting cards, posters, paper valentine hearts, photos — of a giraffe, a waterfall, a forest, a flower — and messages and drawings done with colored markers. If there were a theme to the art in this block, it might be nature, Gabrielle decided.

Four clocks, all set to the same time, ticked above every four spaces. It was a little after 12 noon.

Nervously, she looked to the right, through the bars, into the stalls.

She estimated that each stall was less than ten feet deep, seven or eight feet wide. Each pair of stalls was separated by bars, and separated from the next pair of stalls by a solid wall. So two girls were in the same stall, and they could see the two girls confined beside them.

The stalls were spartan, Gabrielle noticed with disappointment, but with no great surprise. She was here to produce milk, she told herself, and she would receive the minimal resources necessary to do so. This was a business.

Two bunk beds stood against the solid wall in each stall, a simple ladder at the foot ascending to the higher bed. A small sink with two mirrored cabinets above it was affixed to the back wall. Next to that, in a small enclosure with a curtain in the front, was what Gabrielle guessed was a toilet.

The back wall featured a single slot where food, the reports or whatever else were sent through, Gabrielle decided.

Each pair of stalls opened, not into the hall, but into a small cage at the front. To leave the stall, each girl had to pass through two barred doors, the one into the little entry cage, and then from the cage to the hallway.

Done examining the spaces, Gabrielle turned her attention to the occupants.

The first stall on the block was empty, and the second held just one girl, visible only as a lump under her sheets, red hair spilling out across her pillow.

There were two girls in the next pair of stalls, both in stall 3, a brunette standing at the sink, the blonde on the lower bunk, sitting, one foot on the floor, one leg raised to her chest. They had been talking, but when Gabrielle came into view, the blonde turned and smiled.

“Gabrielle?”

“Hi,” Gabrielle said, not sure she was comfortable with the idea that people knew her name and she didn’t know theirs.

The brunette turned her soapy face, smiled at Gabrielle, turned back to rinse.

Stall four was also vacant, the beds neatly made.

Gabrielle quickly scanned the next pair of stalls, knowing these girls would be like roommates, the ones here she was closest to, in terms of proximity if not relations.

Stall five – her stall – was empty. Stall six held a single girl, presently on the toilet, her feet visible under the curtain.

Esther stopped at the single door that led into both stalls, unlocked it with a key on a ring and, still holding Gabrielle’s leash, motioned her to enter.

After Gabrielle stepped in, Esther locked the door and passed the leash through the bars to her. Gabrielle took it, staring at it absently while Esther used a second key to open the door to the stall.

Gabrielle passed in and looked back at Esther quizzically.

“Close the door,” Esther said. “Push it until it clicks.”

Gabrielle obeyed.

“Now, to the leashing port,” Esther instructed, stepping to a wide opening set into the bars, running from her knees to her waist. “Turn around and bend over so I can get your leash out.”

Gabrielle complied, grunting quietly as Esther pulled the leash out of her anus.

“A few more things, and then you can relax,” Esther said.

Gabrielle turned and straightened, wanting only to lie down.

“That’s your space,” she said, turning back to point to a spot on the wall opposite the bars, nothing there but her name, “Gabrielle,” written at the top in block letters, and “83” – her number – below it. “That’s where your points and your production schedule will be posted, but you can decorate it too, tape things to it, buy a poster.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said. Decorating a wall was not of much interest right now. She doubted it ever would be.

“When a girl’s on a regular schedule,” Esther continued, “she’s milked every two to three hours. Today, you should be getting lunch first, through the service port back there, and you’ll be going to your first milking in about two hours.”

“Okay.”

“Between milkings for your first two weeks, you’ll be going back to your stall just about every time, but after your two weeks are up, you’ll get chores, you can go to the commons, and you can use points to interact with other employees.”

“What do you mean by ‘interact’?” Gabrielle asked.

“Ask Roxanne.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said, feeling increasingly numb.

“For your first three nights here, you and Roxanne will be harnessed. They’ll go on before the lights dim and stay on until the lights come on in the morning.”

Gabrielle was tempted to ask what Esther meant by “harnessed” but decided she didn’t want to be told to ask Roxanne for something else.

“Someone should be putting your production schedule up soon, and you’ll need to pay attention to it. They’ll come for you a few minutes before your time, and you’ll be expected to get on your leash as soon as they show up. After the first minute, you’ll be punished, and the punishment goes up by the minute after that.”

“They’ll be coming for me here, right?” Gabrielle asked

“Yes.”

“So, how would I be delayed?”

“Usually, it’s either because a girl’s sleeping or on the toilet. Sometimes just slow for some other reason. But no excuses.”

“Okay.”

“Now, your supplies,” Esther said, passing the bag through the bars. Gabrielle took it, just stared at it, leaving it closed.

“Put everything in your cabinet.”

“You mean, over the sink?”

“Yeah.”

Gabrielle turned to the sink and the pair of cabinets over it, opened the one on the left and quickly shut it when she saw that it was full of someone else’s things. The right cabinet was empty, so she reached into the bag and began depositing items on the shelves: toothpaste, toothbrush, hair brush, soap, tampons, a fork, spoon and knife, a sponge, a washcloth, a tiny bottle of aspirin, lip balm, a white hair ribbon, lipstick and eye liner (both of which surprised Gabrielle), tissue, two pens, a small stack of blank cards and, finally, not one but two objects that seemed designed to be inserted up her vagina. One was clearly a dildo, light blue, with a wide base and ridges carved along its length. The other was a simple white cylinder, thicker and pointed at the tip, then narrowing and thickening again in undulating waves, a short metal hook protruding from its base, its purpose a mystery to Gabrielle. She deposited both objects on the lowest shelf, checked the bag to make sure it was empty, and brought it back to Esther.

“Any questions?”

“No, I don’t think so,” Gabrielle replied, lying again.

Esther offered her hand, a ritual Gabrielle found stranger each time it was done, but she took it through the bars.

“Glad to have you here,” she said.

“Good to be here,” Gabrielle said in another lie.

Chapter 10: Roxanne and the Neighbors

Esther left the block, Gabrielle watching her depart, then turning to the curtain, sliding it open, finding with some relief a normal toilet, with a seat, a flush handle, a clean floor in front of it. Boys did terrible things to toilets, she knew, but no boys could get to this one.

The toilets in the two stalls were beside each other, but separated from each other by a solid wall. Gabrielle stepped in, closed the curtain and sat to urinate. She knew there was a girl beside her – she'd seen her feet – but had no idea what to say.

She heard the other toilet flush, the girl in there open her curtain, step out.

Gabrielle looked down at her vulva as she relieved herself, the pink and white tag dangling from her lip, bright red where the ring had been installed. Because of where her ring had been positioned, the tag hung above her opening, and the sting was all but passed, just a dull discomfort now, but she wiped carefully, pulling the tag out of the way and gingerly passing the tissue up her slot. She tugged lightly on the tag to see what would happen, stopping when it hurt.

Done on the toilet, she thought about just staying there, never leaving, but she flushed and stood, heart beating again, stepped through the curtain and saw a girl at the sink, washing her hands and face. Her hair was dirty blonde, streaked with brown. She was tall, with long legs and heavy breasts.

Gabrielle closed the curtain, just stood there. She thought the girl might turn to say hello while her face was still soapy, but she focused on herself for now, rinsing, drying her face with a towel hanging under the cabinet, staring at herself in the mirror.

Finally, she turned, smiled.

“Hey, Gabrielle,” she said, as if they had always known each other.

“Hi,” Gabrielle said.

“I’m Austen,” she said, and she walked up to the bars and spread her arms.

Gabrielle, guessing this was going to be another ritual she needed to get used to, reciprocated, reaching through the bars for an awkward hug.

Austen was in her early 20s, Gabrielle guessed, with high cheekbones and dark green eyes. She had allowed her pubic hair to grow thick and wild, a black mat that completely hid her sex organ and all but the end of her white tag.

“How’s the day gone so far?” she asked, smiling ironically.

“Terrible,” Gabrielle replied, guessing she could be honest with another production girl.

“First day is the worst, always,” Austen said. She turned to the back of her stall, returned to the bars with a square plate in her hands, covered with a pink lid, a small paper tag taped to the top.

“Hungry?” she asked, raising the lid and revealing meatloaf, mashed potatoes, green beans.

“Thank you,” Gabrielle replied, realizing that yes, she was indeed hungry, and could easily eat everything on Austen’s plate.

“Yours and Roxanne’s should be at your port,” she said, pointing.

“Oh, yeah,” Gabrielle said, feeling stupid. She found two plates on the shelf under the port, one with “083” written on it, the other with “005.” She grabbed the meal that matched the number on her ring, retrieving the fork from her cabinet.

Austen had sat down at the bars and Gabrielle joined her, sitting cross-legged, her plate on the floor before her, her bare bottom on the cool concrete.

“No tables, I guess,” Gabrielle observed.

“No, but some people use their pillows,” Austen said.

“Like a table?”

“Sort of.”

Gabrielle heard voices from the entrance of the block, the sounds of doors opening, clanging shut.

“Sounds like Roxanne and Penny are coming back,” Austen said.

Gabrielle was nervous again. She’d imagined meeting her college roommate many times with nothing but optimism. But now that a similar moment was upon her, she wasn’t sure she was ready. Roxanne was 32, closer in age to her mother than herself.

“Is Roxanne nice?” Gabrielle asked.

“She’s great,” Austen replied. “They always start the new girls with her.”

Gabrielle looked up, saw the same three girls she'd seen before, leashed to a single chain, the same female staffer leading them.

"Welcome back," Austen said to the three of them. "I've been getting to know Gabrielle."

The blonde girl smiled but said nothing, waiting as the girl leading them opened the outer door to the stalls and unhooked their leashes from the chain. She and the olive-skinned girl stepped into the little cage at the entrance to the stalls, took their leashes, waited while the staffer closed the outer door and unlocked the right stall door first, allowing the blonde to enter the stall that held Gabrielle.

So this must be Roxanne, Gabrielle thought, and she set her food on the floor and stood, waiting.

Roxanne shut the stall door and moved to the leashing port, staring at the floor as her leash was removed, then stood, smiled and threw her arms wide.

"Gabrielle, I'm so sorry I wasn't here when they brought you!" she said, hugging Gabrielle fiercely, their breasts pressed against each other, their hips and thighs touching.

She leaned back to look from the white and pink tag in Gabrielle's ear.

"You're already giving milk?" she asked, and she reached up and pinched Gabrielle's left nipple, forcing out a single white drop of fluid.

"Apparently so," Gabrielle replied, embarrassed, wondering if this was normal.

After a few more words with Roxanne, Gabrielle went to the bars to hug Austen's stallmate, the olive-skinned girl, whose name was Penelope but, Gabrielle subsequently learned, was sometimes called Penny because it annoyed her.

Gabrielle's name, her age, her stellar performance in high school, and her lifelong friendship with the Arnolds all seemed to be general knowledge among the girls here, judging from the questions they asked and the things they already seemed to know. The conversation continued as Roxanne and Penelope retrieved their lunches and all four girls sat on the floor.

Gabrielle couldn't help but glance at each girl's body, their thick, extended nipples and their sex openings, the white tags dangling from the ring in each lip. But she almost started when she noticed a thick stream of

what looked like semen, leaking out of Penelope's shaved slot and onto the floor, inches from her plate.

Roxanne had been talking, but she fell silent, and Gabrielle looked up and noticed that everyone was staring at her, as if they knew what she had seen and were waiting for her reaction.

Gabrielle blushed, looked down, tried to come up with something to say, about the weather, or something to ask, about food or schedules or something, but she was speechless.

In the few seconds of silence that seemed much longer, Gabrielle heard the voices of other girls, from either end of the block. Someone said "meatloaf again, yay," someone else laughed, someone said "bitch" and someone laughed about that.

Finally, Penelope spoke. "Raphael," she said, looking at Roxanne.

"Did he talk?" Roxanne asked.

"No. All business, as usual."

"If you say something to him, he'll usually say something back, though," Austen said.

Gabrielle followed the conversation as if she were studying a confusing tennis match, looking at each speaker in turn, uncertain of the meaning.

Finally, Roxanne turned to her. "Raphael's a boy," she said.

"Okay," Gabrielle said, inflecting the word at the end to make clear she wasn't getting it.

"In the production room," Penelope said, taking a bite of meatloaf.

"What was he doing in *there*?" Gabrielle asked.

"Producing," Austen said, and everyone laughed except Gabrielle.

"Producing what?" Gabrielle queried.

Penelope looked down, between her legs, and everyone laughed again.

"Why?" Gabrielle queried.

"It's what boys do," Austen said.

Gabrielle's mind was whirring now, latching on to the few facts at her disposal to understand something she knew she needed to know.

Whatever had happened between Penelope and the boy named Raphael in the milking room seemed to be an inside joke that no one was going to just explain to her. Maybe they thought she was too innocent? A virgin? Maybe they were afraid this would upset her?

No, she wasn't innocent, and the whole dance around the topic was making her impatient.

"Okay," she said, looking into each smiling face, Penelope's last, "so while you were getting milked, a boy named Raphael was fucking you?"

"Yes," Penelope said, serious now.

"That pretty much sums it up," Austen said, covering her mouth.

"And he was supposed to?"

"Yes."

"It's why they're there," Roxanne said.

"An ounce of semen is worth ten ounces of milk," Austen said, doing a passable imitation of Mr. Arnold, and prompting another round of laughter from everyone but Gabrielle.

"You were chained while he was doing it?" Gabrielle demanded, growing increasingly alarmed.

"Yes," Penelope said. "It was while I was being milked."

"Did you," Gabrielle stammered, "was it, um . . . did you . . . I mean, was it . . . okay?"

Roxanne put her hand on Gabrielle's arm and looked into her eyes sternly, all the humor gone.

"We decide," she said. "Always. If you don't want it, it doesn't happen. Always."

"But they just," Gabrielle continued, trying to understand, "they just do it to you? There?"

"Yes," Austen said. "If you tell them they can."

"In front of everyone?"

"Well, everyone who's there," Penelope said. "Not that people are staring. Everyone has their own things to, um, focus on."

"They should have mentioned it to you in training," Roxanne said.

"Well, yeah, they said you could get stimulation," Gabrielle said. "And penetration. But I didn't know they meant by a boy. In the milking room."

"It's an option," said Roxanne. "One of a few."

"And they do it bare?" Gabrielle queried. "They always leave their . . . their sperm in you?"

"Yes," said Roxanne. "But you won't get pregnant. We're all on birth control."

“I’m not,” Gabrielle said.

“You took that prescription?”

“Yes,” Gabrielle said. “Prolactanil.”

“Then you’re on birth control,” Roxanne said. “It’s in every dose. And they’ll keep you on it here.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said, her practical side coming out in full force. If this was how things worked, she just wanted it acknowledged, without any more laughter. “So they do it because they think it helps you make more milk?”

“Yes,” said Roxanne. “I’m pretty sure it works, too.”

“Cumming definitely does,” Austen said. “For me, no doubt about it. But there’s research too.”

“Interesting,” Gabrielle said, returning to her plate, wondering if her mother knew what happened here, trying to imagine how she would feel, how her father would feel, if they were given the details. Or how Roger would feel, for that matter.

It was all conceptual for Gabrielle now, though. The idea of having a boy inside her while she was being milked was unfathomable to her. Nor could she imagine seeing it done to anyone else.

“You’re not freaking out, are you?” Roxanne asked, putting her hand on Gabrielle’s arm again.

“No, no, I don’t think so,” Gabrielle replied, bending to work at her food, wanting to finish it now and lie down.

“Roxanne, she’s freaking out,” Austen intoned.

“Because you asked her if she was freaking out,” Penelope said.

“Uh, I’m not the one who showed up with a boy dripping out of my hole,” Roxanne countered with a sharp look at Penelope.

“No, this is all totally normal,” Gabrielle said, prompting laughter. “This kind of thing happens to me, um, daily.”

“You’re not a virgin, are you?” Roxanne asked.

“No,” said Gabrielle. “But just one boyfriend. Like, a year ago.”

“Do you like it?” Austen asked.

“Yes,” Gabrielle replied. “Usually. When he does it right. Or, did it right.”

“What did your boyfriend say when you told him you were signing up for this?” Roxanne asked.

“I didn’t tell him.”

“Uh, don’t you think he should know?” Roxanne queried.

“He doesn’t deserve to,” Gabrielle replied. “We kind of broke up Saturday night. Because we were, uh, making out, and he, um, sucked me, and some milk came out. And he went from, like, what is this? to oh damn you’re pregnant, to who’s the father ‘cuz it’s not me.”

“Oh my god,” Penelope said, tearing up as she laughed. “Oh, god, you’re kidding.”

After a few more comments about boys, Penelope finished her lunch, set the tray back on the shelf and stepped to her sink, but turned to face the other girls.

“So, I’m gonna close the deal now, if no one objects.”

“Me and Gabrielle will be going to production in, like, 15 minutes,” Austen said.

Gabrielle looked at the wall beyond the bars of her stall. Indeed, someone had come through while she was eating or talking or otherwise distracted, and neatly written her schedule out on the left side of her space: 8 a.m., 10:30 a.m. 1 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 6 p.m., 8:30 p.m.

Austen’s space was beside Gabrielle’s, her schedule almost identical, except that she’d be milked at 8:45 in the evening.

It was 12:47, according to the clock on the wall. Thirteen minutes to go. Gabrielle’s stomach jumped, more from the uncertainty of things than from any fear that she’d fail. She went through, in her mind, the steps she’d been taught, believed she was remembering everything. It was all simple enough.

She focused on the girls in her stall again. They seemed to be arguing about something.

“I’d rather not wait,” Penelope said.

“You’re going to freak Gabrielle out even worse,” Austen argued.

“Let’s ask Gabrielle,” Roxanne proposed.

“Do you even know what we’re talking about?” Austen asked.

“No idea,” Gabrielle replied.

“Explain, Penny,” Roxanne said.

“Okay,” Penelope said moving toward the bars. “You know how Raphael did me? While I was being milked?”

“Yeah, that part I understand,” Gabrielle said.

“Well, I got worked up, obviously, but I didn’t orgasm.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said.

“So I’d like to orgasm now,” Penelope said, “while Raphael’s still halfway fresh.” She looked down at her bare vulva, pink lips glistening, then looked back at Gabrielle.

“Oh, you want to masturbate now?” Gabrielle said. “Please go ahead. That’s like, the least of my worries.”

“Thank you,” Penelope said, glaring at Austen before she stepped back to the cabinet and pulled out a thick, black dildo.

She climbed to the top bunk with it, leaned back on one elbow, raised her leg and pushed the toy up her vagina.

Gabrielle was doing her best to treat all this as a normal interaction, but she’d never been in the presence of a masturbating female before and wasn’t quite sure how to behave. She finished her lunch, put the tray on the shelf and went to the sink to get a sip of water, careful not to look into the other stall.

“Which bunk do you want?” Roxanne asked. “Top or bottom?”

“Well . . .” Gabrielle said. “Bottom? I don’t care that much, though.”

“Bottom it is,” Roxanne announced.

“Bottom’s definitely better,” Austen said. “You get the toilet first.”

“Yeah, but you might need to help Roxanne get down her ladder in the morning,” Penelope quipped, her voice a little tense. “She’s a complete zombie for, like, half an hour.”

Gabrielle looked into the other stall, wondering if Penelope was already finished, but she was clearly still working through the tension Raphael had created, her left hand sliding the tool in and out of her sex organ, her right hand quickly circling her clitoris.

“Did they give you a ribbon?” Roxanne asked.

“Oh, yeah,” Gabrielle said. She went to her cabinet, found it.

Roxanne reached up, pulled a dark green ribbon from her own hair, shook it loose.

“Don’t forget to bring it,” she said. “They don’t like having to pull your hair out of the way.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said, and she went ahead and tied up her hair, piling it loosely on top of her head.

“Ow,” Penelope grunted. Gabrielle looked up at her in alarm, but her face was a mask of ecstasy, eyes closed, mouth wide open. “Ow, ow, uh!”

Almost stabbing herself with the dildo now, she rocked her hips and raised her leg high, shaking through climax.

Finished, she rolled to lie flat on her back, and she laughed, hand on her face, and then she sat up, smiled at Austen, climbed down from her bunk with the dildo clutched in one hand, and went to the sink to wash it.

“Gabrielle,” said Austen.

Gabrielle looked at the girl and saw she was pointing toward the bars, where a female staffer Gabrielle hadn’t seen before waited with a pair of leashes.

Chapter 11: First Milking

“Oh,” Gabrielle said. She’d altogether forgotten the schedule. That was Penelope’s fault. Perhaps being late for a milking was more common than she’d imagined.

Austen stepped to the leashing port, turned and bent over, and Gabrielle followed suit.

The staffer leashed Austen first, then passed the end of the leash through the port. Austen took it and stepped to the door to the little entry cage, waiting for it to be opened.

The staffer moved to Gabrielle’s leashing port, and she winced as she waited for the plug. It went in easily, however, and it was uncomfortable but not painful when it was locked inside her rectum.

Taking her cues from Austen, she grabbed her leash and moved to the door. Where Austen passed the leash between her legs so it extended from in front, however, Gabrielle chose to keep her leash behind, running around her thigh. She didn’t want to take any chances with her tender vulva.

The staffer unlocked both stall doors, and Gabrielle joined Austen in the entry cage. Austen closed her stall door, Gabrielle did the same, then Austen raised her leash to the gap in the door that led into the hall. The staffer took Austen’s leash, then Gabrielle’s, wrapping both around her wrist before she unlocked the door to the hall.

The whole process took less than a minute. Very efficient, Gabrielle thought, very straightforward, and very secure. There would never be a time, apparently, when she wasn’t either confined, or leashed, or both.

Nerves jangling again, Gabrielle joined Austen at the staffer’s left, allowing her to lead them out of their block, into the hall, past the other two female blocks on the right, the offices and supply rooms on the left, and around the corner to the production room.

She looked down the hall toward the window that she’d thought was a picture at first, of the naked boy and girl facing each other at the table, but they were gone, replaced by a staffer standing with her back to the window, gesturing toward someone else. There might have been others beyond the staffer – Gabrielle caught a glimpse of nude flesh, perhaps, a

boy's face, or a girl's, but now they were at the production room and she stopped looking that way.

They walked without speaking, the silence unbroken until the staffer pulled open the door and a cacophony of sounds greeted her – voices, the steady hum of machines, someone crying out in what might have been pain or pleasure.

Gabrielle's eyes swept the room quickly. She'd been told it held twenty milking stations, and she confirmed that number quickly, counting ten stations in two rows, at least half of them occupied by females, each chained on her hands and knees, a white, milk-filled line running from each nipple to one of four machines, positioned at each corner of the room. On the walls behind the girls, leashes dangled from pegs.

Besides the production girls, Gabrielle spotted Arwen and a second staff member, who was holding the leash of a nude male, following him as he walked toward them, his firm penis pointing directly at Gabrielle.

Gabrielle stared at him, doing her best to appear indifferent, and he smiled and stared back, into her eyes, and she wondered if he was going to walk over and speak to her, but he stopped, turning toward a black girl being milked on his left.

The girl looked up, smiled, said something that made him laugh, and Gabrielle felt a swift, unexpected twinge of jealousy. It would be two weeks before she could fully interact with the males here. Was she willing to have sex with them? Here? She wasn't sure. But she would have been comfortable talking to the boy, who was short and dark-haired and pleasant looking. Was he allowed to talk to girls whose tags bore the pink of a newcomer? Just talk, and not have sex? She hoped so.

Arwen approached and smiled. "Hi, Gabrielle," she said, taking Gabrielle's leash.

"Hey, Arwen."

"Welcome to production."

"Thanks."

"Think you know what to do?"

"I'm hoping I'll remember everything."

Arwen led Gabrielle to an empty station near the middle of the room.

"Okay, what happens first?"

“Well, I know I’m supposed to tie my hair back, but I’ve already done that.”

“Very good.”

“And then, um, my ankles,” Gabrielle said, and she stepped between the two cuffs lying open at the back of the station.

“Remember the click count?”

“Three,” Gabrielle replied, and hands slightly jittery, she knelt, reached back and closed a cuff around each ankle, making sure each clicked three times.

She dropped, hands between the second pair of cuffs. Arwen checked the fit of her ankle cuffs, continued to hold her leash while she grabbed the first wrist cuff.

“Do you remember how many clicks?”

“Four,” Gabrielle replied.

Arwen closed the cuff around Gabrielle’s right wrist, allowing it to click four distinct times, did the same thing to her left wrist.

“Four it is,” Arwen said. She picked up the collar, raised it to Gabrielle’s neck.

“Extra credit. How many clicks for the collar?”

“Doesn’t matter,” Gabrielle said.

Arwen closed the restraint and stood.

“You’re doing great.”

“Thanks,” Gabrielle said in her most dismissive tone. She’d always hated meaningless praise.

“No, I’m being serious,” Arwen said. “You’ve gotten everything right. Most girls get everything wrong the first time. Or, like, 80 percent of it.”

“It doesn’t seem that hard to me,” Gabrielle said.

“It’s not about hard or easy,” Arwen said. “It’s about stress. The unknown. A lot of girls kind of shut down for a while.”

Arwen pulled a packet of wipes from her pocket, drew one out and reached under Gabrielle to clean each nipple, squeezing and massaging Gabrielle’s breasts as well.

She cleaned the collection cups with a second wipe, clamped them to Gabrielle’s nipples and stepped over to the machine to turn on her lines.

Within a few seconds, Gabrielle felt a vibration, suction as her nipples were pulled into the cups, and then relief as the milk left her body.

“Leash in or out?” Arwen asked.

“I have a choice?”

“Yeah, while you’re being milked.”

“Why would anyone want it in?”

“Some girls like it.”

Gabrielle laughed, recalling jokes about butt plugs she’d shared with her closest female friends once they’d learned such things existed. She’d never imagined getting pleasure from that hole, but she knew some people did.

“You can take it out,” Gabrielle said.

“Okay,” Arwen said, removing the leash and, Gabrielle assumed, hanging it on the wall behind her.

“So, I’m gonna recommend you get moved up a few days.”

Gabrielle did her best to look up at Arwen, who was standing in front of her now, but the restraints weren’t designed to facilitate conversation.

“What does that mean?” she asked, staring at Arwen’s black work sneakers.

“Normally, you keep pink on your tag for two weeks,” Arwen replied. “How does ten days sound?”

“Fine, I guess,” Gabrielle said, “but I’m not really sure what that means.”

“You get to go to the commons,” Arwen said, “and you can have other people take care of you.”

“What are the commons?”

“It’s that room at the end of the hall. You can see it when you get to the door to this room.”

“Okay, yeah, I think I saw some people in there before, playing checkers or something.”

“Yup, that’s it.”

“And then . . .” Gabrielle continued, glad to be looking just at Arwen’s shoes now, “other people taking care of me. You mean boys, right?”

“Boys or girls.”

“Okay, but, um . . . like, sex, right?”

“Yeah,” Arwen said, and she dropped, sitting on her rear with her legs crossed. “Depending on what you think of as sex.”

“Well, for me, sex is boys,” Gabrielle said. “And it’s, uh, what boys usually do to you.”

“Good,” Arwen laughed. “That can happen here. After you go to the white tag, anyway.”

Gabrielle looked into Arwen’s eyes and decided not to be embarrassed.

“A girl in my stall – or in the stall next to mine, but I could see her – she had . . . she had, um, semen dripping out of her. After she got milked.”

“Penelope?”

“Yeah.”

“Uh huh. She was with Raphael here,” Arwen said casually.

“So that’s normal, right? That’s what happens?”

“Yeah.”

Gabrielle could hear the room again, girls talking to each other, a boy’s voice now and then, the steady hum of the milking machines. Two girls were put back on their leashes and walked out, speaking quietly. She heard the rattle of chains to her left, looked, noticed the short, dark-haired male crouched, talking to a solidly-built brunette, the girl’s thick hair tied in a ponytail with a red ribbon that Gabrielle envied. The boy was still on the leash, the staffer girl was still holding it, and his penis was still hard.

Gabrielle couldn’t hear what they were saying, but she sensed the universal language of flirting, the boy smiling and gesturing, the girl at least smiling, although her restraints kept her gestures to a minimum.

After a few more words, the girl nodded as if an agreement had been reached, and the boy turned to the staffer and nodded to her.

The staffer knelt, secured his leash to a ring between the girl’s hands, and stepped away.

All Gabrielle’s attention was focused on the boy and the girl, so she barely noticed when Arwen stood.

“I’ll be back to check on you in a few,” she said.

“Okay,” Gabrielle replied absently, not diverting her gaze from the couple a mere ten feet away.

The boy rose to his knees, positioned his penis under the girl’s mouth, and she lunged toward it, the chain running to her collar rattling against the floor, her mouth wide open, as if she were famished and his sex was the first food she had seen in weeks. She took almost all of it into her

mouth, jaws working, head rocking, while the boy looked down in a tight-lipped grimace of pleasure.

The girl was toying with the penis now, allowing almost all of it to slip out of her mouth before she devoured it again, or pulling back completely, the tip just beyond her lips, so she could stick her tongue out to caress it, taste it, lick the shaft and the end, then swallow all of it.

As she serviced him, the boy thrust gently, his leash barely swaying between his legs, allowing her to do most of the work, to decide how much of his penis she wanted inside her mouth. He didn't grab the back of her head to force himself down her throat. And even amidst the heat of their passion, he was tender, gently stroking her hair, running his fingers through it, around her ear, against her cheek.

On the two occasions when she'd done oral sex with Roger, he was all force. She hated that. She hated the way the semen shot out, against her tongue and the back of her throat, and the way it tasted, like the world's most inappropriate jelly. She told Roger what she didn't like after their first round of oral, but when they did it again two weeks later, his methods were the same, and she made it clear to him oral wasn't her thing and it wouldn't be happening again. And if he didn't want to lick her, that was fine too.

As she watched the lovers, however, she wondered. If she could be touched like this while she serviced a boy with her mouth, perhaps she could get past the other things. Maybe semen was an acquired taste.

Gabrielle couldn't help but admire the girl's performance as well. Restrained as she was, she was remarkably agile, bobbing her head and, with what seemed like little effort, tilting her head back and looking up until her eyes met the boy's. They both smiled, in on a secret known only to them, before she lowered her gaze and concentrated on the manhood between her lips, sucking and sliding with her mouth, arching her back and bucking her hips until her expression transformed from quiet pleasure to sheer animal terror.

Her mouth still wrapped around the boy's member, she began issuing muffled cries of panic. The boy responded with his own urgency, hips gyrating now, penis driving in and out.

They were cumming together, Gabrielle told herself. They were cumming together, in perfect harmony, their bodies synchronized, their wild sexuality so mutually attuned even the distractions of being milked, being

leashed and chained, in a room full of people, couldn't keep them from ascending to perfect union.

Gabrielle and Roger had tried a few times to cum together, but he always released too soon, leaving her to wrest what pleasure she could from his penis before it dwindled.

The boy groaned out again, the girl's squeals quieted, and at last they were done. Smiling again, he drew his still-firm sex out her mouth.

Gabrielle saw her neck contract, knew she was swallowing, but the boy had produced enough semen that some spilled out, a long string of it running from her lower lip to the middle of his shaft before it swung loose and dropped to the floor.

Surely these two were lovers, lifelong, always together, always practicing, performing, perfecting. Surely, Gabrielle thought – with a heart that was beating and breaking and dying inches from two breasts being drained of their milk – surely, she would never make love like this, never know a boy like this, never know this happiness.

“Oh, god, Gabrielle, Gabrielle, I'm so sorry, so sorry, where does it hurt? Tell me, tell me,” Arwen said, kneeling beside Gabrielle, hand on her back, stroking between her shoulder blades. “You've got to tell us when it hurts. It's not supposed to hurt.”

Gabrielle looked up, completely mystified, Arwen just a blur.

Only then did Gabrielle realize she was crying, tears running down her nose and dripping onto the floor, shoulders shaking in misery.

Arwen reached for Gabrielle's nearest nipple, preparing to uncup it, but Gabrielle managed to choke out “Stop, no, it's okay,” before her voice broke.

“What's going on?” Arwen said, her mouth close to Gabrielle's ear.

“Oh, I'm fine,” Gabrielle said, with a short laugh. “I just saw something I wasn't ready to see.”

“What?”

“That couple, over there,” she said, tilting her head. They were just talking now, the girl still chained and cupped, the boy sitting, still leashed to the ring in front of her.

“Did they do something that upset you?”

“No, no,” Gabrielle said. “It was fine. It was nice, really. They just seemed so . . . connected. And I'm . . .”

Gabrielle bit her lip and stifled another cry. She didn't want to talk about this anymore. She felt like a fool.

Arwen seemed to understand, and remained silent.

"Do you know how much longer I have?" Gabrielle asked. The thought of returning to her stall, at last lying down, was intensely appealing right now.

"You're probably almost done," Arwen said. "You've been on for more than 20 minutes."

"How does it know when I'm finished?" Gabrielle asked, trying not to sniffle. She wished she could have a tissue, and one hand free.

"It's very sensitive to flow," Arwen said. "It can tell when you're close to empty."

Gabrielle heard the same beep that had sounded in training, coming from the machine fed by her lines.

"Was that me?" she asked.

"No," Arwen said. Three stations away, a redhaired girl looked at Arwen expectantly.

"New girls tend to take a little longer," Arwen said. "Let me get this girl back to her stall and we'll see where you're at."

Alone again, Gabrielle stared at the space between her hands, wet smears there where her tears had fallen and she'd passed her fingers through them.

If she weren't here, she'd be at home, in her bedroom, probably, and she felt a sudden wave of homesickness so deep she almost wept again.

And yet, if she were in her bedroom, she wouldn't be here. She'd still be unemployed, still facing homelessness, still calling people who didn't call her back. Life had given her two terrible choices. She'd taken the least bad one.

She heard another beep, wondered if it was her time, shifted uncomfortably on her hands and knees and lost herself in reverie, playing what she had seen over in her mind, the way the girl had swallowed the boy, the way he had grimaced and touched her and gently thrust into her mouth, their orgasms, and the cum the girl couldn't swallow, dripping to the floor.

She didn't know Arwen was back until she heard her voice, speaking behind her.

"All done, Gabrielle," she said.

"Okay."

She heard a tap on the wall, guessed Arwen was getting her leash, and she braced for penetration, but the next thing she felt was Arwen's hand on her bottom.

"You're soaked," Arwen observed.

"Huh?" Gabrielle responded, desperately trying not to be embarrassed.

"You're producing a lot of fluid," Arwen said.

"Okay."

"May I do a quick inspection?"

"Huh?" Gabrielle said. "Um, okay."

She felt Arwen's fingers on her vulva, running up her slit, spreading her lips, sliding inside her.

"Uh," Gabrielle said.

"Does it hurt?"

"No."

"This is just lubricant," Arwen said. "Not urine or ovulatory fluid."

"Okay."

Arwen's fingers exited Gabrielle's chamber, slid down her vulva to her clitoris, pressed it gently.

"Ah," Gabrielle said, pushing involuntarily against Arwen's hand.

"You look swollen."

"I think I am," Gabrielle confessed.

"Would you like relief?" Arwen asked.

"What's relief?" Gabrielle inquired.

Arwen answered with her fingers, massaging Gabrielle's clitoris, making tight circles around her enlarged bud, exploring her opening, entering her female chamber with one finger, two fingers, always careful not to jangle her tag or touch her pierced lip.

Gabrielle's hips rocked, acting with a mind of their own under Arwen's attention. By the time she realized consciously what was happening, that a woman she'd just met was masturbating her in a room full of people, she was cumming, a strong, solid release that had her gasping quietly, limbs straining against her chains.

"Uh, uh, uh," she moaned. "Oh god."

Gabrielle was still panting as Arwen stepped away to prepare her for the walk back to her stall. She pushed the leash into Gabrielle's anus, locked it and let the chain fall to the floor, removed the collection cups and

allowed the machine to suck in the rest of the milk, the lines going from white to clear as Gabrielle watched.

She released Gabrielle's wrists, and Gabrielle immediately moved her hand to her face, brushing away the tears, tending to her nose.

Then she stood, scanning the room for another pair of lovers, hoping not to find them.

There were no boys in here now, fortunately. They couldn't be here all the time, of course. The farm only had five. How many times could each boy orgasm per day?

"You can free your ankles," Arwen said, grabbing Gabrielle's leash.

Gabrielle knelt, opened her ankle cuffs, and stepped away from the station, following Arwen toward the door, looking at the place where the lovers had been, the space empty now except for a short pole set into the floor.

Gabrielle studied the pole as they passed. Esther had mentioned something like that, mounted between the girl's knees to stimulate her sex organ, and indeed, the pole featured several attachments – a thick rod, presumably for the vagina, and a shorter tab for the clitoris. So that's why the girl had been bucking as she neared orgasm. She wasn't just writhing under the magic power of the male's penis. She was relieving herself on something.

Knowing that made Gabrielle feel a little better. The couple were not so in synch that the girl could just spontaneously orgasm. She needed help.

Chapter 12: Back to the Stall

Outside the production room, Arwen stopped and turned.

“Okay now, Gabrielle?”

Gabrielle remembered her tears, but not the deep emotion that provoked them. The boy and the girl were just a memory now, no longer a profound emotional trigger, their restrained tryst just one of those things people do.

“Oh, I’m fine, I’m fine,” she said, laughing. “It’s just, I guess, first day jitters. I wasn’t expecting what I saw, that’s all.”

“Okay, good, I understand,” Arwen said, pausing. “Now, I want you to know – and I’m being honest – you did great. All the way through.”

“Well, all I had to do was sit there,” Gabrielle replied. “Or be on my hands and knees, anyway. I’m not sure how I could have messed that up.”

“Well, you’d be surprised,” Arwen said. “And very few girls orgasm on their first visit.”

“You made that happen,” Gabrielle protested.

“Because you were ready for it,” Arwen said. “Right?”

“I don’t know,” Gabrielle said. What if she’d said no? What if she’d said she hadn’t wanted to cum? The truth is, she wasn’t sure. If she’d been asked, rationally, before she’d seen the couple, if she would have wanted someone to masturbate her while she was being milked for the first time, she would have said no, absolutely not. And yet, a part of her was glad it had happened, was grateful for the relief.

“No, I was,” Gabrielle added quickly. “It’s just another thing I wasn’t expecting.”

“I mentioned moving you up,” Arwen said.

“Yeah,” Gabrielle said. “Ten days instead of two weeks?”

“I’m not sure you even need that much time,” Arwen said. “And your baseline is already tainted.”

“Tainted?”

“Normally, we have girls do two weeks before they start experimenting with sexual stimulation in production. We measure their output then, and that’s what we call a baseline, so we can compare it to

what happens when she switches things up. But you released on your first visit.”

“Because of you,” Gabrielle countered.

“You needed release,” Arwen said. “Your vulva was—”

“Okay, okay,” Gabrielle interrupted. She heard voices, knew she didn’t want whatever Arwen saw between her legs announced to whoever was coming.

Esther rounded the corner, leading three females and a male, two of the girls talking. She studied their faces, then looked down at the boy’s penis, saw it was half-erect and tried to imagine wrapping her mouth – or her vagina – around it, while she was being milked. It was no longer unthinkable.

“Hey, Gabrielle,” said Esther, stopping, those fastened to the chain in her hand halting with her.

“Hi, Esther,” Gabrielle said.

“Survived your first milking?”

“I guess so.”

“She did great,” Arwen announced. “I’m going to recommend that she get white-tagged in five days.”

“Outstanding,” Esther said.

Gabrielle looked back up, into everyone’s eyes, smiled when she noticed they were smiling at her. Had she seen any of them before? She was losing track of the faces. She needed to learn every name, she told herself. It could take weeks.

Arwen stepped forward and Gabrielle followed her, around the corner, toward the third block of stalls.

“How much milk did I make?” Gabrielle asked.

“You’ll get a monthly report,” Arwen said. “But we don’t talk about individual visits.”

“Why not?”

“We don’t want to distract you. Production fluctuates, and that’s just how it is. We used to report daily, but we found that some girls worried too much when it was low, and when it was high, they’d try to repeat exactly what they did.”

Arwen laughed, spoke in a high-pitched voice: ““Oh, I have to wear the blue ribbon from now on. I need to drink fifteen ounces of water right

before I'm leashed. I have to masturbate during lunch.' And then, production would go down, most of the time."

They entered block three, Gabrielle scanning the stalls, wondering if there would be a special connection to the girls in the other stalls on her block, even though she couldn't see them when they were all confined.

Roxanne, Penelope and Austen were all there, Roxanne reading a book on the top bunk, and Penelope and Austen sitting on the bottom bunk, facing each other. Gabrielle wondered if they were friends, or more than friends.

Her return to the stall was the reverse of her trip out. Arwen unlocked the door into the entry cage, Gabrielle stepped in, Arwen locked the door and passed Gabrielle's leash through the bars, then unlocked the door into her stall and removed Gabrielle's leash at the port.

"How'd she do?" Roxanne asked, peering down from the foot of her bunk.

"Outstanding," Arwen said.

"How outstanding?"

"Five days to a white tag," Arwen replied. "At least, that's what I'm going to recommend."

"Not surprised," Roxanne said, and she climbed down from her bunk.

"See ya, Gabrielle," Arwen said.

"Bye," Gabrielle responded. "Oh, and um . . . thanks."

Roxanne was waiting when Gabrielle turned to head to the sink, arms wide for another embrace. Gabrielle was glad to oblige, although she wasn't sure what the hug was for.

"Sounds like you made it through initiation," Roxanne said. "Congratulations."

"They didn't tell me it was initiation," Gabrielle said, finishing the hug with a squeeze of Roxanne's shoulder and making her way to the sink to blow her nose and wash her face. Done washing up, she pulled out her ribbon, hung it in her cabinet, found Penelope and Austen at the bars, smiling at her.

"How'd it go?" Austen asked.

"Fine, I guess," Gabrielle said. "A lot going on in there."

Penelope laughed. "Now what," she said, "did you do to get cut back to five days?"

“I don’t know,” Gabrielle said. “Nothing.”

Roxanne stepped before Gabrielle, put her hand on her shoulder, looked into her eyes.

“Were you crying?” she asked.

“Yes.”

“Why?”

“Because of what I saw. In there.”

“What did you see?” Penelope demanded.

Gabrielle looked at the three girls, one at a time. She’d been expecting to come back to her stall, lie down, and try to rest while she processed what had happened since she woke up this morning. Apparently, the girls she was confined with had other ideas.

Not that she didn’t appreciate the attention. But how could she explain what had happened in the production room?

“Okay, long story short, I got freaked out again,” she said, moving to the bars.

“What did you see?” Penelope demanded again.

“The same things I guess all of you see,” Gabrielle replied tersely.

“Go on,” Austen said.

“Why do you care?” Gabrielle asked, truly curious. Penelope had returned to her stall with her vagina leaking semen. Why would anyone be interested in the oral sex she’d witnessed?

“It’s always interesting to hear what new people think,” Roxanne said. “Will you humor us?”

“Okay, okay,” Gabrielle said. “I saw a boy and girl, near me . . . doing it.”

“Doing what?”

“She was sucking him . . . sucking his penis.”

“Did he cum?” Austen asked.

“Yeah, they both did, I guess,” Gabrielle replied. “It seemed like it, anyway.” She paused, considered. “Oh, they must have, at least the boy. I mean, I saw his, um, his semen on her mouth – coming out of her mouth. It fell on the floor.”

“And you cried?” Roxanne asked.

“Yes,” Gabrielle replied, looking at her, surprised by her directness. Maybe it was the inevitable result of living in close quarters: you asked

people personal questions, and they were expected to answer. Gabrielle believed she could adapt to that, at least with Roxanne.

“I cried because, because . . . they just seemed really close. I mean, it was just oral sex, but they seemed so connected. My only experience was with that one . . . stupid . . . boyfriend . . . And . . .”

Gabrielle fought the lump forming in her throat, trying not to tear up again.

“Was that all that happened?” Roxanne asked, narrowing her eyes at Gabrielle.

“Well . . . no,” Gabrielle replied.

Roxanne raised her eyebrows and stared expectantly.

“I, um, Arwen, um . . .” Gabrielle stammered. “I was having a sort of, um, reaction, so Arwen, um . . . behind me, she . . .”

Gabrielle knew she was blushing furiously. To her relief, the other girls seemed to understand without needing it spelled out.

“Arwen’s good at that,” Penelope observed.

“That explains the five days,” Austen said. “No reason to wait.”

“You had the whole process down, then?” Roxanne asked, and Gabrielle sensed that Roxanne was trying to change the subject, that she knew they were pushing too hard.

“I guess I did,” Gabrielle replied, leaning against the bars that separated her from Austen and Penelope.

“How many clicks?” Austen asked.

“Three for ankles, four for wrists, doesn’t matter for neck.”

Roxanne laughed and did a mock clap. “The last girl they put me with, it took her two weeks to get it down,” Roxanne said. “I swear she got swatted every other day.”

“Swatted?” Gabrielle echoed.

“Yeah.”

“For that?”

“Yeah.”

“But it was simple mistake.”

“Mistakes are on the list,” Austen said.

“Oh, the, um, punishment list in the, um, commons?” Gabrielle asked.

“Yes.”

“But I can’t go the commons for two weeks,” Gabrielle protested.

“Five days,” Roxanne said. “As soon as you get your white tag.”

“Can I get, um, swatted before I can see the list?”

“Oh yeah,” Roxanne replied. “But it’s not always corporal. They do a few things.”

“That’s not fair,” Gabrielle asserted, but she decided to let the matter drop. This was another aspect of life at the farm Gabrielle was finding difficult to imagine. She’d already seen unfathomable things, and maybe one day they’d seem normal. She would have to see this too.

Gabrielle looked at the clock. Almost 2. It would be another 90 minutes before her next milking.

“I was thinking . . . I’d rest now,” Gabrielle said, looking at her bed.

“You’ll get used to the noise eventually,” Roxanne said, smiling.

Gabrielle moved to her bed, pulled down the white sheet and the blue blanket, sat down with her feet on the floor and looked at Roxanne, at her neighbors, feeling suddenly very awkward again. Were afternoon naps done here? She’d seen the redheaded girl asleep, so she knew at least one person did it.

Penelope drifted to the toilet, Austen went to her bed to sit, Roxanne looked at Gabrielle, smiled, stepped closer.

“I can answer any questions,” she said. “Don’t hesitate.”

Gabrielle could think of nothing to ask. Or, she thought, her life was one big question mark right now. She had no idea where to start. So she shook her head at Roxanne, slipped her body under the covers and rolled over, facing the wall.

“I get milked again at 3,” Roxanne said. “You’re at 3:30. So I’ll wake you up when they come for me, if that’s okay.”

“Sure,” Gabrielle said. “Thanks.”

The sounds of the stalls was constant and, occasionally jarring. Along with the girls’ voices and the jangle of leashes, there was the occasional clang of a stall door, an explosion of laughter, a shout.

Gabrielle’s last thought was despair that she’d ever be able to sleep here during the day, and then Roxanne was touching her shoulder gently, waking her.

“What, what?” Gabrielle said groggily, no idea where she was or why someone was bothering her. Her next thought was horror, that she was late for her next milking, that she was going to be punished. When she

turned, however, she found only Roxanne, smiling, sitting beside her on the bed.

“They’ll be taking me in a few minutes,” Roxanne said. “And then I’ll be going to the commons. So I probably won’t be back until dinnertime.”

“What time is it?” Gabrielle asked, rolling over and sitting up.

“Almost three.”

Gabrielle looked through the bars, saw the clock on the wall. 2:55.

“Think you’ll sleep when you come back?” Roxanne asked.

“I don’t know,” Gabrielle said. She looked toward the other stall. Austen and Penelope had climbed up to Penelope’s bed, facing each other. Gabrielle deduced they were playing cards. “Probably not.”

“Want a book?” Roxanne asked.

“What kind of book?”

“Just a novel,” Roxanne said. “A love story, with a ghost.”

“I guess so,” Gabrielle said.

“It’s on my bed,” Roxanne said. “Grab if it you want. Just don’t lose my place.”

“Thanks.”

Gabrielle heard conversation and knew what it meant. The same staffer who’d come for Gabrielle and Austen appeared at the bars again, holding a chain with five girls and a boy fastened to it.

“See you at dinner,” Roxanne said, rising, stepping to the leashing port, turning and bending.

“Bye,” Gabrielle said, with a small wave.

“Do you like fish?” Roxanne asked, looking at Gabrielle, her expression unchanged as the staffer slipped the leash up her anus and locked it.

“Yeah,” Gabrielle replied. “Certain kinds, anyway.”

“Fish for dinner,” Roxanne said, stepping to the door of the entry cage.

Penelope accepted her leash, both girls were allowed into the entry cage, then released into the hall, the ends of their leashes fastened to the chain, all of them following the staffer out of the block. Gabrielle studied the boy until he was out of sight. She’d seen him earlier, when Esther had put her in the holding pen, walking with the other girls to production. He was handsome – like all the boys she’d seen here. He was tall, well-

muscled, and endowed with a large penis – another requirement of the job, Gabrielle guessed. He wasn't erect right now, his member curving down, but she remembered its aroused size from the morning.

She tried to imagine sucking him, or taking him between her legs. What if he didn't like her?

This was at least his second trip to production today, Gabrielle thought. What would he be doing there? What did he do earlier? Did he, or any of the boys, ever have trouble performing?

Gabrielle thought about climbing up on Roxanne's bed to find her book, but she noticed Austen smiling at her from Penelope's bed.

"Hey," she said. "Ready for round two in production?"

"I don't know," Gabrielle replied. "I'm still getting used to all this."

"Are you worried they'll be . . . doing things in there?" Austen asked, climbing down from Penelope's bed,

"I wasn't until you brought it up," Gabrielle said. She went to her cabinet, pulled out the ribbon and tied up her hair.

"What did you think of that girl who took us earlier?" Austen said, lowering her voice.

"I don't know," Gabrielle said, moving toward Austen, the two girls on opposite sides of the bars. "She never said anything."

"She never does," Austen said. "Unless you get sent to her."

"Sent to her?"

"She runs discipline."

"Discipline?"

"The punishment room."

"I didn't know there was a room for it."

"Yeah, at the end of the other hall," Austen said. "Her name's Greta but we call her Grendl when she isn't listening."

"Grendl?"

"Yeah," Austen said. "Like, a monster."

"It's that bad?"

"No, but it's not fun."

"Have you been?" Gabrielle asked.

"Of course," Austen said. "Everyone goes."

"I'm not going," Gabrielle said. "I'm not going to get into trouble."

Austen smirked but said nothing.

"What do they do to you there?" Gabrielle asked.

“It depends on what you did wrong. There’s this room they put you in, or they might put you on this thing, or—”

Austen looked toward the bars.

“Oh, it’s time.”

Gabrielle followed her gaze, and her heart jumped immediately into her mouth.

The woman they called Grendl was there, holding a long chain, with four girls and a boy fastened to it. Not just any boy. THE boy. The boy Gabrielle had watched getting his penis sucked, squirting into the girl’s mouth, thrusting, groaning.

Not that she had much to compare him too, but to Gabrielle at this moment, he was the greatest lover she’d ever seen.

Chapter 13: Second Milking and Back to the Stall

Gabrielle stepped to the port to get leashed, joined Austen in the entry cage, stood still while the chain was passed through the end of her leash. A black girl stood between herself and the boy.

“This is Gabrielle,” Austen announced to everyone, as the little group began making its way to production.

The first to speak was Grendl. “I’m Greta,” she said from the front of the line. She didn’t smile, but she did look into Gabrielle’s eyes before she turned to escort them from the block.

Next to speak was the boy. “Hey, Gabrielle,” he said, his voice husky, as if he yelled a lot. Maybe he did. “I’m George.”

Gabrielle stole a glance behind to look at his face and then, because she couldn’t help it, down at his penis, which was sticking straight out, bouncing as they walked, as long and thick as it had been when he was with the girl.

“Hi, George, nice to meet you,” Gabrielle said, continuing to look back at him as she negotiated the hall with six other leashed people.

“I look forward to working with you,” he said, prompting a guffaw from Austen and two or three other girls.

“I’m supposed to get a new tag in, uh, five days,” Gabrielle said.

“That’s early,” one of the girls observed.

“She’s a fast learner,” Austen said.

“Why are you bringing that up?” George asked, still looking at Gabrielle. “Will you want my assistance when you’re white-tagged?”

Was this flirting? Gabrielle wondered. Is this how people talked here? She was 18, a sexual novice, and yet, she felt comfortable with this, with George, with everything right now.

“I might,” she replied. “I’ve seen your work.”

Facing forward again, Gabrielle kept pace with the group as they rounded the corner and neared the production room door.

She sensed that George was at a loss, that he didn’t know how to reply to her last comment, thus remaining silent.

Grendl opened the door and Gabrielle trooped in with her comrades readily, if not enthusiastically. She'd been preparing for this moment for more than two hours, she realized. Even while she was napping. So when she gazed across the production room, noticed a male on his knees behind a girl, both of them moving slowly, calmly engaged, faces strangely serene, Gabrielle felt a soft tingle between her legs, but nothing else. No shock, no heartbreak, no sorrow for what she hadn't known yet in her own life.

But still, could she do this? She remained unsure.

Austen was first off the chain, her leash handed to another staff member who led her to the closest milking station, waited while she cuffed her ankles, then finished securing her in place and cupping her nipples.

Gabrielle was next, secured to a station three places away from the girl and the boy who were having sex, close enough to hear their sighs, their quiet words.

"You can go faster," the girl told him. Gabrielle, even as the worker massaged her breasts and attached her cups, wanted to stare at them. She refrained, but saw out of the corner of her eye his thrusts speed up and go deeper, the girl grunting with pleasure each time he buried his penis inside her.

"How much longer?" he gasped.

"Cum anytime," she said.

Within seconds, the boy was grinding within her, his hips rocking, her back arching in response, and then he made a quick final thrust while he grunted, and Gabrielle knew he was pumping her full of himself, and she wanted the five days to be over.

She could feel her fluid building at the mouth of her vagina, her frustration growing between her legs. If she cried, would Arwen come to her again and relieve her? Was this normal? Could she get in trouble for being oversexed?

She looked down, tried to concentrate on how it felt to be drained, on the two white lines running from her breasts to the machine. She tried to think about her life now, found it made no sense.

She heard more quiet conversation from the couple, heard the girl cry out softly and wondered if the boy was bringing her to climax, or if she'd managed to cum in some other way.

Gabrielle didn't care. In the time it had taken her breasts to refill, she'd gone from relationship angst to pure sexual frustration.

She looked up, saw George talking to someone, standing before her, his leash in Arwen's hand, too far away for her to hear what was being said, what was being proposed, if indeed anything was. How did it work? Did the boy proposition the girl, or did the girl proposition the boy, or were they assigned to each other by someone else?

If a boy propositioned her right now, at this moment, she thought, she would say yes. She would want him behind her, thrusting up her sex organ, and not at her mouth. She would keep her eyes down, her groans quiet, and try to forget that anyone else was here. But she wanted it.

She heard a few quiet cries from a girl across the aisle. She was alone, but she was rocking her hips, arching her back, and Gabrielle guessed she was relieving herself on one of the posts. Who set those up? Would she have to ask for her own, specify the attachments, the size and length? Obviously, she'd be getting sex and stimulation here. Obviously, none of it would be private.

"Doing okay, Gabrielle?" Arwen asked.

Gabrielle did her best to look up, her restraints making it difficult, even when she spread her thighs and lowered her rear toward the floor. After a quick glance at Arwen's face, she settled on talking to her knees.

"Much better," Gabrielle said, "thanks for asking."

"Every girl responds differently to production," Arwen said, "but you're not the first I've seen cry."

"Well, thanks for letting me finish."

"I thought you were in pain. Once you told me it was emotional, I knew you were fine. I mean, better than fine."

"What do you mean?"

"The ones I worry about the most are the girls with no reaction. They come in for the first time, get on the floor, expression never changes, and then they're done and they leave. And if you ask them how they're doing, you just get a stare."

"I don't think I was much better off," Gabrielle said.

"You had an orgasm," Arwen said. "On your first visit. That's unusual."

"If you say so."

"You're okay with five days on a pink tags?"

"I guess so," Gabrielle replied. "You mean, you could make it shorter?"

Arwen laughed. “No, it’s gotta be at least five days, so your labia can heal up. But most girls need the full two weeks, just to settle in.”

“Five days is fine,” Gabrielle said. “But I’m not sure what’s supposed to happen then.”

“You can go to the common room,” Arwen said, “and you can partner with a male.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said.

“Three days for a female.”

“What do you mean?”

“You can partner with a female on your fourth day,” Arwen said.

“You mean, here?” Gabrielle asked. “I don’t want to do that.”

“That’s fine,” Arwen said. “No one’s going to make you do anything. But if you want to be with a girl, here or in your stall, it’s after three days.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said, not seeing a reason to tell Arwen she wasn’t interested for the second time.

Gabrielle heard the sound of several machines beeping, guessed one of them might be hers.

“Okay, you’re all done,” Arwen said. “Someone will come for you soon.”

“Okay, thanks.”

Only Penelope was there when Gabrielle returned to her stall.

“Welcome back,” she said, descending from her bunk, sitting at the bars.

Gabrielle had thought she might read Roxanne’s book, but she joined Penelope at the bars because that seemed to be expected.

Penelope got right to the point.

“You graduated from high school with a 4.0,” she observed.

“Not quite,” Gabrielle answered. “I got a few B’s.”

“Still,” Penelope continued. “Why here?”

“I didn’t get accepted into college, I couldn’t find a job, and my mom is renting out my room.”

Penelope looked at Gabrielle with surprise. “I wouldn’t have expected any of those answers,” she said.

“Well, I might get into college in the winter. And I didn’t look that hard for a job. Not as hard as I could have. And then, my dad got hurt last

year and can't work much, so my parents needed the money. Plus, my mom's into tough love. Know what I mean? Sink or swim. Tiger mom."

"But kicking you out," Penelope said. "That's pretty tough."

"I guess," Gabrielle said, still not sure how she felt about it. "What about you? How long have you been here?"

"Just two years," Penelope said. "Two years in October."

"Why?"

"Ex," Penelope replied. "He drank, he was abusive, so I moved out, and then he started stalking. Driving by my mom's house at weird times, calling my friends. When someone told me he bought a gun, that was it. I'd heard about places like this, where you could give milk, that were kept secure. Arnold Farm was the closest one, and they took me."

"How old were you?"

"Twenty-four."

"How long is your contract?"

"Five years."

"That seems like a long time."

"I kind of wish I could leave sooner, but a contract's a contract."

"You agreed to it?"

"Yeah, I specifically said five years."

"Why?"

"I told Mr. Arnold five years, and told him to send a copy to my ex, because I wanted him to see it, and how long it was, and give up hope."

"Did it work?"

"Yeah. That gun he bought?"

"Yeah?"

"He used it on himself."

"Oh, god," Gabrielle said quietly, looking into Penelope's eyes, looking for pain, or relief, finding neither.

Chapter 14: Boys

“Yeah, I cried,” Penelope said. “Who wouldn’t? You get news like that, and your head goes to two places – all the good times you had, and all the good that still could have happened if things had been different. If you had been different. So you blame yourself. And then you see him.”

“See him?”

“In your dreams. In your daydreams. Sometimes you’re not sure if it’s just a dream.”

“See him . . . here?”

“Yeah,” Penelope said. “But I got through it. He went away. The girls here were great. The boys helped too. I cried on some shoulders. Girls’ shoulders. Boys’ shoulders.”

“Boys’ shoulders?” Gabrielle echoed. “Like, in the production room?”

Penelope laughed before she could stop herself. “Sorry, sorry, you’re new,” she said. “I’m not laughing at you, just picturing that, happening in the production room. But no, in the stalls.”

“Boys and girls can be together, here?”

“Yeah,” Penelope replied. “There are certain rules about it, but yeah.”

“They’re kept together?”

“No, it’s girls with girls, boys with boys,” Penelope said. “But you can ask for someone, or they can ask for you, or you can both ask for each other, and if you have enough points, you get an hour.”

“Points?”

Penelope gestured toward the wall across from the bars. “See my space?”

“Yeah.”

“See the number under my name?”

“Yeah. Four.”

“Those are my points. Three gets you in a stall together.”

“What can you do?”

Penelope arched an eyebrow and smiled. Gabrielle considered that question answered, but she had more.

“If you just have him brought to your stall, though . . .”

“Yeah, we’ll be here. We’ll try not to watch.”

“You’ve . . . done that?”

“Oh yeah,” Penelope said, looking down at her shaved opening. Gabrielle looked too, half expecting to find more of what Raphael had deposited earlier. But her lips were clean and dry.

“Austen?”

“Yes.”

“Roxanne?”

“Yup.”

Was this a universal? Gabrielle wondered. Would any girl be willing to make love in front of other girls if that was her only choice?

Would she?

Given the circumstances, the rest of their conversation was strangely normal, about their lives before they got here, about boys in general, boys in specific. Penelope did most of the talking, describing marriage, the good and the bad of it, and the five boys here, all of whom she’d been with multiple times, both in the production room and in the stalls.

She ticked off their names – George, Raphael, Al, Dan, Ronen – and their attributes: George liked oral a lot, Ronen was Muslim, Raphael spoke only when spoken to, Al was black and had done porn, but he insisted it was a just few movies with a friend, and Dan was the best looking, with the largest penis, and he was sweet and grew up poor.

“Do you have a favorite?” Gabrielle asked.

“It’s better not to,” Penelope said, and her face darkened a little, a subtle shift in her eyes, in her mouth.

“What do you mean?”

“Well, your boyfriend . . .” Penelope began. “Imagine him here.”

“Oh, god, no thanks,” Gabrielle blurted.

“See? Imagine watching him with another girl in the production room. Or seeing him with someone else in your stall.”

Gabrielle laughed, the whole scenario too outlandish to even be imagined. “Okay, I can’t,” she said. “No way.”

“That terrible?”

“That weird,” Gabrielle said. “I can’t even go there, in my head.”

“Are you freaking out again?”

“No, no, I don’t think so. Not being able to imagine something isn’t freaking out, is it?”

“I don’t know,” Penelope said. “But anyway, that’s how it is. You might be with one of the guys, in production, and then you’ll start thinking about him, and you’ll start feeling some kind of connection, and your mind will wander, and then you’ll see him with another girl, and it’ll hurt.”

“It’s happened to you?” Gabrielle asked. They both knew the answer, so Penelope just looked at the floor in front of the space where her knees were crossed.

After a brief silence, she looked back up. “They try to discourage it, too.”

“What do you mean?”

“If they think you’re getting too close to someone, they’ll take steps.”

“Like what?”

“Adjust production schedules, reject stall visits . . . and, whatever.”

Gabrielle sensed there was meaning in Penelope’s “whatever,” but the sound of voices and rattling leashes told her people were returning. She looked up, saw it was almost five o’clock.

Roxanne and a blonde girl appeared, led by Arwen.

“Hey, Gabrielle,” Arwen said, unlocking the door to the entry cage. “Still doing okay?”

“I’m fine,” Gabrielle said, standing, stepping to the bars. “I’m not sure anyone believes me, though,” she said, looking back at Penelope.

“Gabrielle, this is Helen,” Arwen said. “She’s your next-door neighbor.”

“Hi, Helen,” Gabrielle said brightly, wondering if hugging through the bars was a custom when a girl was on a leash. Apparently not. Helen smiled but remained by Arwen’s right shoulder.

“Nice to meet you, Gabrielle,” Helen said.

Gabrielle noticed the red tag of a girl on her period hanging beside the white tag in Helen’s ear, matching red and white tags dangling from her labia, barely visible amidst the thick mat of brown pubic hair covering her sex.

Back in the stall, Roxanne touched Gabrielle’s arm and smiled, and Gabrielle turned, trying to give her the look that said she was okay, she was adapting.

“Keeping your leash in?” Arwen asked.

“Yeah, I’ll just hook it,” Roxanne replied.

Gabrielle watched Arwen and Helen pass, listening to the clatter of doors and leashes as Helen was returned to her stall, the voices of girls Gabrielle couldn’t see welcoming her back.

Roxanne, holding her leash, stepped to her cabinet

“So how have you been doing really?” she asked, looking at Gabrielle as she rummaged through her things.

“I’m fine, I’m fine,” Gabrielle said. “Penelope’s been entertaining me.”

“I told her all about the boys,” Penelope said.

“Not enough time for all that,” Roxanne countered, pulling a rod out of her cabinet. It wasn’t the object designed to provide pleasure to a girl’s body, though, Gabrielle noticed. It was the same thing she’d been given along with her toy: a simple white cylinder, thicker and thinner along its length, pointed at one end, a metal hook protruding from the other end.

Gabrielle guessed Roxanne was going to masturbate with it, and she wondered if she was going to ask permission first, or if it was understood that Gabrielle was okay with it.

Roxanne didn’t climb up to her bed for relief however.

Instead, she dropped her leash to the floor, allowing it to swing between her legs. She propped her foot on Gabrielle’s bed, spread her lips and touched the tip of the rod to her opening.

“Has anyone explained this to you?” she asked, looking down at the object as she fed it into her sex organ.

“Uh, well,” Gabrielle stammered, “you’re just, uh . . .”

“No, not really,” Roxanne said. “It’s not for masturbation. It’s a vaginal hook.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said. “But that doesn’t really tell me anything.”

“Just watch,” Roxanne said, burying the device up her slot, nothing but the hook protruding between her lips.

Gabrielle stepped before Roxanne, watching as she deftly looped two of the rings of her leash around the hook, shortening it so that it dangled just to her lower thigh.

“You don’t want it dragging on the floor,” Roxanne said, stepping to the sink to wash her hands.

“Why not just have it taken out?”

“They’ll be taking me to production in a few minutes,” Roxanne explained, and she pulled her pillow off the top bunk, sat down beside the bars and crossed her legs, arranging her leash in a coil over her ankles. “I’d rather not have it pulled out and put back in again that quickly.”

“Does it hurt when that’s done?” Gabrielle asked.

“It can, especially after your first couple of weeks, before you get used to it. But it’s something you have to manage, no matter how long you’ve been here. Ask for alternatives any time you want.”

“Sure,” Gabrielle said, pausing to collect her thoughts. “Hey,” she said, looking at Penelope, back at Roxanne, “are you, uh, going to have a boy here?”

Roxanne laughed and looked at Penelope accusingly. “So you told her all about that?”

“I did,” Penelope said without apology. “I told her you ordered boys all the time.”

“Fuck you, Penny,” Roxanne said, but she pointed to her space on the wall. “Down to three points. So you can draw your own conclusions.”

“Are you going to have anyone in . . . tonight?”

Roxanne laughed again, a comfortable, healthy laugh that reminded Gabrielle that topics considered taboo outside the farm were mere conversation here.

“No,” she replied. “Can’t.”

“Why not?”

“Because of you,” Roxanne said.

“What about me?” Gabrielle demanded.

“Until you’re cleared for it, no male visitors,” Roxanne said.

“Cleared for what?”

“Male stuff. You know, that five-day thing. Well, two weeks for normal girls. Five days for you.”

“How does that affect you?” Gabrielle persisted, deciding Roxanne meant her last words as a compliment.

“No males in the stall,” Roxanne said, “if there’s a girl with a pink tag.”

“But he’d be here for you,” Gabrielle protested. She was sincerely just trying to understand the system, but she saw a smile playing over Roxanne’s lips.

“If you really, really want them to bring me a boy, maybe they can make an exception,” Roxanne said. Penelope laughed lecherously.

“No,” Gabrielle said, her face burning. “No, it’s not that, I just don’t get why you can’t have a boy here if my tag is pink.”

“Stuff happens,” Roxanne explained cryptically.

Gabrielle decided to let the matter drop, looked up at the sound of chains and voices, saw Austen, being brought to the stall by Arwen. Like Roxanne, Austen opted to keep her leash in, holding it up at the toilet, relieving herself without closing the curtain.

“Got everything figured out, Gabrielle?” she asked, leaning forward to look into Gabrielle’s eyes.

“Definitely,” Gabrielle replied. “It’s all very simple. And normal.”

Holding her leash with one hand, Austen wiped with the other, peering at her vulva, passing tissue across it a half dozen times before she flushed, and Gabrielle wondered if she was wiping off more than urine.

The staffer they called Grendl appeared. Roxanne rose with a grunt, unhooked her leash, removed the object from her vagina, washed it at the sink, returned it to her cabinet and joined Penelope in the entry cage.

“See you at dinner time, Gabrielle,” she said.

“Okay,” Gabrielle replied. “See you. And thanks, Penelope, for, um, the explanations.”

Austen retrieved her vaginal hook from the cabinet, inserted it, put her leash around it and sat down on the floor, arranging her leash in a tight wad just under her vulva.

“So, they told you everything?” she asked.

“No,” Gabrielle said, sitting down, glancing briefly at Austen’s sex. “I was lying. I’m still lost.”

“Ask me a question.”

“Okay. Where were you?”

“Chores.”

“Chores?” Gabrielle repeated. “Like, work?”

“Yeah, work. But they call it chores.”

“Like what?”

“Oh, um, kitchen, administration, lab. You can help keep the production room clean, or the commons, or the overall building.

“What’s your job?”

“Kitchen. I was helping get dinner ready.”

“You work in the nude?”

“Not in the lab, or the kitchen,” Austen said. “Sometimes you’ll wear an apron, or they’ll at least strap you.”

“Strap?”

“It’s kind of like underpants, or a bikini bottom. But skimpier. Like, it just covers your holes.”

“Is there an opening in the back? I mean, for your leash?”

“You’re not leashed in the kitchen. But they do keep the kitchen locked, and it’s one of the places where they’ll chain you.”

“Chains?”

“Depending on what you’re doing, yeah. If you’re working a certain area, like, operating the potato peeler, or washing dishes, they’ll chain your ankles to the floor. Long chains, though, so you can walk around a little.”

Once again, Gabrielle was struggling to imagine the scene that had been described.

“The worst is working on the facility,” Austen continued.

“What’s that like?”

“So, the head engineer is Mr. Dambert, and he doesn’t want you touching anything or walking where you’re not supposed to. He works on electricity, plumbing, the boiler and stuff, so I guess it makes sense. So if you go to help him, your leash stays up your ass the whole time, and he padlocks it to this cart he pushes, and then he handcuffs you, and shackles your ankles together, so you can barely walk. And then he almost always puts his tool belt on you, and it’s heavy. So you’re just standing there, getting tired, and he’s really old and he doesn’t talk, and he’s basically using you as a tool belt holder. And then, if he doesn’t like something you do, like if you just ask a question he thinks is dumb, or you don’t turn the right way so he can get a tool off the belt that very second, he whacks you with this stick. Like, an old fishing pole, so it stings.”

“Oh, my god,” Gabrielle said. “Can you refuse to work for him?”

“No. If they assign you to him, that’s it. But it’s not that often. Like, maybe a few times a year.”

“What happens if you try to keep him from hitting you?”

“You can’t, ‘cuz he beats you on your bottom, and you’re handcuffed in front. He’ll just say, ‘Turn your belt around,’ and that means

turn it so the tools are in the front and on the sides, and just the buckle is in the back, higher, so no protection there, and then he swings once or twice.”

“I thought all the discipline happened in that, um, the discipline room.”

“Almost all, but you can get whacked in the kitchen, and Mr. Dambert gets a pass,” Austen said, smiling a little wickedly, and Gabrielle began to suspect that Austen was enjoying telling her story, and was making things sound more dramatic than they really were.

“The council’s complained about him a few times,” Austen said. “We’ve even taken a vote on it, but nothing changes.”

“The council?” Gabrielle queried.

“Officially, the Production Council,” Austen said.

“Yeah, but what is it?”

“It has seven girls, two boys,” Austen said. “We vote for who’s on it, but it’s sort of casual.”

“Have you been on it?”

“Yeah, a few times.”

“What does it do?”

“Gives official advice to Mr. Arnold, but he doesn’t have to follow it. Like, we hereby propose that you fire Mr. Dambert’s old ass, but Mr. Arnold ignores that because Mr. Dambert is really good at what he does, apparently, even if he’s completely old and senile in every other way.”

Gabrielle laughed. She’d met people like Mr. Dambert. They were either annoying, or funny, depending on how you looked at things.

“And then, we vote on stuff like discipline. Like, if there’s a dispute about someone breaking the rules, or how much punishment they should get, we’ll talk to everyone and decide that, and they usually follow it.”

“So, you meet somewhere?”

“Usually in the common area,” Austen said, “sometimes in processing, if it’s a bigger meeting.”

“Oh, downstairs?”

“Yeah.”

Austen looked over Gabrielle’s shoulder.

“Ready for another round?”

Gabrielle looked up. Arwen was at the bars, holding a leash.

“Hey,” she said. “Time again.”

Chapter 15: Third Milking

Gabrielle stood, did a quick mental count of the times she'd had a leash plug inserted up her rectum today. Four times so far, by Mr. Arnold first, then by Esther after she was processed, then twice to be milked. Was it going to start hurting?

She stepped to the port, bent, did her best to loosen her anus, felt Arwen pushing it up her hole slowly.

"How is it feeling, Gabrielle?" Arwen inquired.

"Fine, I guess," Gabrielle replied, "other than it still seems kind of weird that it's done. I mean, that it's put back there."

"Do you think you're wearing the right size?" Arwen asked, locking the leash inside Gabrielle's bowels with a quiet click.

"I guess so. I don't have anything to compare it to."

It was just Gabrielle and Austen going to production with Arwen this time. In the hall, Arwen turned toward Gabrielle "Getting all your questions answered?" she asked.

"I think I'm going to forget everything while I'm asleep tonight, and they'll have to tell me all of it again tomorrow," Gabrielle confessed.

"That's normal," said Arwen.

Gabrielle had been joking, but Arwen seemed to think she was being serious.

As soon as they arrived in production, Gabrielle scanned the room for boys, found none, although there were two girls this time who seemed to be serving in their stead, standing and chatting with two girls being milked, a single staff member holding both their leashes.

Gabrielle and Austen were chained beside each other, Gabrielle sighing with relief as the cups began their work, the lines running white with her thick milk. The ache in her breasts had been particularly bad this time. Was she fuller than she'd been earlier? Maybe she'd do her best production later in the day?

Gabrielle looked at Austen, wondering if she was going to continue talking, if she wanted a boy, or if she would get one of those poles set up behind her that she could grind against on her own. But Austen remained

silent, her eyes closed, as if she needed to direct all her mental faculties to forcing the milk from her body.

Gabrielle searched the room again, found herself following the two girls she was assuming were here for service. She didn't care to know what they did, how they did it, but morbid curiosity kept her focused on them.

They were still just chatting casually, the female staffer standing behind them to hold their restraints as they circulated slowly through the room, crouching to talk to a girl here and there. They were both blonde, slim except for their heavy breasts, and Gabrielle wondered if skinny blonde girls were favored for this kind of work, because they were considered cuter. The idea annoyed her. She wanted a boy. Or a girl who looked like a boy, if she were utterly desperate and no boy was available. Or maybe a solidly-built girl with dark hair, like the one who had sucked George's penis earlier. She wondered what the girl's name was.

The two girls drew closer. Gabrielle heard laughter, a word here and there, but she couldn't tell if anyone was propositioning anyone. She lowered her head, eyes on the floor between her hands, listening as the voices grew louder.

Bare feet appeared in the aisle just before her, and she looked up as far as her restraints would comfortably allow, at a pair of female thighs.

"Hey, Austen," a voice said.

Austen looked up. "Hey, Dee," she said. "No takers?"

"Some people don't know quality when they see it," Dee lamented. "But I've got thirty minutes left. I'm sure we'll find someone."

"No doubt," Austen said.

"What about you?" Dee asked.

"Thanks, but me and Penelope have a date tonight."

"How long have you been stalled with her?"

"Six months," Austen said.

"Do you still love her?"

"Yeah, as much as you can love another girl," Austen replied. "But you know she was with Raphael earlier."

"Yeah, I saw it. They were two spaces from me."

"Did they talk?"

"Just enough to set everything up. He offered, she said yes, he got behind her, they both kinda grunted, then I guess he came."

“Oh yeah, he came,” Austen said. “She was dripping all over the floor when she got back. Right, Gabrielle?”

Gabrielle had been listening to the conversation with a sort of frustrated detachment, and it took her a second to realize her name had been spoken.

“What?” she said.

“Gabrielle, this is Dee,” Austen said. “She and I go way back.”

“Hi, Dee,” Gabrielle said, glancing up briefly.

“Hey, Gabrielle,” Dee said. “You just got here, right?”

“Yeah,” Gabrielle replied. “Earlier today. But it feels like a week ago.”

“She’s doing really well, though,” Austen said. “Already making milk, and she came earlier. Her first time in the room.”

Gabrielle watched as Dee’s legs bent to a crouch, thighs spread wide, bare vulva spread as well, her pink lips pouting around her opening, the leash hanging from her anus.

She felt a hand on her ear, realized Dee was checking her tag.

“How long’ll you have pink?” she asked.

“Probably just for five days,” Austen said. “They’ve recommended her for that.”

“How did you orgasm?” Dee asked.

“Arwen did it,” Gabrielle replied.

“Arwen thought she needed it,” Austen said. “You were wet or something, Gabrielle?”

“Something like that,” Gabrielle agreed, looking down, not enjoying the conversation at all. She could probably get used to doing certain things with other people around. She didn’t think she could get used to having it all talked about afterwards.

The other service girl was June, and she said hi to Austen and was introduced to Gabrielle, but she wasn’t as talkative, and the two kept moving.

“Me and Dee were in a stall together for awhile,” Austen said quietly.

Gabrielle pondered the appropriate response, had no idea how one replied to a statement like that, finally settled on a question she considered potentially stupid but better than silence. “You got split up?”

“Well, we split up, yeah,” Austen replied.

“It was your choice?”

“Yeah,” Austen replied. “Who’s in your stall is usually up to you, as long as both of you agree on it and there’s no issues.”

“What kind of issues?” Gabrielle asked.

“Well, fighting a lot,” Austen said. “Like, toxic, you know what I mean? Two girls who love each other when they’re apart, and then they hate each other after about a day in the same stall. So you split them up and they cry, you put them together and they scream. That’s something the council does. ‘Sorry, bitches, but we can’t deal with your drama anymore, you’re done sharing a stall. You can catch up in the commons or whatever.’”

“So . . .” Gabrielle began tentatively, broaching a topic she’d been struggling with “. . . if you’re in a stall with a girl . . . you have to . . . be with her?”

“No, not at all,” Austen said. “We have plenty of girls who are just roommates. Really, we don’t have that many lesbians at all. I mean, total lesbians, like girls only. And I’m not a lesbian. I’m not even really bi. But it’s nice to just, you know, have someone to be with, at half-light.”

“Half-light?”

“It starts at 10:30, ends at 11, when the lights go totally off. During half-light, they dim the lights, for a little privacy. You don’t have to go to sleep. You can talk, masturbate, be with your stallmate, or even do whatever through the bars, if you like the girl in the next stall.”

“I probably won’t be doing that,” Gabrielle said. “I kinda want that on the record.”

“Well, you’re going to be harnessed, so it doesn’t matter anyway,” Austen retorted.

“What does that mean?”

“For three nights, you and Roxanne. They’ll go over it tonight.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said.

“Oh, and you won’t be staying with her,” Austen said.

“What do you mean?”

“She usually gets the newest girl, and sort of trains them, or answers their questions, so when the next new girl shows up, they put her with her, and her last girl has to find someone else.”

The prospect of having to find someone new to share a stall with filled Gabrielle with a sudden, sharp anxiety. Her mind went back to her

search for a job, the rejections and the unanswered queries. She imagined failing at finding a stallmate too, relegated to solitude.

“Is it hard to find someone?” she asked.

“Not at all,” Austen replied. “At any given point, like probably ten girls are ready to switch, and new girls are always the most popular. Unknown quantity, I guess.”

“Okay.”

“As long as you’re not totally shitty, that is. If you are, that will get out. Quickly. And everyone will suddenly just love their stallmate, when you ask them.”

“There are totally shitty people here?”

“Well, relatively speaking,” Austen replied. “Not like, criminal, but sort of inconsiderate, or they’ll play head games, or don’t care if you’re hurting. We’ve even had a few times where a girl stole something.”

“The milk?” Gabrielle inquired.

“Huh?” Austen replied.

“The girl stole the milk?”

“What are you talking about?”

“It’s something Bruce mentioned,” Gabrielle said, blushing and feeling like an idiot. “I mean, I think he did, this morning, when I met him in his office. He said don’t steal the milk.”

“Oh, yeah,” Austen said, stifling laughter. “Yeah, that’s another kind of stealing. It’s not what I was talking about, but that’s right, you’re not supposed to do that either.”

“Please explain,” Gabrielle said.

“The kind of stealing I was talking about was what this one girl did once . . . so, her mom sends her stallmate some really nice soap, and this girl took it, right out of her cabinet. The girl had issues, you know? And she’s not here anymore. Anyway, so the stallmate knows she took it, and she’s pissed but she stays cool, waits until the other girl goes to be milked, and she calls in a staffer, tells her what’s going on, they find it under her pillow. But – and this is how you have to do it – they knew she’d just deny it. So they leave it under her pillow, but when she comes back from being milked, the first girl – the girl who got her soap stolen – she says, ‘Hey, did you take my soap? ‘Cuz I think you did, and I’m going to have someone come in and look for it.’ And then she goes to get milked, but they watch. The girls in the other stall are in on it too. And they watch, and she tries to

be all secret, and she moves the soap back to the cabinet, but they see her and confirm it, so she's busted, and the council gave her five units."

"Units?"

"Units of punishment."

"Okay."

"But there's another kind of stealing, that Bruce was talking about," Austen continued. "It's if you're with a girl, and you suck her too much."

"What do you mean?"

"Suck her nipples. Like, you're just doing it with her, but you drink too much from her. That's theft."

"You're joking, right?" Gabrielle said, shifting as much as her chains would allow, picking up one knee, then the other, moving her hands closer together.

"No," Austen replied.

"Why would someone do that?" Gabrielle queried. "I mean, I know some comes out, but . . . sucking?"

"Yeah."

"On purpose?"

"It's good."

"What's good?"

"The milk. It's good."

"No it's not."

"Have you had any?"

"Well . . . yeah, when it first started coming out."

"Sweet, right?"

"I guess so."

"It's an acquired taste," Austen asserted.

"You like it, then?"

"Yeah."

"You're willing to get in trouble for it?"

"No," Austen replied. "You can do just a pull or two, and it won't matter. I mean, they say you're not supposed to do even that, but I think they decided a taste here and there is okay. Maybe even helps you produce. Like, milk in, milk out."

Austen laughed at her own joke.

"How do they know if you took some?" Gabrielle asked.

“You have to report what you do with other people. And if your production’s down right after that, they’ll decide the other person must have had too much, and you’re both in trouble.”

“Both?” repeated Gabrielle. She had many other questions, but her abiding concerns about justice trumped the rest.

“Well, yeah,” Austen said. “The girl who’s giving the milk knows how much is being taken. Or she should.”

“How much trouble are you in if it happens?” Gabrielle asked.

“One unit per ounce if you admit it, two if you’re caught,” Austen said.

Gabrielle heard a beep, looked toward the machine and wondered who had finished, and saw that Dee had found someone who wanted her services. Three spaces away, she was kneeling behind a dark-haired girl, rubbing between the girl’s legs while the girl, eyes closed, rocked slowly. Dee leaned forward to whisper something and the girl nodded. Gabrielle looked away when Dee lowered her mouth to the girl’s rear.

June found someone too, in front of her partner, kneeling and kissing while the staffer checked her phone, absently holding June’s leash.

“See you back in the stall,” Austen said after she was put on a chain with a half dozen other girls.

“Bye.”

Gabrielle went soon after, leashed with two other girls she hadn’t met before, Bambi from her block, Lisa from block two.

All the other girls were already in the stalls, and so were their dinners, but they’d apparently decided to wait until Gabrielle had arrived to eat. They sat in their usual places, trays on the floor or on their pillows, talking and gossiping, about other girls, the boys. Gabrielle mostly listened.

Exhausted, desperately tired, she almost forgot she had another milking left. She sat on her bed and considered lying down, but at 8, Grendl showed up to take Roxanne and Penelope, and at 8:30, Gabrielle and Austen went.

A tall, black male was making the rounds in the production room this time, and Gabrielle watched him work his way down the row. His name was Al, she remembered, and he’d been in a pornographic movie.

Before the second cup was clamped onto Gabrielle’s nipple, Al had found a partner, and as her milk started flowing, he mounted a girl on the

other side of the room, her first cries clearly audible as the walls of her sheath were stretched and pleased.

Back in her stall a little after 9, Gabrielle headed straight for bed, barely nodding to Roxanne or the other girls. Before she'd pulled the covers up, however, Roxanne stepped to the bed, sat down on it, raising one thigh, bending her knee, turning to look down at Gabrielle.

"You know they're coming for us in a few minutes, right?"

"What for?" Gabrielle asked, trying not to whine.

"Harnesses," Roxanne replied.

"Okay, yeah, that got mentioned earlier," Gabrielle said. "What does it mean, though?"

"They'll cover us up . . . down there."

"Why?" Gabrielle demanded, rising up on her elbow.

"To remove temptation."

"What kind of temptation?"

"Things that might . . . happen," Roxanne replied.

"You know I'm not that way, right?"

"Yes, but it's what they do, until your ring heals up."

"I doesn't hurt."

"It's not supposed to on the first day. They burned off all the nerves. The second day's usually when it's the most painful, and it'll be worse if you do anything tonight."

"Wake me when they get here," she said, covering her head.

But sleep wouldn't come now, she knew, not only because of the din – girls talking, eating, washing silverware; doors clanging open and shut – but because her exhaustion seemed to be of the nervous variety, a deep, tired agitation. There was too much going on, too many things to think about, to remember. Lovers and friends, or mere colleagues, touching, sucking, mounting, cumming, all in front of her, in front of the world.

She lay there for what felt like ten minutes, in her own world, working through this strange new turn in her life, when she heard a male voice, one or two stalls away, drawing nearer, and quickly decided it must be someone being brought to one of the girls on their block.

She remembered what Austen had told Dee, that she and Penelope had a date tonight. Whatever that meant, it probably didn't mean a boy. And Roxanne wouldn't have ordered one.

She sat up, watching. Arwen appeared first, followed by a single nude male, his leash swinging between his legs, his penis half erect, bobbing as he took each step.

Chapter 16: Raphael

“Hey, Raphael,” Penelope said.

“Hey, Pen,” Raphael replied.

So this was Raphael, the boy who had filled Penelope earlier. And now they were speaking casually. Not like lovers. Just like friends or colleagues.

Gabrielle studied him from her bed. He was deliciously handsome. Beautiful, really. Blindingly so. And there was something strangely familiar about him, as if Gabrielle had always known him.

“Raffie,” Roxanne said with a quick wave, which the boy returned.

Austen waved but said nothing.

Gabrielle wondered how many times he’d been with each of them, how significant their relationships were.

As she suspected, he was being brought to the next pair of stalls. Several female voices greeted him, doors clanged open and shut, and Gabrielle guessed, from the next sounds she heard, that his leash was being removed, no doubt through the same process that girls went through.

The voices in the next pair of stalls grew quieter. Gabrielle strained to hear what was being said and hoped at the same time she wouldn’t be able to make out the words. She didn’t know if she could do this, if she could make love or have sex, or whatever it was called, in her stall with the other girls watching, or in the production room in front of everyone. But she didn’t like that everyone else could do this and she couldn’t. She wanted to have the option, at least. She wanted her five days to be up.

Arwen, done depositing Raphael next door, reappeared, stopped at the bars, laughed when she found Gabrielle in bed already.

“Had enough for one day?” she asked.

“More than enough,” Gabrielle replied.

“I’ll send Bea to get your harnesses on,” Arwen said. “Has that been explained?”

“Sort of. Roxanne told me about it. She said things were going to sting tomorrow, so I needed to lay off.”

“Yeah, it may hurt, more than today. You’ll be fine by Thursday, though.”

Gabrielle stayed in her bed, sitting up, arms around her knees. She was no longer tired. Something about the boy had left her unsettled. She believed she could hear sounds now, however faint, of what was being done next door: a girl's rhythmic grunting, or the squeak of the bedframe, or perhaps it was just the air conditioner. Then someone spoke and someone else answered, from somewhere beyond her vision, in the stalls to the left, where the boy was, or maybe to the right.

"That's not how my mom taught me," a girl announced loudly. Other girls laughed. That couldn't have been said in a pair of stalls where a boy was making love to a girl, Gabrielle thought. Could it?

A middle-aged woman, someone Gabrielle had seen in the production room, appeared at the bars, holding up a pair of what looked like skimpy leather panties.

"Hey, Bea," Roxanne said, moving toward her. "Gabrielle, now would be a good time to pee."

Gabrielle pondered Roxanne's advice, understood and moved to the toilet, not closing the curtain.

Bea passed one of the items through the leashing port and Roxanne stepped into it, slid it up her legs, positioned her labial tag in it, and adjusted the straps.

"Backside against the port," Bea instructed. "Bend at the hips."

Roxanne obeyed and Bea knelt behind her, reaching through the port, tugging on the straps of her harness as if trying to remove it, pulling hard enough that her breasts swung.

"Turn around and face me," Bea commanded.

Roxanne smiled at Gabrielle and performed a quick hop, spinning in the air, obviously finding the process funny.

The harness was completely closed in the front, Gabrielle had noticed, with a small but impenetrable-looking silver cup enclosing Roxanne's mound and vulva. The harness was open in the back, however, two heavy straps running from between Roxanne's legs, along either side of her rear and running through metal rings on the thick black belt that encircled her waist. After they passed through the rings, the straps terminated at a silver disk at the back of the belt that was, Gabrielle guessed, a lock of some kind.

"Spread your legs," Bea said tersely, apparently not at all impressed by Roxanne's pirouette.

Roxanne obeyed, parting her legs further than Gabrielle guessed was necessary, grabbing the bars and pointing her pelvis forward, the muscles of her rear flexing.

Bea continued her inspection, pulling at the belt, yanking on the front of the harness with enough vigor that Roxanne's whole body shook.

The inspection concluded with Bea's hand between Roxanne's thighs, pulling at the lower edge of the cup, where it pressed against the space between Roxanne's anus and vaginal opening. So the anus would be left bare, Gabrielle noted with relief. She hoped the harness would come off before she had to urinate, but that would be a minor annoyance compared to having her rear hole covered.

"Okay, stand up straight, and face away from me," Bea said.

Roxanne, still smiling, obeyed.

Bea pulled a set of keys out of her pocket and pressed one into the back of the belt. Whatever she did not only locked the belt but tightened it slightly, the belt digging into Roxanne's hips.

"Done," Bea said, tapping Roxanne's shoulder, turning to Gabrielle. "You."

Gabrielle wiped and flushed, and, with a sudden sense of misgiving, took Roxanne's place at the port, accepting her harness from Bea, stepping into it and studying the fixtures. She reached down, gingerly slipped her tag toward the middle of her vulva, as Roxanne had done, so it would be completely enclosed in the cup.

"Have you worn one before?" Bea asked.

"No, Ma'am," Gabrielle admitted.

"Reach back and pull the straps as tight as they'll go."

Gabrielle complied, yanking at the straps until they pressed against the flesh of her rear.

"Turn and bend, backside at the port."

Gabrielle complied, looked up at Roxanne standing by the bed, and tried to smile while Bea tugged on her harness, shaking her, forcing her to grab her breasts to keep them from swinging. Even when they weren't full of milk, they were tender.

"Turn around, spread your legs."

Gabrielle complied, parting her legs only as much as necessary, and Bea continued her inspection of the fit, pulling against the harness, grabbing the cup at the sides and underneath.

“Turn around, facing away from me, and stand straight.”

Gabrielle held her breath, knowing the already-tight belt was about to be cinched. She heard the key enter the lock at her backside, felt the pressure, and then the relentless squeeze of the harness.

“Uh,” she grunted. “Oh, god.”

“Done,” Bea announced. “Turn around for instructions.”

Roxanne stepped beside Gabrielle, the barest smirk on her face.

“The harness is intended to protect the installation site of your labial ring,” she said, reciting from memory, it seemed. “It’s meant to prevent contact and stimulation, reduce the risk of infection, and enable quicker healing.”

She looked at both girls, making sure they were listening. Gabrielle nodded.

“Do not attempt to remove or loosen the harness. If the harness loosens on its own, do not attempt to touch, masturbate or penetrate yourself; do not invite a partner to do so; and notify a staff person as soon as possible that you need a new harness.”

Bea looked at both of them.

“Everything clear so far?” she asked.

“Yes,” said Gabrielle.

“Yes,” said Roxanne.

“Pass wastes only when necessary while you’re harnessed,” she continued. “The harness is designed to accommodate anything you need to do on the toilet, and the cup features slots that will allow urine to drain. But remember that you won’t be able to wipe your vulva until the harness is removed. The harness will come off prior to leashing tomorrow morning.”

Bea looked at them again, first at Roxanne, then focusing on Gabrielle.

“Okay,” Gabrielle said.

“If you do have to urinate, you’ll want to give the cup an extra minute or two to drain, and you’ll want to wipe it before leaving the toilet. You’ll receive one punishment unit for allowing the harness to loosen, and three if you attempt to stimulate yourself while harnessed.”

Bea looked at Roxanne.

“You are expected to actively support your stallmate’s recovery. Sexually suggestive words or actions, or anything that prompts her arousal, can slow healing and lead to extended harnessing.”

Roxanne nodded, squeezed Gabrielle's shoulder. "She's in good hands," she said.

Bea, unsmiling, left without speaking.

"So, you catch all that?" Roxanne asked.

"Makes sense," Gabrielle replied. "Except for why I have to be punished if it comes loose."

"You never get the benefit of the doubt," Roxanne said. "If something breaks or goes wrong, and they're not sure if it was your fault, they'll assume it was and you'll get punished."

Gabrielle gasped. "That's just not fair at all."

"Well," Roxanne said, "it kind of makes sense. It keeps everyone on their toes. And this place runs like clockwork. Boom boom boom."

"Still," Gabrielle persisted, returning to her bed.

"It's not a big deal," Roxanne said, sitting beside her. "If you get sent to discipline, just get through it."

"Whatever," Gabrielle replied, unconvinced. "And why do you have to wear, um, one of these things?"

"Things happen," Roxanne said, her expression unreadable. "It's for your own good."

Gabrielle looked down at the harness, wondering how many other girls had worn it. The part that covered her opening and mound was stainless steel, scuffed and nicked here and there, as if it had been bumped against things. Did girls bump it against the walls or the bars while it was on? she wondered. Probably not. All the damage was probably done while it was in storage, or being carried around, clanging against other harnesses.

"Oh, damn!" someone – a female – shouted from somewhere else in the block. Gabrielle wondered if someone had gotten hurt, but she kept yelling, and there was something different about the way she cried out: "Damn! Oh damn!"

The revelations came fast, one after another almost simultaneously to Gabrielle's mind:

This was the sound of a girl climaxing.

She was climaxing because she was with a boy.

That boy was Cameron Flasche.

Gabrielle looked at the floor, pondered, looked into Roxanne's eyes.

Roxanne, not knowing what was going through Gabrielle's mind, looked back sympathetically.

“They should have harnessed everyone on the block,” Roxanne said. “But it sounds like they’re almost done.”

“What’s that boy’s name?” Gabrielle asked.

“Raphael,” Roxanne said, looking slightly puzzled. They’d been talking about Raphael all day.

“Does he have another name?”

“He might.”

“What is it?” Gabrielle queried.

“Anyone here might have another name,” Roxanne said. “It’s one of the rules, though . . .”

“What do you mean?”

“Don’t ask. Some people are here for reasons they don’t want to talk about. Some people are here to forget who they were. So . . . don’t ask.”

Gabrielle studied Roxanne’s face. All the humor of the harnessing process was gone, replaced by not just seriousness but maybe a little pain as well, and Gabrielle wondered if Roxanne was really Roxanne, or maybe she was Lucy, or Pearl, or Barbara. Gabrielle wondered if she’d been through something bad, if she’d ended up here, as one of Mr. Arnold’s first milk producers, at the end of a difficult path. She’d gotten here at age 22. Was there an ex, a crime, something else?

“So maybe you think you know who Raphael *was*,” Roxanne continued, emphasizing the last word. “Maybe he was your cousin, your best friend’s brother, your ex-boyfriend. But pretend you never saw him before. He’s Raphael here. Only Raphael.”

But, Gabrielle wanted to say, he was Cameron Flasche. Cameron Flasche. The best running back in the state his junior year, second best in the state his senior year. Ninety-two yards per game his junior year. Ninety-four yards per game his senior year, beaten out by less than a yard per game by a kid from out of state whose team played easy opponents from the foothills. All-state all four years. Debating team co-captain, state champions his senior year. Straight A’s. Valedictorian. Student body president. Beautiful. Nice. Friendly. Saved her father’s life.

Cameron Flasche.

She heard a grunt, a gasp, the sound of a male having an orgasm. Was this the sound Cameron Flasche made when he came?

Gabrielle felt a hand on her arm, saw Roxanne through her tears.

“We’re gonna get through this, Gabrielle, I promise,” Roxanne said gently.

Gabrielle pressed her hands to her face, looked through her fingers at Roxanne, picked up her pillow, put her mouth against it, wishing she could cry, or scream, or die without bothering anyone.

“Just let it out,” Roxanne said. “Let it out. It’s okay.”

Roxanne had no idea. How could she? This wasn’t about having her labia pierced, being harnessed, being milked, being caged, having a restraint slid into her rectum over and over again.

This was about Cameron Flasche, and the dreams and wishes and longings of a school girl. Innocent dreams. Chaste longings. Even when she was masturbating, Cameron Flasche above her, moving in and out of her, showing his devotion to her with every thrust up her vagina, it was an innocent pleasure. They were married, or at least given only to each other. They were in love. They were alone.

All of that was dead now, replaced by a naked man brought on a leash to a girl in a stall, his identity a secret, his carnal affection anything but secret.

“Got a little left for me?” a girl asked. A different girl, Gabrielle thought, her voice husky.

“Yeah,” the male replied. “Not sure I can cum again, though.”

“That’s fine.”

Gabrielle listened without wanting too, the creak of a bed, a girl gasping, quickly moaning through what sounded like a soft orgasm, just a little pleasure, nothing major, courtesy of the boy who, had he run for mayor, would have won. That’s what people said. If he’d run for mayor of Lakemore after he’d graduated, instead of leaving for West Point, Cameron Flasche would have won. Before his nineteenth birthday.

Roxanne was still there, touching Gabrielle’s arm again, looking worried and possibly a little confused.

“I’m okay,” Gabrielle said, the ache too deep now to be relieved by further tears. She pressed her pillow to her eyes. “I’ll be okay. But there’s a history there, and I’m gonna have to work through it. That’s all.”

“That boy?” Roxanne said. “Raphael?”

“Yeah, but he’s someone else to me.” Gabrielle paused. “I think.”

Now she was beginning to doubt. Had it really been him? Could it be him? How could he have ended up here, like this?

Yes, Cameron Flasche had given up on military school, come home, been seen briefly before disappearing. Yes, Betsy had heard the rumor that he was working for Arnold Farm. Yes, the boy named Raphael, being led to the stall next door, looked like him, or at least his twin brother. Convincing as it all was, however, that didn't prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the boy having sex a few feet away from her was truly Cameron Flasche.

Gabrielle had to know. She squeezed Roxanne's hand, scooted off the bed, went to the bars, not to listen but to see. Cameron Flasche would be coming back. Arwen had told him he had an hour, and the clock on the wall said 10:20. It had been an hour, at least.

There was silence now. No talking, no groaning. Someone flushed a toilet.

"Put the seat down," a girl's voice said.

"He always remembers," another girl said, and laughed.

Gabrielle heard Arwen's voice, saw her making her way through the block.

"Hey, Gabrielle," she said. "All harnessed up?"

Gabrielle looked down. She'd forgotten the thing she'd been forced to wear. "Yeah."

"Still doing okay?"

"I'm fine," Gabrielle said, lying. She knew her eyes were probably red, and Arwen could probably tell, so she decided to say what most girls would probably say after their first day: "A lot of adjustments to make in one day. I think I might be a little homesick."

Arwen smiled sympathetically, but she was holding a leash, and Gabrielle knew that's why she was here. Not to comfort Gabrielle, but to get Raphael. And Gabrielle wanted Arwen to get Raphael.

"But everyone here's been great," Gabrielle continued. "You've been great too. Thanks for . . . for everything."

Arwen beamed, moved on.

Nothing was said at the next stall at first. There was the faint clink of a leash being applied, then doors opening and closing. Then, finally, a girl's voice: "Bye."

"Bye," the boy said.

Gabrielle could see him now, exiting the entry cage, stepping behind Arwen, saying something quietly to her, perhaps reporting on his

performance, telling her he'd entered both girls, and both girls had cum once, one intensely, shouting, one casually, as if she didn't care.

He had performed well, Arwen would note.

They began to walk, Arwen in front, Raphael behind her.

Gabrielle looked into his eyes. Deep-set, dark, sensitive eyes. This was Cameron Flasche. This could only be Cameron Flasche.

She looked at his penis, still halfway firm, wet now with the lubrication of two females.

She looked back up, at his eyes. He was looking at her now.

Her heart stopped. It literally stopped beating in her chest. Time stood still.

There was nothing in his face, in his eyes, no expression. He was just taking her in, looking at her. If he recognized her, from that one time they'd actually spoken, or maybe some time when he saw her that she didn't see him, at school, in the yearbook, in the newspaper, he wasn't showing it. If he thought she was attractive, nothing in his face indicated it. If he loved her, the way she loved him, with a deep, perpetual obsession, his feelings were completely invisible.

Then he smiled, a sort of half-smile, warm, friendly, the kind of smile he might give anyone he looked at, because that was how he was. Gabrielle tried to smile back, fighting the sudden horror when she realized what Cameron was seeing, a near-naked girl confined to a stall, wearing a ridiculous harness that had been forced on her, locked between her legs, because she couldn't be trusted not to touch herself.

His eyes went to her middle, flickering there, quickly, before they returned to her eyes. For another long moment, he held her gaze. And then he was gone.

She grabbed the bars, looking at the place where Cameron Flasche had passed. She blinked, but her feelings were too complex for something as simple as crying. She turned back to her bed, where Roxanne still sat.

At that moment, the lights went dim, as if even the fixtures on the block felt sympathy for her.

She stopped, trying to make out her bed in the sudden darkness.

"What's going on?" she asked.

"Half-light," Roxanne answered. Gabrielle could barely make her out, rising from the bed. "Try not to listen," she added. "If that bothers you."

“If what bothers me?”

“What . . . people do.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said, still not sure what Roxanne was talking about.

Gabrielle heard an unfamiliar clang and guessed that the door that led into the block had been closed and secured. She heard a new round of talking, from the other stalls. “Goodnight,” someone said. “Love ya,” said another voice. “Sleep well.”

“Come say goodnight,” Roxanne whispered.

Chapter 17: A Difficult Morning

Gabrielle's eyes adjusted quickly to the dimness, and she saw that Penelope and Austen were at the bars, Austen's arm around Penelope's waist.

She followed Roxanne, stood back while Roxanne put her face between the bars, kissing each of their neighbors on the lips.

Gabrielle stepped up, trying to remember the last time she had kissed any female on the mouth other than her mother. She never had, she decided. But the rules here were different. She kissed Penelope first, holding the kiss for a few seconds. Then Austen stepped up, leaned in, their mouths touching longer – four seconds, five – before Austen pulled back and whispered, “Sweet dreams.”

“Goodnight,” Gabrielle whispered back.

She turned, her eyes altogether adjusted to the darkness now. Roxanne was waiting for her, to hug her, to kiss, Gabrielle guessed. That was fine. These girls were like sisters, she thought. Sisters kissed. Even sisters who had just met each other.

Roxanne's embrace felt all-enveloping though, her arms around Gabrielle's back, their breasts touching, their thighs against each other, the cups of their harnesses colliding with a metallic ring. They were the same height, and Gabrielle held her head level for the inevitable kiss, but Roxanne put her mouth at Gabrielle's ear first.

“I love you,” she whispered.

“I love you too,” Gabrielle replied quietly, not quite sure if it were true, because she didn't know what love meant here. But when Roxanne moved her mouth to Gabrielle's, she accepted the goodnight kiss in the spirit it was given, pressing against Roxanne's lips, parting her own lips but keeping her mouth closed, so that their teeth tapped, and then their cups knocked together again, and Gabrielle wondered if this was how the harnesses had gotten their scratches and dents, by being banged together at the end of the day by girls saying goodnight to each other.

“Goodnight.”

“Goodnight.”

Roxanne climbed up to her bed and Gabrielle collapsed onto hers, pulling the covers up to her chin, lying on her side looking at the wall, struggling to take stock of the day, and her life.

She had just looked into the eyes of Cameron Flasche. She was still trying to grasp that. He was nude. She was almost nude. He'd just had sex. At some point, they might have sex with each other.

The one time she and Cameron had spoken, at city hall, she had been frantic for weeks afterwards, their brief encounter nothing less than an emotional atom bomb blasting through her consciousness. What if she'd said something different to him? What if she'd told his friends to bug off?

Everything was different now. Seeing him pass by her stall, locking eyes with him, looking at his penis, should have driven her into apoplexy, if not instant death. And yet, right now, at this moment, the presence of Cameron Flasche at Arnold Farm was just one more thing of many to work through, and probably one of the less important ones. She'd taken a new job today, and she needed to focus. She couldn't afford the luxury of obsessing over a boy.

She sensed that things were happening in the next stall, and she rolled over to look.

It didn't surprise her to see Penelope and Austen lying together in the lower bed, facing each other, Austen's back to her. She saw Penelope's hand move, from Austen's thigh to her shoulder, heard whispers too quiet to make out.

Austen raised her leg and she guessed Penelope was touching her there, caressing her vulva. They were kissing, Penelope's head raised slightly, Austen's leg high, her hips rocking.

Gabrielle had never seen girls make love before, but she'd imagined it, joked about it, had dreams where it happened. It was always strange in her dreams, however, not satisfying or arousing, and half the time she was caught by someone – her mom, Betsy, her grandmother – her imaginary tryst ending in a humiliation so real it lingered into her waking hours.

What Austen and Penelope were doing seemed okay to them, though, and she closed her eyes and half-listened to their breathing, the rustle of sheets, the sounds their mouths made.

Almost asleep, a noise from somewhere roused her. Someone spoke, perhaps. She opened her eyes, saw that Austen was on top of

Penelope, reversed on her in a tight coupling so the girls could lick each other's sex organs.

Austen's pelvis twitched, presumably every time Penelope's tongue passed over her clitoris, and Penelope's legs lifted off the bed, dropped down, rose again, parted.

Gabrielle imagined being one of the partners, how it would feel to be licked and touched, and she rolled over and wished her harness was off. She reached down, wrapped her hand around the cup, felt the slots where her urine would drain, and fell asleep.

She slept hard, not waking until she heard a chime, thought at first it was part of a dream, opened her eyes and saw that the lights had come on.

She remembered where she was almost instantly, the bars and the unfamiliar bed reminding her of her of everything. Her mind moved next, of its own accord, to Cameron Flasche. Surely she'd been dreaming when she saw him.

No, it was real. He was here.

Probably.

She reached down, touched her harness, grabbed the cup, a little relieved it was still firmly attached to her body. The place where they'd installed the ring was hurting, a sting that was just over her pain threshold. She could see the clock from her bed, glowing faintly: 6:47 a.m.

Roxanne moved above her, issued a muffled grunt, her feet appearing on the ladder as she descended. In the other stall, Austen stirred first, shuffling off her bed and to the toilet, reaching it at the same time Roxanne did. The girls nodded to each other, but there was no kissing, no greeting.

Austen flushed but Roxanne lingered, and Gabrielle guessed she was making sure her cup had drained. When would the harnesses come off? she wondered. She wanted hers gone.

Roxanne flushed, stepped out, washed her hands, went to the service port and retrieved her meal. Gabrielle considered holding her urine, but she imagined suffering with a full bladder for an uncertain amount of time and decided to get it over with.

She smiled at Roxanne as their paths crossed, and Roxanne, holding her meal, touched her shoulder with her free hand, then sat at the usual spot on the floor, Austen already there.

Gabrielle sat at the toilet without closing the curtain, released, and screamed.

“Oh, god, that hurts. Damn! Ow!” she cried. “Fuck!”

Roxanne was on her feet immediately, stepping to Gabrielle and kneeling, taking her hands.

“I should have warned you,” she said. “Second day’s the worst. I’m sorry. I’m sorry.”

Gabrielle reached down, grabbing at the cup, desperate to have it off, helpless to do anything.

“Just get it all out,” Roxanne urged. “Keep going.”

Gabrielle, on the verge of tears, gripped Roxanne’s hands and leaned over, watching the urine spill from the harness cup into the toilet in three neat streams.

“When is it coming off?” Gabrielle gasped.

“Should be any minute now,” Roxanne said.

“God, it hurts.”

Done releasing, Gabrielle watched the cup drain, first in a trickle, then a few drops, then nothing.

“Shake it, if you can,” Roxanne said.

Gabrielle was already shivering, but she bounced on the toilet once or twice, freeing another few drops, then wiped the slots and the rest of the cup. The pain eased slightly once the cup was empty, but she was still shaking as she flushed, stood, and staggered to the port for breakfast.

Queasy and miserable, she dropped to her knees with the other girls, afraid to sit all the way down.

Penelope was still in bed, but sitting up and looking at Gabrielle sympathetically. “The person you most wanted to see is here,” she said, gesturing toward the hall.

A male employee Gabrielle hadn’t seen before was at the bars, leashes draped over his arm.

Roxanne rose, helped Gabrielle to her feet.

“Hey, Matthew, we’ve been waiting for you,” Roxanne said.

“Gabrielle, this is Matthew.”

“Hi, Matthew,” Gabrielle said, one arm rising unconsciously until her forearm was across her nipples. This was the first male employee she’d seen since Bruce yesterday morning, and she felt a sudden wave of modesty.

“Hi, Gabrielle,” he replied, apparently not even remotely interested in ogling her. He was blond-headed, tall, lean, his voice a little soft, but Gabrielle didn’t think he was gay. She wondered what it would be like to be a boy and have to work with dozens of naked girls. He must be used to it, she thought.

“Matthew’s going to take off your harness and give you some cream for your ring,” Roxanne said. “Right, Matthew?”

“I didn’t bring cream,” Matthew said. “But they’ll have some in production. Come on to the port, Gabrielle.”

Gabrielle obeyed, backing up to it, felt the key in the lock, felt the harness loosen, then begin to slip down her legs. She caught it, stepped out of it and passed it through the port to Matthew.

“Is it supposed to hurt?” she asked. She wanted to look at her opening, at the ring in her lip. It felt like the metal had torn through her folds, or given her the worst infection of her life. But she wasn’t going to inspect her sex organ while Matthew stood there.

“It’s normal on the second day,” Matthew said, “especially if you pee while you’re harnessed. Anything salty is going to sting.”

“It’s more than a sting,” Gabrielle said.

“Is it getting better?”

“Yeah,” Gabrielle said. “I almost fainted on the toilet. Now it just hurts like hell.”

“Today will be the worst day,” he said. “Back up again so I can get your leash in.”

Gabrielle obeyed, Matthew slid the plug up her anus and locked it, and she moved to the door of the entry cage.

“We’re not going out quite yet,” Roxanne told her, bending at the port to accept her leash.

As soon as Matthew moved on to the next stall to leash Austen and Penelope, Gabrielle picked up the free end of her leash and moved to her bed, spreading her legs and holding her tag out of the way to inspect her genitals.

To her surprise, while her lip was bright red right around the two piercings that held the ring, the rest of her vulva was its normal, healthy pink. No tears, no rips, no blazing infection.

Roxanne sat on the bed beside her. “I promise it’ll get better,” she said. “Maybe by tonight.”

“What’s that cream you were talking about?” Gabrielle inquired. “I want it now.”

“Matthew should have brought it. But ask for it in production. In the meantime, rinsing should help a little.”

“How do I rinse?”

Roxanne stepped to her cabinet, pulled out the vaginal hook, slipped it up her sheath and looped her leash around it. She opened Gabrielle’s cabinet next, pulled out a wash rag.

“Do you want your hook?” she asked.

“You mean, to put inside me?”

“Yeah. You’re not supposed to let your leash drag on the floor.”

“Oh, god,” Gabrielle said. “Is there an alternative?”

“You can wrap it around your waist, but it’s harder to shower that way, and it tends to come loose.”

“We’re showering?”

“Yeah,” Roxanne said, laughing. “I hope that’s not a surprise.”

“I hadn’t even thought about it.”

“Well, first things first,” Roxanne said, running water over the rag. “Go to the toilet and let me rinse you.”

Gabrielle stood, holding her leash in her hand, went to the toilet and sat, legs spread, her vulva burning.

Roxanne, water dripping from her hand and the rag, knelt before her. Gabrielle leaned back and Roxanne held the rag against her belly, squeezing it, warm water streaming out, down to her vulva, across her lips, over the ring.

“Ow,” Gabrielle said quietly. “Ow. Ow.”

But the water helped, the pain almost back to its level at first of the morning, and after resting on the toilet, she joined the other girls for breakfast on the floor, sitting gingerly, hoping they didn’t mind the fuss she’d made earlier.

The food here was consistently good, Gabrielle decided, looking for anything to appreciate. Breakfast was scrambled eggs, sausage, a biscuit, juice, two pills of unknown purpose, and she tore through it, concentrating on the taste and not her vulva, listening to the other girls gossip about people she hadn’t met yet.

A girl named Carmen, who’d been too shy to do anything in the production room since she’d arrived six months ago, finally succumbed

yesterday, Gabrielle learned, and her initiation to open sex had been both enthusiastic and surprisingly loud.

As they talked, Gabrielle's eyes wandered over the bodies of the other girls, noting the similarities, and the differences. Each girl approached her vaginal hook uniquely while she sat, and Gabrielle wondered if she could assume character traits based on that.

Austen was the most casual with hers, allowing the loops of her leash to fall wherever – across her ankle, jumbled under her bottom.

Roxanne was the most fastidious, coiling up the links neatly between her ankles and vulva after she sat.

Penelope was somewhere in the middle, wadding up her leash in a pile beside her thigh, then picking it up and rearranging it absently as she talked.

“Why did they leash everyone already?” Gabrielle asked.

“Morning's the busiest time,” Roxanne replied. “They want to get everyone to production by 8, so they put our leashes in first thing to prevent delays.”

“I get milked at 8,” Gabrielle said. “And that guy put my leash in I guess around 7. So, for an hour . . .”

“Yeah, only thing you'll be doing is peeing,” Austen said.

“Unless you've got your hook in,” Penelope said. “Then you won't be doing anything.”

“But that's optional,” Gabrielle observed, hoping no one would contradict her.

“Yeah, but strongly recommended,” Roxanne said. “Feel brave enough to give it a try?”

“Okay,” Gabrielle replied, moving to rise until Roxanne touched her arm. “Stay, I'll get it.”

Roxanne jumped up, leash swinging between her thighs, stepped to Gabrielle's cabinet, grabbed the vaginal hook and sat back down.

“You know how it works?” Roxanne asked.

“Hook goes on the outside,” Austen advised.

“God, Austen, she's not an idiot,” Penelope said.

“Uh, I was joking?” Austen said, inflecting to make her statement a question.

Gabrielle, not ready to laugh at Austen's joke, set down her fork, took the object from Roxanne, leaned back and carefully spread her lips,

easing her tag out of the way.

She found a little moisture at her opening, not much but more than she'd expected. Apparently, her sheath pumped out fluid in response to any stimulation, good or bad.

She put the tip against her pink slot, eased the object in slowly. It was smooth enough that she didn't have to be soaked to accept it. With steady pressure, she was able to embed it in her chamber in less than a minute.

It felt good, its undulating thickness a strange but not unwelcome sensation. She hadn't had an orgasm since yesterday afternoon, and since then, she'd witnessed a half-dozen sex acts, had her nipples sucked repeatedly and her anus penetrated just as often. If she were alone, she knew, she would immediately set about the business of pleasure, thrusting with the vaginal hook until the crushing relief of an orgasm erased the pain elsewhere between her legs.

With three new friends studying her, however, she limited her reaction to a single grunt.

"It's thicker than I expected," she said, looking up from her middle.

"Well done," Roxanne said. "Now you just have to put your leash on it."

"It's easiest if you stand, or at least get up on your knees," Austen said.

Gabrielle opted for knees, rose up and allowed her leash to drop down between her legs.

"You'll want to hook it two times," Roxanne said and she grabbed Gabrielle's leash and pointed at two places along its length. "Start with the links here and here, and make sure the hook goes through them both."

Gabrielle did as suggested, sliding two links over the hook.

Her leash, now shortened by two thirds, barely touched the floor while she was on her knees. She dropped back down to her bottom, crossed her legs and arranged the restraint carefully, the way Roxanne had done.

Roxanne squeezed her shoulder, but Gabrielle received no other encouragement from the girls. Nor did she expect any, given how minor this accomplishment was.

"Last piece of advice," Roxanne said, finishing breakfast. "Don't let it get tangled up. If you hand your leash to someone and there's a knot in it, that's a unit."

“Of punishment?” Gabrielle asked.

“Yeah.”

“That’s just harsh,” Gabrielle protested. “I know I’ve said this before, but the rules here are . . . just kinda strict.”

“Tight ship,” Roxanne said simply.

“And we’re running late, you know,” Austen said.

“I know, I know,” Roxanne said, rising. “Gabrielle, finished?”

“Yeah,” Gabrielle said, shoving a sausage and half a biscuit into her mouth. “What’s supposed to happen now?”

“Reports,” Roxanne said. “Silverware in the sink, tray back where you got it.”

Gabrielle stood carefully, making sure not to get her leash tangled in her feet or legs, and joined Roxanne at the service port, where two small cards had been placed.

“Okay, get your pen,” Roxanne said, handing one of the cards to Gabrielle.

Chapter 18: Morning Routine

Gabrielle took the card, retrieved the pen from her cabinet and sat on her bed, Roxanne beside her.

“Put your number up there,” she said, pointing to a blank at the top of the card. “Do you remember what it is?”

Gabrielle spread her legs and bent over to read the tiny characters engraved into her ring.

“Yeah, 1512-083,” she said.

“You’ll want to be able to say it without having to look.”

“Or I’ll be punished?” Gabrielle asked, half joking.

“Yeah,” Roxanne replied, apparently being serious. “Just the last part, anyway. 83. The first part’s the facility number, so it’s the same for everyone.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said, looking at the ceiling. “83. 83.” She looked at Roxanne. “What’s yours?”

Roxanne stood, turned and grabbed the top of her mound, stretching her hairless vulva for Gabrielle’s inspection.

“You could just tell me,” Gabrielle said, but she leaned forward, found the ring embedded among Roxanne’s pink folds, white tag dangling from it, reached up, tentatively, to turn it so it could be read.

“You can just yank on it,” Roxanne said.

“I don’t want to hurt you.”

“It’s been there for ten years. It’s as much a part of me as my clit.”

Indeed, the silver ring looked like a part of Roxanne, as natural in her sex as a ring on someone’s finger.

Gabrielle had never touched a girl’s sex organ before, but she took Roxanne’s advice, pulled the ring away from her body and read the number. “1512-005.”

“Yup.”

“That means you were the fifth one here?”

“Yeah.”

“Ten years ago?”

“Uh huh.”

Roxanne sat. “So write your number there.”

Gabrielle wrote down her own number, scanned the rest of the card.

The first section was headed “Orgasms, Last 24 Hours.” In the first column were four words on four rows: “Masturbation,” “Staff Member,” “Female Partner,” and “Male Partner.”

There were five columns to the right: “Production Room,” “Stall, Day,” “Stall, Half Light,” “Stall, Lights Out” and “Other (List).”

“I’m lost,” Gabrielle confessed.

“Okay, you had an orgasm in production yesterday, right?”

Roxanne said.

“Yeah.”

“Just one?”

“Yeah.”

“And Arwen masturbated you?”

“Yeah.”

“So find the row that says ‘Staff Member.’”

“Found it.”

“And it happened in the production room, here. So put a one on that line.”

Gabrielle wrote the number one where Roxanne tapped the card.

“Were you penetrated?”

“What do you mean?”

“Did she put anything up your vagina?”

“Uh, no. I mean, her finger I guess, but not a toy or dildo or whatever, if that’s what you mean.”

“Did you cum any other time yesterday?”

“No.”

“Okay, you’re done with that section. The next one is about milk during sex.”

Gabrielle saw two lines at that part of the card:

“Estimate Ounces Taken”

“Estimate Ounces Given”

“Gonna need help here too,” Gabrielle said.

“Did anyone suck your nipples yesterday?”

“No,” Gabrielle laughed. “I still can’t believe that happens.”

“Did you suck anyone’s nipples?”

“No.”

“Okay, put ‘0’ for both.”

Gabrielle filled in the two numbers.

The bottom of the card said “Notes” and featured five blank lines.

“What goes here?” she asked.

“Anything you want to say. You don’t feel good, you’d like a certain partner in production or brought to your stall or whatever, you’re not happy about something, you’re having cramps. Anything.”

“Should I tell them my pussy hurts and I almost died when I peed this morning?”

“No,” Gabrielle replied. “They already know that.”

“Okay, I’m just gonna leave it blank then.”

Roxanne quickly filled out her own card, recording one orgasm with a male partner in production and one masturbation orgasm in her stall during the day, then scratched a “P” and “V” next to each number.

“What do the letters mean?” Gabrielle asked.

“Penetration,” Roxanne replied. “And vagina. The boy put his penis up my vagina, and I used the dildo on myself. You put M for mouth, A for anus.”

“When did you masturbate?”

“Yesterday evening, while you were at your last milking.”

“Is that when you usually do it?”

“No, usually I wait until lights out. But I knew I needed to get it done earlier last night.”

“Since they were going to put those things on us?”

“Yeah.”

“Sorry about that.”

“It’s not your fault,” Roxanne said.

“You didn’t have to have me as your stallmate. Isn’t that optional?”

“It’s strongly encouraged, though, for me, ‘cuz I’ve been here awhile. And I get benefits.”

“What kind of benefits?”

“Points, sometimes. And I get to meet the new girls.”

“Are you bi?”

“Sort of. Yeah.”

“So that’s why they harnessed you too? They’re afraid you’re going to do something to me?”

Roxanne laughed. “You don’t mind getting right to the point, do you?”

“No. Kind of like everyone else here.”

“But it’s not just to prevent interaction,” Roxanne said. “If they didn’t harness me, I might masturbate, and if I wasn’t discreet, you’d know, and that might make you frustrated.”

“But our neighbors, uh,” Gabrielle observed, gesturing toward Penelope and Austen, who were washing up at the sink.

“They should probably harness them too,” Roxanne said, “but I guess since we can’t get to them, it’s not considered necessary.”

“Okay.”

“Did you watch?” Roxanne asked.

“Some.”

“Did you . . . was it . . . interesting?”

“I guess,” Gabrielle said. “I’ve never seen girls have sex before. I’ve never seen most of what I saw yesterday. I’m kind of overwhelmed.”

Gabrielle heard a commotion at the bars, looked up to see Matthew holding a chain with a half dozen girls fastened to it, one male too, who wasn’t Cameron Flasche.

“Your ride’s here,” Gabrielle said.

Roxanne laughed, unhooked her leash from her vaginal hook, set the hook in the sink and headed to the door.

Gabrielle guessed the boy was Dan, who grew up poor, she’d been told, and was the best-looking, they said. He wasn’t, but he looked like a movie star, with a heavy jaw and eyes that could see a million miles.

Roxanne and Penelope were let into the entry cage, handed over their leashes and took their positions at the front of the group chain, its members murmuring greetings, touching arms, smiling as they were led off.

“Still hurting, Gabrielle?” Austen inquired.

“Yeah, but not as bad,” Gabrielle replied, drifting to the bars that separated her stall from Austen’s. She looked down, still getting used to having a chain hanging from her holes “I’m supposed to get some cream or something in production.”

Gabrielle heard the door into the block clang shut, and Arwen appeared, waved but kept walking, to the stalls at the end.

“What’s going on?” Gabrielle asked.

“Boards,” Austen said, “then shower time.”

“With our leashes in?”

“Yeah, just wash around them.”

“What do you mean by boards?”

“Your space on the wall,” Austen said, pointing. “With your name and number and schedule. You can decorate it. Draw stuff on it.”

“Why?” Gabrielle asked.

“It’s just something some people like to do. You don’t have to.”

Gabrielle heard voices, stall doors opening and closing, and then Arwen was at their stalls, unlocking all the doors so they could pass into the hall without pausing in the entry cage.

“I heard it’s hurting today,” Arwen said.

“Yup,” Gabrielle agreed. Even if she got the fabled cream everyone kept promising, she couldn’t imagine wanting sexual relief today, from Arwen or anyone else.

Gabrielle looked toward the showers at the end of the block, saw that Helen and another girl, from the next stalls over, were showering, chatting quietly to each other as they rubbed shampoo into their hair.

Austen went straight to her space on the wall, erased a huge cat’s face, grabbed several colored markers, uncapped the blue one and wrote “Austen + Penny” in elaborate, flowery letters, surrounding it with a heart.

Gabrielle, not sure Austen was being sincere or ironic, couldn’t keep from laughing regardless. Austen uncapped a red marker and stepped over to Penelope’s space. “Make sure to look at what I drew,” she wrote in the lower corner, adding an arrow pointing up to her profession of love. Or whatever she was professing.

“What are you going to put on your space?” she asked.

“I have no idea,” Gabrielle said. She stared at the white expanse under her name and schedule, unable to conjure even the beginnings of what she might do with it. She could just put up an animal poster, she thought, like some of the other girls had done. She was no artist, so trying to draw something was out of the question.

She looked at Roxanne’s space, wasn’t surprised to see that it contained mostly names, a few with simple drawings of faces or bodies next to them. But one name, Vanessa, included a message: “Vanessa, I swear I’ll always love you, and I’m saving all my points for you!”

“Who’s Vanessa?” Gabrielle asked.

“Roxanne’s last stallmate.”

“Sounds like they were close.”

Austen just laughed.

“How long were they together?”

“Three months.”

“And they split them up because of me?”

“Don’t worry about it,” Austen said.

“Is she on this block?”

“Yeah, the second stall. Red hair.”

“I’ve seen her,” Gabrielle said. “She was sleeping when I first got here.”

“She’s nice.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said, feeling mild twinges of both guilt and jealousy.

“Bath time,” Austen announced, looking toward the showers, where Helen and the other girl were toweling off. She put up her pens and moved toward the end of the block.

Gabrielle said hi to Helen and was introduced to the other girl, Linda, who greeted her with the customary hug. Helen was still bearing in her ear and labia the red tag of a girl in menstruation but, like everyone else, she was wearing the vaginal hook. Gabrielle, who never wanted anything inside her during her period other than a tampon – certainly not a penis or anything else for pleasure – reminded herself that the vaginal hook was simply a tool, inserted temporarily for convenience, and not meant to provide relief.

Helen and Linda hung up their towels, headed toward their spaces on the wall to be creative, and Austen and Gabrielle bathed quickly, just 10 minutes to go until their 8 a.m. milking.

The soapy water hurt as much as Gabrielle expected, but she was prepared for it, summing up her misery with a quiet “fuck, damn” while Austen looked over with a supportive smile.

A little before 8, dried and refreshed, Arwen directed all four girls back to their stalls to put up their hooks and finish getting ready. Gabrielle brushed her teeth, looked into the mirror and fluffed up her hair. Done at the sink, she looked through the bars, surprised to find Austen putting on makeup, a little liner around her eyes, bright red lipstick. She thought about the girls’ faces she’d seen, realized that many of them bore the benefits of color.

“Where did you get that?” Gabrielle asked.

“The makeup?”

“We all get some. You probably did too.”

Gabrielle checked her cabinet, saw that, indeed, there was eye-liner and lipstick there. Now remembering that it was in the bag of things she got from Esther yesterday, she pulled out the lipstick, passed it quickly over her mouth, and joined Austen in the entry cage, where they were locked in to wait for the next group leash.

Matthew arrived a minute after 8, quickly added all eight remaining girls from the block to the chain.

Gabrielle ended up beside Vanessa, Roxanne’s last stallmate. The girl glanced at her, looked away, so Gabrielle decided to cut through the awkwardness.

“You’re Vanessa?”

“Yeah,” she said, smiling more warmly than Gabrielle had expected.

“I’m Gabrielle.”

“Nice to meet you,” she said, offering her hand in a strange ritual of formality as they negotiated the door that led from the block.

“You were in Roxanne’s stall, I think,” Gabrielle said.

“I was,” she replied. “My first three months.”

Gabrielle found herself at a complete loss for words. What else could she say?

“Well, nice to meet you,” Gabrielle finally stammered at the entrance to the production room.

Vanessa said nothing in reply as Matthew swung the door open.

The room was as busy as Gabrielle had ever seen it, a girl at almost every milking station, a chain of seven girls and a boy being led out, two boys talking to girls, crouched in front of them while the girls were emptied.

Gabrielle and the other females were deposited and restrained one by one, wherever Matthew could find an empty station.

Gabrielle ended up near the middle of the room, cuffing her own ankles, Arwen there to chain her wrists.

“You didn’t tie your hair back,” Arwen observed, kneeling beside Gabrielle.

“Oh, sorry,” Gabrielle said.

Arwen rose up on her knees, fished two black tags out of her pocket, dropped them on the floor just beyond Gabrielle’s reach.

“Ready for a full day of this?” she asked.

“I think so,” Gabrielle replied. “But is there something you can put on my ring?”

“Yeah, I’ll get to that.”

Arwen pulled Gabrielle’s hair away from her shoulders, fastened the collar around her neck, wiped her nipples and the collection cups and clamped them on, the machine quickly beginning its work.

“I’ll be right back,” Arwen said, touching Gabrielle’s shoulder.

“Okay.”

Gabrielle heard a grunt, glanced over quickly to see that one of the boys was being devoured by the female before him, almost all of his penis pulled into her mouth.

Gabrielle heard other sounds, a quick staccato gasping, saw the tell-tale motions of females relieving themselves on the posts set behind them, and she looked down at the floor in misery and closed her eyes.

“What did you do?” asked a female voice.

Chapter 19: Discipline

Gabrielle looked up, saw Grendl crouching before her, holding the two black tags.

“Huh?”

“What did you do?”

“When?”

“Why did you get discipline tags?”

“What are you talking about?”

“These are discipline tags. Why did you get them?”

“Oh,” Gabrielle said, a sick sense of understanding slowly dawning. “Oh, no. Okay. Uh, Arwen said I didn’t tie my hair back. I mean, does that matter?”

Grendl said nothing, just drew a small tool from her pocket, leaned forward and attached one of the tags to the ring in Gabrielle’s ear. Gabrielle looked down at the tubes running from her nipples, a tiny air bubble here and there indicating that her milk was flowing heavily this morning, while Grendl stepped behind her.

“Ow,” Gabrielle said as soon as Grendl’s fingers touched her labial ring. She was prepared to scream, and she gasped through several more tugs on the metal set into her genitals, but Grendl’s work was both quick and delicate, tagging Gabrielle for punishment almost painlessly, in a matter of seconds.

Grendl moved on and Gabrielle tried to process what had just happened. A woman she considered a friend had just selected her for punishment.

She desperately tried to remember everything she’d been told about discipline: Everyone gets punished. Punishment is no big deal. There’s a room where it’s done. They beat the girl’s bottom, but they do other things as well.

“Open your legs a little and arch your back for me,” Arwen said from behind Gabrielle.

Gabrielle complied, felt a finger at her labia, cried out as her ring and lip were pressed, then it felt like Arwen was touching her with ice, and suddenly, the pain was almost gone, just a slight numbness there.

“Oh, god, thank you,” Gabrielle said.

“So, it’s helping?”

“A lot,” Gabrielle replied.

“Good. The relief should last a few hours, at least.”

“Okay, thanks.”

Gabrielle paused.

“Arwen?”

“Yeah?” Arwen stepped around to Gabrielle’s front, but she kept standing, so all Gabrielle could look at comfortably were her legs.

“So, I’m going to get punished?”

“Yes, you got a single unit.”

“For not tying my hair back?”

“Yes, you should have done that.”

“Sorry. I forgot.”

“I know. It happens all the time, especially to the new girls.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said. “But what happens now?”

“Whoever comes to leash you will see the tag and walk you to discipline. It’ll probably be Greta.”

“How long will it take?”

“It depends on what you choose.”

“I have a choice?”

“Usually. It depends on how many other girls are in there.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said.

For the rest of her milking, Gabrielle tried to focus on the relief between her legs. Surely nothing they would do to her could hurt as badly as what she’d felt on the toilet this morning. This would be an annoyance, and nothing more, she decided. Just something to get through. And she wouldn’t forget to tie her hair back again.

Still, her heart fluttered when she heard the machines start beeping, one after another. A lot of the girls were finishing at the same time, and she guessed she was one of them.

“Arch your back, relax your anus,” Grendl said, and Gabrielle did so, surprised at how gently the woman who managed punishment was treating her.

Grendl pushed the leash into her body, locked it and opened her cuffs, allowing Gabrielle to free her own ankles.

“Discipline’s this way,” Grendl said, leading Gabrielle to the back of the production room.

Gabrielle’s earlier misery returned with all its fury as she walked down the room’s center aisle, one girl relieving herself on a pole, thrusting obscenely against it as she moaned, another groaning as she was ravished by one of the males, kneeling behind her and thrusting almost violently up her vagina.

Gabrielle hadn’t noticed the door at the back of production before, but now it loomed large before her, a simple gray portal labeled “Discipline.”

Grendl unlocked it and Gabrielle stepped in behind her, sucking in her breath as her imaginations of this place met reality.

Directly before her, seven girls were being held in various positions of discomfort. Three were hanging by their wrists along the wall, just the tips of their toes and the ends of their leashes touching the floor. Two stood with their heads and hands secured between two boards, a punishment Gabrielle immediately recognized as medieval, and something she never imagined she’d witness in real life. Two more were seated, but suffering a punishment just as primitive, ankles and wrists clamped between two sets of boards, leashes draped over their thighs.

All the girls facing her looked at her when she entered, and one smiled. Gabrielle smiled back, then thought better of it. This wasn’t a happy place.

Several of the girls gazing at her looked familiar, but she knew none of their names.

To the right, three more girls simply stood, their anal leashes padlocked to the tops of waist-high posts set into the floor.

“Stress or corporal?” Grendl asked.

“I don’t know what that means,” Gabrielle said. “This is my first time here.”

“I can put you in a stress position for 45 minutes,” she said, pointing at the area where the bound girls suffered, “or you can do corporal punishment, just get three swats and go.”

“Corporal,” Gabrielle said quickly. She didn’t want to be here any longer than necessary.

“I swing hard,” Grendl said.

“That’s fine,” Gabrielle replied.

Grendl led Gabrielle toward the girls who were leashed to posts, padlocking her anal restraint to the top of the next post in the row.

“I’ll be back in a few,” she said. “No talking.”

She exited the room, and Gabrielle continued her survey of punishment. The far wall was lined with ten tiny cages, like the holding pen where Esther had put her on her first day. One girl had been caged there, and Gabrielle looked at her, but she never raised her eyes from the floor. How long was she being held here? Gabrielle wondered.

Along the adjacent wall, eight doors stood side by side, the numbers one through eight stenciled on them sequentially, and “Isolation Stalls” stenciled in large letters above the row.

Each door had a small window at eye level, with a small cover that was latched closed, and a larger opening at hip level, also covered and latched, that Gabrielle assumed was where leashes were inserted and removed. She tried to imagine being brought there, after each milking, being locked in, bending to have her leash removed, then doing nothing. For hours. She shivered.

She returned her gaze to the girls in the stress area. The girls in the seated stocks faced the entrance, but the stocks where girls were forced to stand faced the corporal area, and Gabrielle noticed something familiar about one of them.

“Oh, hey, Roxanne,” she said, startled, forgetting talking was forbidden.

“Hey, Gabrielle,” Roxanne said, waving awkwardly, the same smile she always wore spreading across her face.

“How did you end up here?” Gabrielle asked. “I mean, can you tell me? Are we supposed to be quiet? Sorry.”

“It’s okay,” Roxanne said, tilting her head toward the door into the production room. “Just stop when the door opens.”

Roxanne paused, shifted her feet, her leash swinging between her legs. “They didn’t like my little performance when they harnessed us last night.”

“It was funny,” Gabrielle protested.

“Not to Bea,” Roxanne replied. “How about you? Ribbon?”

“Yeah, I forgot,” Gabrielle said, raising her hands to her hair, bunching it up in the back in an act of futile penance.

“I should have reminded you!”

“I’ll remember next time, I’m sure,” Gabrielle said.

“This is your first time here?” asked the girl secured closest to Gabrielle in corporal.

“Yeah,” replied Gabrielle, turning to her, recognizing her immediately as the girl she’d seen during her first milking, giving oral sex to George. She was big-boned, thick but well-proportioned, her black hair longer than Gabrielle’s, tied back with the red ribbon Gabrielle had envied. She was pretty, Gabrielle thought, with dark eyes and a sloping nose, lipstick in a bright shade of red. She’d allowed her pubic hair to grow wild, a thick covering that completely hid her vulva.

“I just got here yesterday afternoon,” Gabrielle added, finding that conversation took her mind off her fears. Maybe that was part of the reason it was forbidden.

“So it took me less than twenty-four hours to get into trouble.”

The girl laughed. “Some girls go in the day they get here,” she said. “I’m Beverly, by the way.”

“Gabrielle. Nice to meet you.”

“Where’s your stall? I’m in block two.”

“Block three,” Gabrielle replied. “Roxanne’s my stallmate.”

Beverly looked at the door, made a mock terrified face and closed her mouth. Grendl was there, leading in two more girls by their leashes. No one spoke as she walked them to the isolation stalls. The girls opened the doors and stepped in. Each space was no more than four feet wide, perhaps eight feet deep, with a toilet at the end, and nothing else, not even a mattress to rest on. No pictures on the walls, no window, nothing. Just blank walls and a toilet.

Grendl closed and bolted the doors shut, opened the lower ports, removed each girl’s leash, latched the port door closed again, and put the leashes in a sink, presumably for cleaning.

As Gabrielle watched her, anxiety building, she stepped to a cabinet, pulled out a long black rod, and turned toward Gabrielle and the other girls.

Grendl stepped to the first girl. “Post or knees?”

The girl turned and bent, placing her hands on the top of the post where her leash was fastened.

Grendl stood back and, holding the rod with both hands like a baseball bat, swung against the girl’s bottom. The girl grunted, just a simple

“Uh.” On the second swat, she cried out in distress, and the third provoked a quick scream. The girl continued to hold the post, her face red, breath shallow, as Grendl moved to the next girl.

“Post or knees?” Grendl inquired.

The girl stepped away from her post and bent, hands on her kneecaps.

“Back up a little,” Grendl said.

The girl took two steps back, pulling her leash taut, and Grendl swung, three times, hard, the sound of wood against flesh echoing in Gabrielle’s mind. The girl grimaced but had no other reaction, and Grendl moved to Beverly.

Beverly grabbed the padlock that secured her leash.

“Ow! Ow! Damn!” Beverly shouted as she suffered through the three blows.

By the time Grendl finished with Beverly, Gabrielle was in full-fledged panic.

“Can this wait?” she asked.

“Nope.”

“Can I do the other thing?” she asked. “The, um, stress thing?”

“You made your choice. Post or knees?”

“I don’t know, I don’t know which to choose,” Gabrielle babbled. “What will hurt less?”

“Just choose.”

“Knees?” Gabrielle asked. She meant it as a question, but Grendl took it as a decision.

“Bend over then, hands on your knees.”

Gabrielle, in a frenzy of humiliation and uncertainty, bent over, straightened and looked at Grendl, bent over again, put her hands on her thighs, lowered them to her knees, and was considering trying to touch her toes when the first slap rang out.

She heard the sound of her first spank before she felt it, sharp and frightening, quickly followed by the sensation of burning, of something violating her.

“Ow, damn,” she said.

The second swat was harder.

“Ow, stop,” she protested, but she held still for the third, and it landed with a stinging intensity.

“Oh, god, that hurts.”

She wanted to sit, and wondered if her leash was long enough to allow that comfortably, when a fourth blow landed on her tender rear.

“Ow!” she cried. “Four?”

“The last one was for talking,” Grendl said. “You were told not to talk.”

“Oh,” Gabrielle said, fighting tears. “Sorry.”

“Who were you talking to?” she asked.

“Huh?”

“Who else was talking?”

“Oh, no,” Gabrielle said. “Oh, I’m so sorry. I’m not . . . I’m not sure.”

“You know,” Grendl said. “Tell me, or you’ll get hers too.”

“That’s fine,” Gabrielle said, deciding that suffering in Beverly’s place was far preferable to telling on her. She grabbed her knees and steeled herself for the fifth swat.

“I was talking too,” Beverly said.

Grendl stepped back to Beverly, and the girl bent, grabbed her post and accepted her fourth swat with another “Damn!”

Grendl stepped to the cabinet, put up the rod and pulled out a long group chain.

Gabrielle looked at Beverly, working through the morality of what had just happened. Beverly looked back, smiled ironically. They’d talked, they’d been caught, they both got an extra swat, so what? she seemed to be saying. That’s all there was. But Gabrielle was thankful Beverly had confessed, and she looked at her new friend with gratitude.

Grendl put Gabrielle, Beverly and the two other girls in corporal on the group leash first, then freed Roxanne and a second girl, passed the chain through their leashes as well and walked them to the wall, where she padlocked the end of the group chain to a ring.

Using her little tool, she went down the line, first removing the black punishment tag from each girl’s ear, then scooting on one knee to remove the black tags from each girl’s genitals. Gabrielle noticed that removal of the lower tag followed a certain protocol: As soon as Grendl knelt before the girl’s vulva, the girl would spread her legs, feet planted a yard apart, pelvis thrust forward, making her ring as accessible as possible. As soon as the tag came off, the girl would stand casually again.

Gabrielle followed suit, legs wide, sex tilted forward, relieved to have the black tag gone, relieved that Grendl removed it gently, making sure it didn't hurt, even if the pain of the swats lingered. She touched her bottom, noticed it felt hot where she'd been struck, and she knew it must look as bad as Beverly's behind, and the rears of the other two girls, long red welts where the rod had landed.

Once all the girls had been relieved of their punishment tags, Grendl dropped them into a basket on the desk by the door, letting them fall together with a dull clink, and Gabrielle imagined they'd be washed and quickly handed out again to Arwen and the other staffers, to be affixed to the next girl who dared to be disobedient, or merely forgetful.

Their time in the room complete, their chain was removed from the wall and Grendl walked them out of the punishment room through the second door, the one that led down a hall Gabrielle hadn't seen before.

On the right she saw a door that said "Clinic/Infirmary" and a little further on, a second door, "Commons."

She heard laughter from the latter door, someone shouting at someone. At the window, she glanced quickly in while they turned the corner back toward the residential hall. She saw three girls at the table just inside the window, nude, playing a board game, money and playing pieces scattered about. One laughed, looked up at her and her compatriots, looked away, and Gabrielle guessed she knew where Gabrielle and the others on the chain had been.

The girls were returned without further ceremony to their stalls. As soon as Gabrielle and Roxanne were locked into theirs, Roxanne turned and, with a sigh of deep mourning, turned to embrace Gabrielle, her head on Gabrielle's shoulder, one hand stroking her hair, the other at the small of her back.

She might have thought Gabrielle was going to cry, because after 15 seconds of hugging, she leaned back to look into Gabrielle's eyes.

Gabrielle, however, considered herself entirely without need of comforting, fully recovered from the little ordeal, at least emotionally.

Her bottom still stung of course, but her labia was numb, and Gabrielle wondered if the numbness was due to the cream Arwen had applied, or if being spanked had taken her mind off the pain in front.

"You're okay?" Roxanne whispered.

"I am," Gabrielle said. "I'm fine, I promise."

“Where have you two been?” Austen demanded.

“Grendl’s lair,” Roxanne replied.

“You were both there?” Penelope inquired from her bed, and Gabrielle wondered if she’d been masturbating.

“Yeah, they got us both,” Roxanne said, stepping to the bars.

“What did you choose?”

“Standing stocks,” Roxanne said. “I always do stocks.”

Gabrielle twisted to look at her rear, pointed to the fading welt.

“What did you bitches do?” Austen laughed.

“No hair ribbon,” Gabrielle said.

“Bea wrote me up for dancing,” Roxanne said.

“Dancing?” Austen echoed.

“Well, twirling or whatever it was I did last night, while she was harnessing us.”

“I knew that would happen,” Penelope said. “What was all that about?”

“I was just having fun,” Roxanne said. “I’ve done it before and no one cared.”

“Bea’s totally PMSing,” Austen said.

“Oh, my god, I know,” Penelope said. “She’s sweet as hell except for one week every month.”

“They should make staff wear tags for their cycles, like they put on us,” Austen said. “So we’ll know what to expect.”

Chapter 20: An Understanding Between Stallmates

The rest of the day was uneventful and, Gabrielle noticed by dinner, not terrible given all that had already happened. The food was good, the girls she was stalled with were consistently amusing, and milking was as she expected, a room full of girls and the occasional boy, some getting pleasure, some just there to get their job done, a steady rhythm to things she was beginning to find comforting.

Cameron Flasche was there during her third milking, talking to one of the girls, crouching before her. Gabrielle closed her eyes until her machine beeped, and wished she could cover her ears. She wasn't jealous. She just didn't want to see it, or hear it. In her mind, Cameron Flasche had always made love to her in a bed, alone, privately, not in a bustling production room where his function was to ram his semen into girls three times per day.

Gabrielle didn't want to see anyone, for that matter. She wasn't going to do anything today. The numbness persisted between her legs, and that was in some ways less amenable to arousal than pain. So the final milking of the day came as a great relief, and she walked back to her stall with George and the other girls almost giddy, joking with George about the things he did, what he liked.

It was Arwen who came to harness them that night, and Roxanne was, if anything, more animated than the night before, twirling, moaning as the belt was tightened, thrusting obscenely once it was locked. Fortunately, Arwen seemed as amused by Roxanne's antics as Gabrielle was.

Gabrielle slept well again, woke up with no pain but waited until she got her harness off to pee. Her ring hurt a little in the shower, but nothing like the day before. And this morning, when she and Austen went to their spaces on the wall, she received an inspiration: she would draw the woods, and the little creek where she had put her toes on her last day of freedom. She had just a single tree trunk down however before she and Austen went to their stalls to get ready for production.

With lunch, she got a short note from her mother:

“We miss you, Gabi, please write. Love, Mom and Dad.”

Gabrielle inquired, learned that if she put a note at the service port with her parents’ address on it, someone would make sure it got delivered. Maybe she’d write, she told herself. Maybe she wouldn’t. She was sure the Arnolds would tell her parents she was doing fine. What more did they need to know?

Another day of milking, another day of doing her best to ignore the sex and the lovemaking and the sounds and smells. She didn’t want to get frustrated. She didn’t want to get wet and have to be masturbated again. Maybe Cameron Flasche was there. She wasn’t looking for him, because she told herself it didn’t matter.

It had been two days – since Monday – that she’d had an orgasm. She wanted to heal. She didn’t want to get aroused in front of anyone else. She didn’t want to relieve herself in front of anyone else. And, quite simply, she wasn’t aroused. She had become asexual, she told herself. She didn’t want to be that way always, but for now it was fine.

That night, as they waited just before half-light for someone to put their harnesses on, Gabrielle sat on her bed reading a romance novel she borrowed from Austen, and Roxanne crawled down from her own bed and joined her.

“How are you?” she asked.

Gabrielle looked up. “I’m fine.”

“No, I mean, really . . . how are you doing?”

“It’s all going to be relative at this point,” Gabrielle replied. “Today was way better than yesterday.”

“When’s your contract up?”

“Oh, uh, January,” Gabrielle said. “It seems like a million years from now.”

“Think you’ll make it?”

“Make it? To January?”

“Yeah.”

“How could I not make it? It’s not optional.”

“You’d be surprised how many girls are saying ‘Let me out of here!’ by the third day.”

“Oh, god, really?” Gabrielle said. “That’s sad.”

“It is. Especially if they keep giving milk. One of the girls they put with me, last year, she was so homesick she threw up almost every morning. And I told her, don’t worry, your milk’ll dry up and they’ll send you back.”

“Back to where?”

“Prison.”

Gabrielle laughed despite herself. At least one convict considered this place worse than prison.

“Did she go back?”

“No. She’d throw up, and I’d go to her at the toilet, and her milk would be bursting out, both nipples leaking, and she’d look down and just cry.”

“Oh, god.”

Roxanne laughed.

“Why are you laughing?” Gabrielle asked.

“She’s still here. She never left.”

“Is she okay?”

“She adapted. She found a girlfriend.”

“Here?”

“Yeah.”

“They’re in the same stall?”

“No.”

“They’re kept apart? Why?”

“Mutual agreement,” Roxanne explained. “They visit each other all the time, catch up in commons, but they decided not to live together.”

“Oh,” Gabrielle said.

“Do you want to know how that works?”

“How what works?”

“Visits.”

“Yeah, I guess.”

“Once you get three points,” Roxanne said, “you can ask to visit anyone else here. Any boy, any girl. Or you can have them brought to your stall.”

“What if they say no?”

“You can’t ask a girl who doesn’t want to be with a girl. And everyone’s allowed to put some names down of people they don’t want. But the boys can’t say no. They’re here for that. Oh, unless they’re too big.

Some of the girls are too small for some of the boys. Like Dan. He's even kinda hard on me."

"I can ask any boy . . ." Gabrielle began, "into my stall?"

"Yes, or you can go to his stall. It just can't be the same boy."

"What do you mean?"

"You can't keep seeing the same boy, all the time."

"Why not?"

"No steadies allowed."

"No steadies?" Gabrielle repeated. "What are you talking about?"

"No boyfriends."

"Oh, right," Gabrielle said, pondering, trying not to think about Cameron Flasche. "Penelope explained that. But what if two people fall in love with each other?"

"That's their problem."

"It's a problem?" Gabrielle said.

"Just think it through," Roxanne said. "You fall in love with one of the boys. Like, George. Or Al."

"Okay . . ."

"And then you go to the production room, and he's with another girl, or the girl in your stall asks for him, and they're, you know . . ."

Roxanne pointed up, at her bed, above their heads. ". . . doing it."

"You can't help it if you fall in love," Gabrielle argued. "It just happens."

"If you need to fall in love with a boy," Roxanne countered, "fall in love with all five."

Gabrielle laughed. She had been in love with Roger, at times, she thought, and she found it constantly distracting, almost torturously so.

"Loving five boys would kill me," she said. "Loving one almost did, and I didn't even love him that much."

Roxanne laughed. "Just like them all then. As much as you want. The main thing is to keep it equal, and you won't get in trouble."

"Get in trouble? What do you mean?"

"If you keep asking for the same boy, they'll send you to discipline."

"For that?" Gabrielle asked. "Seriously, for that?"

"Yes," Roxanne replied.

“Okay,” Gabrielle said, and now she wasn’t thinking about Cameron Flasche at all, just about the strange justice of this place.

“You’re allowed to have a girlfriend, of course,” Roxanne added.

Gabrielle just stared at the covers, starting to feel guilty. Tomorrow night, they wouldn’t be harnessed. She knew that Roxanne liked girls. She knew that she’d given up Vanessa, a true lover, so she could share her stall with Gabrielle. And Gabrielle wasn’t Vanessa.

Gabrielle was willing to try things with Roxanne, but there would be no spark there, no passion, and Roxanne was going to be disappointed. Maybe a new girl would show up and get Gabrielle’s place, soon, and Gabrielle could share a stall with a girl who didn’t want sex with another girl.

“Hey,” Roxanne said, touching Gabrielle under the chin.

Gabrielle looked up, smiled as sincerely as she could.

“I like you,” Roxanne said.

“You’re the best stallmate I could ask for,” Gabrielle quipped.

Roxanne laughed. “You were funny in discipline today.”

“Oh, god, you suck for watching,” Gabrielle said.

“Front row seat,” Roxanne said. “It’s one of the reasons I always choose the stocks.”

“So you can watch?” Gabrielle asked.

“Yup.”

“You’re a total psycho.”

“Maybe,” Roxanne said, “but I just like to know what’s going on. You hear a girl screaming, you want to know why. It’s human nature.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said, looking over Roxanne’s shoulder. “Bea’s here.”

The girls slid off the bed, stepped to the bars, and accepted their harnesses without further ado. Roxanne, to Gabrielle’s surprise, remained subdued, although she rolled her eyes more than once when Bea couldn’t see her face.

The lights dimmed as Bea was finishing, and Gabrielle and Roxanne went to kiss the girls in the next stall goodnight, then they kissed each other, a long kiss next to the bunk beds, chastity cups clanging together.

Gabrielle dropped to her bed, and Roxanne followed her, sitting on the covers by her shoulder.

“Did it bother you, what Penelope and Austen were doing the other night?”

“No.”

“Did you like it?”

“I don’t know about like. It was interesting. It was okay. But I didn’t watch the whole time.”

“What did you see?”

Gabrielle looked into the other stall. Austen and Penelope were up on Penelope’s bed, but just sitting, facing each other, talking quietly.

“I saw the start,” Gabrielle said, lowering her voice. As open as everything was here, it seemed strange to talk about watching two other people making love. “I saw them kissing. And then, uh, they were wrapped around each other, sort of. Like . . . licking I guess.”

“And then?”

“I fell asleep,” Gabrielle confessed. She was trying to sound casual, but she was feeling that first little twinge of arousal that bloomed into full-blown lust after she lay down at night, when she slept alone and could masturbate without any self-consciousness.

“I didn’t fall asleep,” Roxanne confessed, a wicked gleam in her eye.

“You watched the whole time?”

“Oh yeah.”

“I don’t know if you’re a total psycho, or a total pervert.”

“Can I be both?”

“So they put all the new girls with you?”

“Yeah.”

“This place is just completely twisted.”

“Don’t you love it?” Roxanne said, but her expression immediately changed, became serious.

“Hey, so . . . about tomorrow night.”

“Yeah?”

“You don’t have to do anything with me,” Roxanne said. “Ever.”

“No, that’s okay,” Gabrielle said, a little surprised at how easy her next words were. “I will.”

“Why?”

“Why what?”

“You’re saying you’ll do . . . things with me?”

“Yeah.”

“Why? You don’t like girls.”

“I don’t dislike girls,” Gabrielle said. “I just like boys more. A lot more.”

“Okay.”

“So we can do anything you want,” Gabrielle said. “But I just don’t want you to expect anything. So you won’t be disappointed.”

“You’re a good kisser,” Roxanne said.

“Okay.”

“Seriously. I like kissing you. If you let me kiss you tomorrow, I’ll be totally satisfied.”

“No you won’t.”

Roxanne just laughed, leaned in for another kiss, and when she opened her mouth, Gabrielle did too, letting Roxanne’s tongue touch hers, explore her lips, her teeth. By the time Roxanne pulled away, with a sigh that was part lascivious and part urgent frustration, Gabrielle’s middle was burning, the syrup collecting at her lips, clitoris coming to life after two days of rest.

“See you in the morning,” Roxanne whispered. “Love you.”

“Love you too,” Gabrielle whispered back, watching as Roxanne’s nude form glided from her bed to the bed above.

Once Roxanne was settled above, Gabrielle reached under the covers to grab her cup, pressing her fingers against the three little slots where the urine drained.

She wondered if she’d be able to fall asleep, but not having the option to do anything brought a strange serenity, and she slept well again.

Chapter 21: With Roxanne

Gabrielle's first thoughts when she woke were about her harness, and the fact she would be free of it tonight. She was ambivalent about whatever Roxanne was going to have her do at bedtime, but the freedom was welcome, regardless. It was more than freedom, she thought. It was belonging. She hated the harness not because of what it prevented physically, but because of what it represented – separation from the rest of the girls here. She hated her pink tag for the same reason.

It was Thursday morning. She should be getting white-tagged Saturday.

A sudden, terrifying, inescapably obvious thought burst into her mind all in one piece: as soon as she had her white tag and three points, she could visit Cameron Flasche. In his stall. Or have him brought to hers. On a leash.

With this single revelation, the upheaval of the world as she had known it was complete, no frame of reference for that which was most important, most interesting, most arousing.

Roxanne hadn't stirred yet, so Gabrielle headed to the toilet, nodded to Penelope, who had just flushed, and sat down to try her luck. She couldn't wait any longer.

She released cautiously, just a trickle at first, but her bladder opened of its own accord and soon her cup was full, her urine rushing through the slots with a splash into the water.

She closed her eyes and held her breath, certain her vulva was about to burn with tormenting fire, but she felt almost nothing, just a brief, sharp sting where her ring had been installed, followed by a mild twinge, more an itch than a burn.

She didn't want a boy inside her yet, she was certain of that, but she could already sense the awakening of her natural state: a steady, comfortable desire, a readiness for the exploration of dark thoughts, for touching, for experimenting with the ways her lips and clitoris and hole responded to stimulation. For release. For orgasm.

If nothing else, she could masturbate at lights out, furtively and under the covers, but if Roxanne wanted to touch her the way Arwen had on

her first day, that would be fine. She wouldn't be embarrassed about that.

Gabrielle believed she could pass through the day calmly, waiting for relief that night, but her hormones were growling before Arwen came to push the leash into her rectum, and inserting the vaginal hook was a carnal provocation that would have sent her, under almost any other circumstances, running to the restroom to rub her sex drive into submission. She almost never went more than a day without masturbating, and it had been three now.

At her board with Austen after their shower, she tried to focus on her little drawing of the park, which now had three trees and the start of water, while Austen wrote out another message of love to Penelope. Not a simple heart this time, but a picture of the two of them, standing naked on top of a mountain, arms around each other's waists.

"That's good," Gabrielle observed, trying to think of anything besides her leash, swinging between her legs, tugging lightly on two sensitive holes.

"I took art in middle school," Austen said. "Kinda forgot it, but having a wall to decorate brought it back."

"I guess Penelope didn't go to your school," Gabrielle said, looking at Penelope's space, a poster of a waterfall taped up, and a single message written in black: "Hey, Austen, lov ya!"

"No, she didn't," Austen said. "Plus, she's kind of a bitch. I'm the romantic one."

Gabrielle looked at the number under her name: 3. She'd been given a point for every day of milking, so now she had enough points to ask for Cameron Flasche. She went through the process in her mind. She would fill out the morning report. She would tabulate her orgasms, the milk she had taken and given (zero on both counts, of course), and then, she would write "Raphael" on the lines below. And she would write "In his stall" or "In my stall" after that.

The idea of writing such words, of putting ink on paper to form that message, stirred Gabrielle so forcefully she shook, her hand quaking as it tried to mark out the ripples of water over a stone.

Being milked only eased her desperation slightly. Eight times that day, the production room was a torment where she suffered, a maelstrom of lust, arousal, frustration and uncertainty.

Cameron Flasche was there, doing whatever he did. Gabrielle didn't look.

Others were there too, several service girls, along with George and Al, grinding behind the girls, kneeling before them, the production room a steady cacophony of pleasure and relief Gabrielle wasn't allowed to share.

Back in her stall, she read, she talked to Roxanne and the other girls, she gossiped to the degree she could, and she ached.

She could have gotten onto her bed and taken care of things, and most likely no one would have cared. But if they did – if they watched, or talked about her, or encouraged her – all her lust would have vanished in a puddle of shame.

After the last milking, she and the other girls sat together, the four of them, two in one stall, two in the other, separated by bars.

Gabrielle looked up. It was 9:30. Then she looked down at the floor under her bare vulva and hoped no one else noticed she was leaking, a steady drip of fluid that had persisted all day at the mouth of her sex organ.

She wasn't supposed to start ovulating until Saturday. This was pure lubricant. The tears of unrequited lust.

She heard the sounds of a boy being brought in to one of the stalls further down the block. She heard talking, laughter, and later, something that might have been a grunt of female pleasure.

"Aren't you two supposed to have your harnesses on by now?" Penelope asked.

"We're done with that," Roxanne said. "Gabrielle is all better now. Right, Gabrielle?"

"Not completely," Gabrielle replied, shifting to examine her labia. "Peeing this morning still hurt, a little, and I've felt a twinge here and there. But it definitely looks better, and I'm not dying anymore."

"Are you going to make the most of your freedom?" Austen asked.

"What do you mean?" Gabrielle responded. If Austen was going to ask a dumb question, she thought, she was going to have to answer it herself.

Austen just smiled lecherously.

"When was your last orgasm?" Roxanne asked.

"Monday."

"That was three days ago," Roxanne observed.

"Yeah," Gabrielle said. "I'm kinda going crazy today."

“Crazy, as in, you need to cum?” Austen asked.

“Well, that, yeah, and other things too.”

“Start with cumming,” Roxanne said. “It usually clears out everything else, I’ve found.”

“Yeah,” Gabrielle agreed vaguely, knowing that even the world’s most powerful orgasm couldn’t resolve all the conflict she was feeling.

“Do you want to do something now?” Roxanne asked, and she reached out, brushed Gabrielle’s forearm with her fingers, drew her hand back, as if she were shy.

The gesture surprised Gabrielle. It was the kind of thing a sexual novice would do. Since they’d talked the night before, she’d been anticipating lights out with a mix of dread, resignation and curiosity, imagining herself as Roxanne’s plaything, expected to fulfill whatever it was an experienced lesbian wanted from a teenager. She was going to have to serve as a stand-in for Vanessa, the pretty redhead whom Roxanne still loved. She was going to have to perform.

But now, with a touch, Roxanne had become a new girl – coy, tentative, uncertain – and even if it was altogether an act, it was the act Gabrielle needed.

She looked into Roxanne’s eyes.

“Huh?” she asked, as if she hadn’t heard.

“Do you want to, um . . . be together?”

Austen stood and went to her sink, and Penelope rose to go to the toilet.

“Now?” Gabrielle asked, her voice barely a whisper. “Before lights out?”

“Yeah,” Roxanne said. “If you want.”

Gabrielle put her hands on the floor as if to stand, realized her heart was thumping and she was terrified, dropped again.

“I don’t know what to do,” she quietly confessed.

“Will you come to my bed?” Roxanne asked.

Roxanne stood, offered her hand and Gabrielle allowed herself to be raised off the floor, brought to the ladder that led to the place where Roxanne slept.

Roxanne climbed up first, reached down, guiding Gabrielle up the ladder to her. Gabrielle climbed, crawled across the mattress, both girls on their knees now, facing each other. Roxanne took Gabrielle’s hand and

pulled her up, toward the other end of the bed. Gabrielle, nerves still firing, dropped her head on Roxanne's pillow.

Roxanne lay beside her, propping herself up on her elbow. Gabrielle tried to smile and Roxanne took that as cue enough to kiss, leaning over and pressing her mouth, her breasts, her belly and hip against Gabrielle's.

Roxanne's mouth was softer than any boy's mouth Gabrielle had ever kissed. She'd noticed it the night before, and tonight she decided to enjoy it, opening her mouth wide and letting Roxanne in, tongues touching, breath stirring.

Roxanne's hand drifted down to Gabrielle's middle, and Gabrielle opened her legs and tilted her pelvis up, ready to be caressed there, even if she weren't ready for anything else. She felt three fingers, one along her slit, the other two on her lips, the finger against her ring barely touching.

Still as wet as she'd been all day, her opening yielded easily to Roxanne's finger, her lips parting and her smooth sheath welcoming the penetration.

Roxanne, pulled her finger out, dipped it in again, pulling Gabrielle's lubricant out with every withdrawal and bringing it to her clitoris, making her clit so wet and swollen that every brush against it was like another electric jolt.

Thirty seconds from the orgasm she had longed for all day, Gabrielle sensed a change in Roxanne's rhythm, a slowing, and she wondered at first if her stallmate didn't know how to make her climax.

No, she realized, Roxanne was going to play this out. The idea that a lover wouldn't rush to orgasm, wouldn't rush *her* to orgasm, required a quick adjustment. That's how Roger made love – in a hurry. It wasn't necessarily the only way.

With one more hard pull against Gabrielle's sex organ, one more deep, open-mouthed kiss, Roxanne rose up, on her hands and knees, smiling in the sudden darkness.

It was half-light now, but Gabrielle didn't care. She didn't care if Austen and Penelope and everyone else on their block were watching them from three feet away, spotlight illuminating every moment of their tryst.

Roxanne turned around over Gabrielle slowly, carefully, positioning her vulva over Gabrielle's mouth before she dropped down to examine Gabrielle's wet opening with her own mouth.

Roxanne's tongue passed over Gabrielle's clitoris again and again, moved down her slit to her opening to drink up her fluids, returned to her clit, and Gabrielle understood that this was what oral sex was supposed to be.

She wanted to reciprocate, but first, Roxanne's tag had to be reckoned with. Hanging from her labia, it lay against Gabrielle's chin and almost dropped into her mouth before she slid her head over and turned, licking the sex organ from a slight angle that kept the tag from interfering.

She hoped her inexperience wasn't ruining Roxanne's pleasure, but the flood of honey from Roxanne's hole told her something was working, and she cleaned it off and, following Roxanne's lead, pressed her tongue against Roxanne's clitoris, circling it and pressing it with her mouth. Roxanne's fluid was warm, almost tasteless.

Roxanne whispered something, returned her mouth to Gabrielle's sex.

"Huh?" Gabrielle replied.

"It's fine if you want to lick my ring," Roxanne said quietly, breathlessly.

"The tag's going into my mouth," Gabrielle whispered back.

"You can hold it out of the way," Roxanne said, raising one leg slightly.

Gabrielle had assumed that in this position, her arms would remain at her sides, but she was able to raise one hand to Roxanne's opening and, after a bit of fumbling, press Roxanne's tag against her outer lip, then move her tongue to the place where the ring had, ten years ago, been driven through the girl's flesh.

Roxanne twitched as soon as Gabrielle's tongue touched the place around the ring, raised up her pelvis and dropped down again.

With a few more strokes of her tongue, Gabrielle had Roxanne quivering, her sex organ rocking back and forth across Gabrielle's mouth, Gabrielle directing her tongue to whatever was closest – Roxanne's opening, her clitoris, her lips and ring, and then Gabrielle felt the shift in rhythm, heard the change in breathing that told her Roxanne was nearing climax.

At this point, it was all clitoris, and Gabrielle licked the swollen bud methodically while Roxanne grunted and gasped above her, shaking through her relief.

She continued to spasm as she rose up her knees, vulva out of reach now, apparently satisfied.

After a pause where she seemed to be recovering, Roxanne dropped again, put her mouth against Gabrielle's vulva, put her tongue up Gabrielle's hole and against her clitoris and drove Gabrielle to orgasm in less than a minute, continuing to lick and suck while Gabrielle writhed beneath her, groaning quietly with a fiercer version of the pleasure she'd last enjoyed Monday.

"Oh," Gabrielle whispered, not wanting to bother Austen and Penelope. "Oh, oh, oh yeah."

Roxanne clambered off and returned to Gabrielle's side, kissing her, rubbing her breasts, drawing traces on her belly.

"Did I turn you into a lesbian?" Roxanne whispered into her ear.

Gabrielle pondered for a moment. "No," she said. "Not even bi, I don't think."

"But you liked it?"

"Loved it."

"Wanna do it again?"

"Now? No."

"No, not now. But someday."

"Tomorrow," Gabrielle said. "Or the weekend. I'm supposed to start ovulating on Saturday. I'm kind of insatiable when that happens."

"Does a lot come out?"

"Yeah, a lot of ovulation stuff, and I ejaculate too, sometimes," Gabrielle said.

"I'm good with that," Roxanne said.

"Okay."

"I'm good with milk too."

"Oh, god," Gabrielle said. "That's just not something I can wrap my head around."

The lights were completely off now, just a dim glow from the security lights along the ceiling outside the stall. Gabrielle looked into the adjoining stall, saw only darkness.

"Can I have a taste?" Roxanne asked.

"Yeah, if you don't drink it all."

Roxanne moved her mouth from Gabrielle's ear to her right nipple, licked it to make it firm, closed her lips around it and sucked gently.

“Oh, god,” Gabrielle said, arching her back. “Esther sucked me on Monday, but what you’re doing – that’s way different from her or the machine.”

“Good or bad?”

“It’s good. I’ve always liked it. My boyfriend used to do it. But having milk come out, that’s kinda different. Having a girl do it, that’s kind of different too.”

“You’re sweet,” Roxanne said.

“How much did you take?”

“A few drops. Want some of mine?”

Before Gabrielle could say yes or no, Roxanne rose, got on all fours over Gabrielle, one breast hanging inches above Gabrielle’s mouth.

Gabrielle stuck her tongue out, licked the nipple in the darkness, and Roxanne lowered herself, her nipple against Gabrielle’s lips.

Gabrielle suckled, drawing a few drops of Roxanne’s milk into her mouth. It was sweet as well, heavy and rich.

“Okay,” Gabrielle said, swallowing. “Thanks.”

“What do you think?” Gabrielle asked, returning to Gabrielle’s side.

“About what?”

“About sucking my tit, dumbass.”

“Be more specific, bitch,” Gabrielle said. “You mean, the overall experience, or the taste, or what?”

“Okay, all of it,” Roxanne whispered.

“Taste is good, but sucking is weird. I mean, I guess if they stopped feeding me, you’d have to feed me, but otherwise—”

“That’s sexy,” Roxanne said.

“What is?”

“If they stopped feeding you, and now you had to suck on me.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said, not quite getting it.

Roxanne kissed her again, Gabrielle kissed back. Kissing a girl was starting to seem normal to her. Suckling wasn’t.

“Thanks,” Gabrielle said.

“For what?”

“Well, I was sort of nervous about everything. But this was nice.”

“You’re very good at it.”

“I wasn’t trying to be good,” Gabrielle said. “Just fun.”

“You were fun,” Roxanne said. “Now go to bed.”

This time, Gabrielle initiated the kiss, pressing everything against Roxanne, grabbing her hip, touching her with her breasts, before she pulled away.

Back in her own bed, she lay flat on her back, staring at the bottom of Roxanne’s bed, feeling at peace with the world.

She moved her hand down to her middle, felt her tag, picked it up and let it fall against her vulva, and briefly considered masturbating

No, she told herself. Roxanne would know, and might blame herself, deciding she hadn’t satisfied her new stallmate. It was the opposite, of course. Gabrielle had cum hard, deliciously. Roxanne knew what she was doing?

During Gabrielle’s first milking the next morning, Arwen confirmed that the pink tag was coming off Saturday.

“Saturday?” Gabrielle repeated.

“Yeah, tomorrow.”

“Saturday’s tomorrow?” Gabrielle asked.

“Today’s Friday,” Arwen laughed, standing in front of Gabrielle as the machine emptied her breasts.

“Oh, I’ve got no idea what day it is. So . . . I guess I graduated two weeks ago? No, wow, one week ago. Wow.”

Arwen crouched down so Gabrielle could look into her eyes.

“How are you doing, Gabrielle?”

“I’m good,” Gabrielle said. “Other than losing track of time. I’m getting used to everything.”

“Your card says you copulated last night?”

“You already saw my report?”

“Yeah, I looked for it as soon as it came in this morning.”

“Oh, yeah. Roxanne and I, we, uh . . . in her bed. We were, um, together for awhile.”

“Oral?”

“Kissing first. Then oral, then we sucked each other’s breasts afterwards. Just a few drops, though.”

“Your ring’s good?”

“Just a little itchy this morning. Zero pain.”

“You’re okay with getting a new tag tomorrow?”

“Yeah, definitely,” Gabrielle answered.

“You understand what that means? You get to go to the commons? You get to ask for boys, or girls?”

“Yeah, Roxanne went over all that.”

“Who are you going to order? Have you thought about it yet?”

“George,” Gabrielle blurted.

Why did she say George? She’d been thinking about Cameron Flasche since Tuesday. Or, really, she’d been thinking about him all her life. What force made her mouth open up and say “George?” And really, why was Arwen even asking about this? How was this any of her business?

“Why George?” Arwen asked.

And then Gabrielle understood. Part of Arwen’s job was to make sure the girls didn’t fall in love. If Gabrielle – 18 and modestly experienced in matters of the heart – had just been overtaken by a swooning devotion to George, Arwen needed to know about it. Gabrielle weighed her next words carefully.

“I saw him with that girl, um, Beverly, the first time I got milked. And he seemed nice. He let her do oral sex on him, and I thought maybe that would be best too, instead of intercourse the first time we were together, since my ring is still a little sensitive.”

The machine beeped, and Gabrielle looked over at it. She’d learned to identify the tiny screen on the machine that tracked each girl’s status, learned which one concerned each position on the milking line. The part of the screen that tracked her place on the line was flashing, and that meant she was done.

She hoped Arwen was satisfied with her answer about George, and she seemed to be, saying nothing more on the topic, just stepping behind Gabrielle to look at her holes.

“How is your anus feeling?” she asked, touching Gabrielle there. “The leash can cause irritation on new girls after a few days.”

“It’s not bothering me yet,” Gabrielle said, “maybe because I’ve been too worried about my lip.”

Gabrielle could feel Arwen probing her vulva, moving her labia from one side to the other, checking her flesh where the ring had been installed.

Gabrielle arched her back, aiming her pelvis up to make the impromptu inspection easier.

“I’m going to pull on it, just a little, and you tell me how it feels, okay?” Arwen said.

“Okay,” Gabrielle replied. Wrists and ankles till chained to the floor, nipples still clamped, she didn’t have much say in the matter anyway.

Gabrielle felt the fingers at her ring, felt her tag being handled, felt the pressure as Arwen gently tugged on it.

“Okay so far?” Arwen asked.

“Yeah,” Gabrielle said, wincing involuntarily, ready for the itch to turn into full-blown agony.

The pain never came, however. Arwen finished examining Gabrielle, went to the sink to wash up and returned with Gabrielle’s leash.

“You’re healing nicely,” Arwen said, sliding the leash into Gabrielle’s anus. “As good as I’ve ever seen.”

“It’s not because of anything I’ve done,” Gabrielle said. “But thanks.”

Arwen knelt beside Gabrielle to remove her cups and release her hands.

“Attitude can affect everything else,” Arwen said. “Give yourself credit for that.”

Chapter 22: Helen and George

Back in her stall, just Austen there, reading on the other side of the bars, Gabrielle decided it was time to do something she really didn't want to do.

She pulled the pen and a notepad out of her cabinet, sat down on her bed, and wrote:

“Dear Mom and Dad. I got your note, and I appreciated it. Things are good here. I've already made a lot of friends, but I'm looking forward to January, when I hope I'll get out and can go to school. Love, Gabrielle.”

She folded the note, put her home address on it and set it at the service port.

She went to the toilet and shut the curtain. After she flushed, she retrieved the note and added, “P.S. I miss you.”

Done, she thought with relief.

Still pink-tagged, she passed through the rest of the day with an unexpected sense of belonging. She couldn't have sex with the boys yet, but she'd be able to in less than 24 hours.

The urges that accompanied ovulation were already starting to burn at her middle, she noticed. Everything here – the constant nudity, the casual attitude about sex, the things she and Roxanne had done, the leash, and even the little tag that swung from her lip – were playing their part in elevating her drive.

Today, she had seen every boy except Cameron Flasche playing his role in the production room, and she had a good sense of the overall themes:

George tended to start at the female's mouth, and he stayed there about half the time, although he didn't seem to mind having his leash moved to the girl's rear to finish.

Al, the black former porn actor, was the most workmanlike, and Gabrielle wondered if he was consciously trying not to act like he was in a movie. He'd talk briefly with his partner, reach agreement on what would be done, and then he'd do it, quietly and competently. No shouting, no unnecessary motions, no drama.

The joke they told about Ronen, the Muslim, was that he thought he had died and gone to Muslim heaven, his paradise populated by girls who

weren't necessarily virgins, but who possessed all the attributes he needed. Gabrielle had been told he himself had taken issue loudly with that assertion, the one time someone shared it. If there was a paradise, he'd reportedly declared, everyone would go, and males and females would be equal. Nevertheless, the smile of ecstasy never left his face while he labored in the production room.

Dan, the poor, beautiful boy with the largest penis, was also the most gentle. He'd hurt a girl once, or maybe more than once, so he penetrated slowly, checking in multiple times with his partner as he slowly pushed his shaft up her sex organ.

Gabrielle was curious about how it would feel with each boy, how it would be. Would they approach her the way they did the other girls? Or would they tailor their style to her preferences? Would they even know what her preferences were? She wasn't sure she did.

Today, during her fifth milking, just before dinner, Gabrielle was stationed next to Helen, and they shared a few words, but then Arwen walked up with Dan.

"Hey, Dan," Helen said.

"Hey, Helen. Want to—?"

"Yeah."

Arwen walked Dan to his position behind Helen and fastened his leash to the ring between her knees.

"Fifteen minutes," she said, then knelt before Gabrielle while Gabrielle tried not to listen to what was happening beside her.

"How has everything been today?" Arwen asked.

"I'm good," Gabrielle said. "Pain nonexistent since lunch."

Arwen said something, but Gabrielle heard only the words of Helen and Dan.

"You let me know how you're doing, okay?" he said.

"I will. I think I'm ready."

"You are," he said. "Okay, just starting."

"Uh," Helen grunted.

"Okay?"

"I am, I am, ohhhh, god."

"Stop?"

"No, keep going. Ohhhh, god. Uh."

"I'm only half the way in. I can stop here, like I did last time."

“No, keep going,” Helen panted. “You’re stretching me, but I’m fine. I’m getting used to it.”

“Gabrielle?”

“Yes?” Gabrielle asked.

“Did you hear what I just said?”

“No, sorry.”

“You need to pay attention,” Arwen said. “That could have earned you a unit.”

“Oh, god, sorry,” Gabrielle said, and she glanced over at Helen, and Arwen seemed to understand and, to Gabrielle’s great relief, didn’t reach into her pocket for a pair of black punishment tags.

“So you’ve been approved for transition tomorrow,” Arwen said.

“When tomorrow?” Gabrielle asked, and her attention turned to her neighbors again.

“Ohhhh, oh god, how far are you?” Helen groaned.

“All the way in now. Need me to pull out?”

“No, just hold still. Oh. Just hold still.”

Helen start panting. As if she were having a baby, Gabrielle thought.

“It’s okay, it’s okay,” she said.

The couple was quiet. Arwen had said something, and now Gabrielle was able to play most of it back in her mind:

“First thing. We’ll be switching your tags when you’re leashed tomorrow morning.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said, as if she were hanging on Arwen’s every word. “Okay, that’s great.”

“You’ll make your first visit to the commons tomorrow, after your third milking. And you’ll be doing chores twice. We’ve got you scheduled for the kitchen. You’ll earn a point each time you complete your chores successfully. And did you want a boy tomorrow night?”

“I think so,” Gabrielle said.

“You mentioned George?”

“Yes.”

“I checked with him. He’s free tomorrow night, and he’d like to have you in his stall, if that’s okay.”

“Oh, I’m glad to hear that,” Gabrielle said sincerely. She knew if she picked George, he had to be with her regardless of his interest, but

hearing that he wanted her was gratifying nonetheless.

Now she understood why she'd picked George. No pressure. She'd seen him perform multiple times, and his was a simple style, predictable, comfortable. They'd be together, and she'd get the hang of things.

And then, there would be Cameron Flasche. But not yet.

She heard Dan grunting, knew from experience he was nearing orgasm, that Helen's tight hole was working its magic all along his shaft.

"Okay, move a little," Helen gasped, and Gabrielle could see her rocking back and forth, partly due to Dan's steady thrusts, partly under her own power. She'd adjusted to him. She was enjoying him, it seemed, sliding along his member.

Dan's orgasm came as Arwen was leashing Gabrielle for the walk back to her stall.

"Oh, god," Dan said quietly, driving his penis up Helen's vagina as fast as he dared, pouring his semen into Helen's chamber, and Gabrielle knew, squirting against her cervix.

Before he was finished cumming, he slipped one hand under his penis, where it joined with Helen's body, and Gabrielle knew he was masturbating her now.

Helen jerked away, to the limits of her restraints, then pushed back and moaned while Dan massaged her quickly.

"Awwwwwww, god no, god no!" Helen cried out, and Gabrielle felt Helen's orgasm as if it were her own, tearing through her own body, ripping at her soul, and she was near tears again, stepping out of the production room, alone with Arwen, suffering an ache she was sure could never be eased.

Roxanne was in her bed, reading, and she moved to the foot and peered down at Gabrielle as soon as she and Arwen appeared. She opened her mouth to say something, and then she shut it, and Gabrielle knew it was because of what she saw in her stallmate's eyes.

Gabrielle entered the stall, Arwen removed the leash, and Gabrielle climbed the little ladder to Roxanne's bed.

She wanted to do everything, to kiss and suck and cry and breathe, and Roxanne seemed to understand.

"Oh, my god, what happened?" Roxanne said, and she pulled Gabrielle up toward her pillow, as she had the night before, but this time

there was no caution, nothing tentative. She seemed to understand, and her hands immediately went to Gabrielle's breasts, to her vulva.

"Just fuck me," Gabrielle whispered.

"I can't fuck you," Roxanne said. "I'm a girl."

"Pretend."

Roxanne pulled Gabrielle to the middle of her bed and clambered on top of her, kissing her. Gabrielle spread her legs wide and Roxanne settled her hips between Gabrielle's thighs and thrust against her, pressing against her clitoris, tags ringing faintly against each other.

"Okay, suck me, then," Gabrielle whispered.

Roxanne moved her mouth down to Gabrielle's opening and, crouching on hands and knees, alternated between licking Gabrielle's lips and hole and sucking her clitoris.

Within a minute, Gabrielle was cumming, the sort of earth-shaking, suffocating release she had experienced maybe two or three times before in her life.

Roxanne continued attending to Gabrielle's slot until her last shudder subsided, when she pulled up her legs and turned to lie on her side, facing the wall.

Roxanne lay behind her, spooning her, her mouth next to Gabrielle's ear, so Gabrielle could hear her breathing.

"Is this normal?" Gabrielle asked quietly.

"Is what normal?"

"What I just did. Am I okay?"

"You are so okay," Roxanne said.

"I thought I was just going to give milk, okay?" Gabrielle said. "I thought that's all I'd signed up for. And then . . . and then . . . everything."

"Girls who cum make more milk," Roxanne said. "You know that, right?"

"Yeah, I keep hearing that, but I didn't know . . ."

"So, you saw something in production?"

"Yeah. Uh, Helen, and Dan. And I guess she's kind of small, so it was, it was . . . kind of . . . and then, oh, god, they both . . . so he got up her, and then . . . it was like I was in her body . . . and I was feeling everything."

Roxanne stroked Gabrielle's hair, breathed into her ear. "Oh yeah," she said. "I've seen a good show or two in there."

"Sorry," Gabrielle said. "I didn't mean to attack you."

“It’s not the first time.”

“That’s part of why you have this job, isn’t it? Because you’re ready for anything?”

“I guess.”

“They’re taking me to George tomorrow night.”

“You didn’t waste any time.”

“Arwen set it up. She said George wanted me in his stall.”

“I’m sure he does.”

“I’m telling you now,” Gabrielle said, “so if you and, um, Vanessa. I know you wanted to . . .”

“You’re not jealous?”

“No,” Gabrielle said. The idea of being jealous about Roxanne being with Vanessa while she was with George hadn’t crossed her mind until now. “Not at all.”

“You surprise me,” Roxanne said. “You’re like . . . an old soul.”

“I’m 18.”

“But you’re mature, in certain ways.”

“I’ve probably aged five years since Monday,” Gabrielle said.

Gabrielle sat up and looked into the other stall. Austen and Penelope were in Austen’s bed, reading something together. Austen looked up, looked down as soon as she saw that Gabrielle was looking back at her, and Gabrielle guessed they’d both been watching her and Roxanne.

And she didn’t care, which surprised her.

“I’m working in the kitchen tomorrow,” she said.

“Boring,” Roxanne said. “But easy, if you don’t screw up.”

“And I’m going to the commons tomorrow too.”

“When?”

“After my third milking.”

“I’ll try to get in there with you,” Roxanne said.

“I’d like that,” Gabrielle said, sliding toward the foot of Roxanne’s bed. “And thanks for the help just now. I owe you one.”

“Can I collect tonight?” Roxanne asked.

“Yeah.”

Most of the dinner talk concerned two topics: Gabrielle’s impending visit to the commons, and Austen’s transgression at her mid-afternoon milking.

The first topic was Austen, who bore black tags at her ear and labia.

“I wasn’t more than a fifty seconds late, but Arwen gave me a two,” Austen complained.

“A two?” Gabrielle repeated.

Austen rose up on her knees, leaned against the bars and reached down to her lower tag, pulling it away from her body for Gabrielle’s inspection.

Gabrielle saw a “2” engraved into the black paint.

“I didn’t know they put numbers on them,” she said. “Do they have any with a ‘10’? I mean, what if they put one of those on you accidentally?”

“If it’s really bad, they put a day on it,” Roxanne said. “Like, if it’s Monday and you’re supposed to get two days of punishment, they’ll give you one that has a ‘W’ on it, for Wednesday, and a second tag with time of day, and you just do the isolation stall until your tag says you’re done.”

“Oh, god,” Gabrielle said. She looked at Austen. “Why are you still wearing them?”

“I haven’t been yet.”

“Why not?”

“I didn’t want to miss the commons, and then I had chores.”

“When are you going?”

“Probably tomorrow morning.”

“Not later tonight?”

“No, Grendl—” Austen began, then shut her mouth, looked into the hall, lowered her voice. “Grendl is leaving at five today. So I asked her if we could do it tomorrow after first milking, and she said fine.”

“I didn’t know you could choose when it was done,” Gabrielle said.

“Well, it has to be within a day or two,” Penelope said. “Austen learned that the hard way.”

“Shut up, Bitch,” Austen said.

“What happened?” Gabrielle asked.

Roxanne laughed. “Austen was late to milking another time, so she got a tag, and they asked her in production when she wanted to do it, and she told Grendl, um, I mean Greta, ‘How ‘bout next month?’ and Grendl didn’t say anything, just grabbed some black 2’s and stuck them on her rings. God she was pissed.”

Austen looked away, reached up and fingered the tag hanging from her ear, and Gabrielle suspected there was still some pain attached to this memory, and Penelope and Roxanne enjoyed bringing it up regardless.

“What are you going to choose?” Penelope asked.

“Stall,” Austen said blankly.

“Those little rooms?” Gabrielle asked.

“Yeah,” Austen said. “If you get a two, you can just do that for the whole time between milkings. Two hours or so. It’s boring as hell, but the alternatives are worse.

“Six swats?” Gabrielle asked.

“Yeah, and you know how bad three are,” Roxanne said. “Six swats, or an hour and a half in the stocks, or two hours in the stall. I’d rather do stocks than the stall though.”

“So you can watch,” Gabrielle said.

“That’s the worst thing about the stall,” Roxanne agreed. “They latch the covers closed the whole time you’re in there, so you can’t see what’s happening, but you can hear it, and it starts driving you bonkers. One time, I heard two girls yell at the same time. Two different girls. How did Grendl do that? And then, I heard a girl yell once, and then thirty minutes later, the same girl yell again, the same voice, and I knew she should have been done by then.”

“At least they take your leash out if you go into the stall,” Austen said.

“They’re not going to let you have a stall,” Penelope asserted.

“What do you mean?” Gabrielle asked.

“They don’t always let you choose,” Roxanne said. “They just do whatever. Austen might not get to choose tomorrow.”

“You know she’s just going to spank you like always,” Penelope said, looking at Austen with no sympathy in her voice or eyes.

“I went two months with basically zero corporal,” Austen said. “She let me decide every time.”

“Yeah, a year ago,” Roxanne said. “Face it, she just doesn’t like you.”

“What are you going to do in the commons?” Austen asked, looking at Gabrielle, and Gabrielle knew Austen just wanted to change the subject.

“What are my options?”

“Talking,” said Roxanne.

“They have three PC’s, if you’re into that,” said Penelope.

“Board games,” Austen said.

“And sex,” Gabrielle said, stating an obvious assumption.

“No sex,” Roxanne said.

“Oh god,” said Gabrielle, “I’ve been picturing an orgy room.”

Roxanne laughed. “Now, what could have possibly given you that idea?”

“There are boys there, right?” Gabrielle queried.

“Yeah.”

“And they’re naked?”

“Yeah.”

“And we’re naked?”

“Yeah.”

“Well, you’d think . . .”

“No,” said Roxanne. “No sex. You can hug, you can kiss, even on the lips, but kiss more than, like, five seconds and they’ll black-tag you right there.”

“It seems like that’s their answer for everything here,” Gabrielle complained.

“Learn the rules and don’t complain, and you won’t go more than once or twice a month,” Roxanne said.

“I just complained, didn’t I?” Gabrielle said.

“Yeah, but we won’t tell.”

“The commons is where you do business, too,” Austen said.

“What do you mean?” Gabrielle asked.

“You can log into your account to see your money, see your stats.”

“Stats?”

“Like, average milk production for the month, whatever,” said Penelope.

“You can get your tags switched sometimes,” Roxanne said. “You can sometimes get punishment worked down.”

Arwen appeared with a group chain, three girls and Cameron Flasche already secured to it, and Roxanne and Penelope went to the bars while Gabrielle stared at him. He was talking quietly to the girl leashed next to him, his penis not hard yet. He looked at Gabrielle, stared into her eyes, looked away, and Gabrielle looked down and saw the start of his erection and wondered why it was happening.

By the time Gabrielle went to her last milking, Cameron Flasche was gone, and she wondered who he’d been with, what he’d done. A half

dozen of the females were grinding against posts, including one to Gabrielle's left, but Gabrielle felt nothing without a boy there. Still, when the girl grunted through her orgasm, Gabrielle wanted to feel the same thing, and she thought about Roger and missed the simplicity of things with him. She could tell him she wanted sex and he could usually borrow his father's car and she would usually cum and then they'd be done.

Tomorrow night, George was scheduled to become only her second lover. Scheduled. And it would be done in a stall. In front of other males. She could ignore them if they didn't say anything, but could they ignore her?

Back in her stall, she made small talk with the other girls until the lights dimmed.

"We're dating tonight," Austen said in the half light. "What about you?"

Roxanne turned to Gabrielle but said nothing.

"Yes," Gabrielle said. "In my bed this time?"

Roxanne stood, helped Gabrielle up, and the two turned to Gabrielle's bed and lay down, on their sides, facing each other. Gabrielle leaned in, kissing first, and the two girls became one through their mouths, all Gabrielle's concentration on making love this way to her stallmate while her hole warmed up, swelled and began coating itself with lubricant.

Gabrielle pulled away briefly.

"I think I might be ovulating," she whispered.

"Didn't you say it was supposed to start tomorrow?"

"It came early. It does that, sometimes. My period too. If there's stress, or something weird."

Roxanne laughed quietly. "So, is this stressful, or weird?"

"Both, of course," Gabrielle replied. "But don't take it personally. And it's good too."

"What do you want to do now?" Roxanne asked.

"I can just lick you. I owe you one."

"Do you want to cum?"

"I guess. I don't know."

"Get over me while you're licking me, so I can lick you too."

"Stuff's going to come out," Gabrielle warned.

"I hope so."

"It doesn't bother you?"

“Of course not.”

“But it’s not just, uh, lubricant. There will be thicker stuff.”

“I noticed some earlier today,” Roxanne whispered. “I liked it.”

Gabrielle held still, doubt and self-consciousness weighing on her, until Roxanne nudged her gently. Gabrielle allowed herself to be guided onto her knees, to turn around over Roxanne, to put her mouth over Roxanne’s middle, to lower her own hole to Roxanne’s mouth.

Gabrielle glanced through the darkness to the other stall, saw that Penelope and Austen were doing the same thing, Penelope on top, the girls joined mouth to vulva, and she guessed that one of the girls, or maybe both, were ovulating.

Gabrielle knew what to expect this time, and knew what to do. This was becoming familiar now, each girl licking the other’s clitoris, sliding tongues down slits, exploring openings, drinking the honey, pressing tongues into each other’s soft chambers.

Roxanne came first, rocking beneath Gabrielle, gasping even as she continued to attend to Gabrielle’s slot, and Gabrielle got her release soon after, a long, hard orgasm that had her moaning and shaking, squirting into Roxanne’s mouth.

For at least a minute, the two girls stayed like that, savoring the sweet aftershocks of orgasm without needing to move.

“Sorry,” Gabrielle whispered at last.

“For what?”

“For squirting.”

“Please,” Roxanne said, and she squirmed under Gabrielle and grabbed her hips to turn her around.

“Get on top,” Roxanne said.

Gabrielle complied and Roxanne spread her legs so that Gabrielle’s hips fell between her thighs, as if she were a boy and they were going to make love this way.

“Kiss me.”

Gabrielle obeyed, tasting herself on Roxanne’s mouth.

“It’s good, isn’t it?”

“Yes,” Gabrielle said. “I guess so.”

After another minute of kissing, Roxanne stroked Gabrielle’s hair and moved her hips and legs. Gabrielle accepted that as the cue that they were finished, and she rolled off Roxanne and allowed her to slide to the

edge of the bed and, with one last kiss, climb the ladder and settle in for another night of sleep.

Chapter 23: Want a Boost?

They never sucked each other's nipples, so there was nothing to report the next morning in that section of the card, but Gabrielle dutifully reported the two orgasms she'd had courtesy of Roxanne. And at the bottom of the card, she went ahead and wrote "I would like to visit George in his stall tonight."

The girls were in the middle of breakfast when a heavy-set man in his 30's she didn't recognize appeared at the bars, a half dozen leashes slung over his shoulder.

"Gabrielle?" he said.

Gabrielle turned. "Yes?"

"I need to retag you."

"Oh, yeah," she said, rising and stepping to the bars.

"I don't think we've met," she said.

"I'm Ronnie," he said, offering his hand between the bars.

Gabrielle took it, noticed a wedding band, guessed his wife was fine with what happened here. Or she didn't know.

"Most girls don't get switched this early," he said.

"I'm mature for my age," Gabrielle said, smirking and hoping he knew she was being sarcastic.

"Getting used to things here, then?" he asked, smirking back.

"Not hardly," she said. "But I'm doing a pretty good job of faking it."

He looked at her, as if trying to gauge her meaning, then reached into his pocket and pulled out the little tool used to switch tags.

"Which first?" she asked.

"Ear," he said.

Gabrielle and the man knelt so he could reach her through the port, and he unscrewed the white and pink tag hanging from her ear and replaced it with a tag that was all white.

"Now your lower one," he said.

Gabrielle stood, facing him, spreading her legs at the port and grabbing the bars so she could lean back and angle her pelvis and her vulva up toward him.

He carefully removed the tag dangling from her labia, replacing it with a second white one. Gabrielle watched with a sense of both pride and anticipation. Even if nothing happened in production today, if no boy or girl served her, she would feel profoundly different there.

“Thanks,” she said stepping back, bending to admire the tag.

Her hair was growing, just a dark shadow now, but she wasn’t planning to shave it and she looked forward to having it grow thick and wild there, the tag almost invisible a month from now.

“Let me get your leash in,” Ronnie said.

“Oh, yeah,” Gabrielle said, turning and bending.

He inserted the leash slowly while Gabrielle gasped.

“Is it hurting?” he asked.

“It’s a little uncomfortable,” she said. “It’s one of the things I’m still getting used to.”

“Do you want me to leash you by your vagina instead?”

“That’s an option?”

“Yes, you just have to ask.”

“How does it work?”

“It’s got little pegs that stick out after it’s inserted inside you.”

“Does it hurt?”

“No, not unless you try to take it out.”

“Maybe later today,” Gabrielle said. “I’d like to see it first.”

“I’ll bring one the next time I come for you,” Ronnie said, locking the leash inside Gabrielle.

“Thanks,” Gabrielle said with a quick grunt, stepping to her cabinet to grab her hook. She inserted it and looped her leash around it, returning to the bars to watch as Roxanne was leashed.

“Are you going to start working weekdays again?” Roxanne asked.

“Not until November,” he said, pushing the leash rod up Roxanne’s anus. “I just signed up for another class.”

“In what this time?”

“Another business class. Accounting.”

“Oh, fun,” Roxanne observed, sighing slightly as the leash was locked inside her.

“At Lakemore Tech?” Gabrielle asked.

“Yeah, getting an associate’s.”

“Nice,” Gabrielle said, and her mind went to Brown, and the joy she’d be feeling at this moment, preparing for the move to campus in a few weeks to start one of the freshman assistanceships that began on July 1. She chased the thought from her head and sat down to finish her breakfast, arranging her leash neatly beside her ankles.

After Penelope and Roxanne were walked to production and she and Austen had showered, Gabrielle returned to her board to continue her picture of the park, the stream and the trees. She was no artist, but her work was coming along in fits and starts, as she erased something here, replaced something there, added shadows on the ground.

“Nice picture!” someone had written at the bottom, an anonymous comment that she hoped was sincere. She wondered who had written it.

Another staffer she hadn’t met before came to add her and Austen to the group chain, no males secured to it.

“Hi, Gabrielle, I’m Lynn,” she said.

“Hey, Lynn,” Gabrielle said, and she looked down at her tag and felt a sudden, unexpected jolt of nerves. Nothing would happen if she didn’t say yes, but now things *could* happen. In a few minutes, she could have a new penis up her vagina, a new male having sex with her – only the second sex partner of her life. And in front of everyone.

In the production room, Lynn chained Gabrielle to the floor last, staying to talk to her while she massaged her breasts.

“Congratulations on getting white-tagged,” she said, fastening the cups.

“Thanks,” Gabrielle said. “Supposedly it means something here.”

“How does your labia feel?”

“It’s fine,” Gabrielle said. “I’m ready. Physically, at least.”

“No pain?”

“No, not since Wednesday. A slight itch now and then, but that’s it.”

“Are you able to orgasm normally?”

“Yeah, I did twice yesterday.”

“Were you masturbating?”

“No, I was with my stallmate. Roxanne. She did oral on me.”

“Have you tried masturbating?”

“No,” Gabrielle said. “I haven’t needed to.”

“Be careful the first time you touch, especially around your ring. You might find that things are different.”

“Okay.”

“Do you know about the exercise post?”

“I guess so. That’s the thing you put behind us?”

“Yeah, if someone’s available to install it.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said. “I don’t need one now.”

“Do you know how to ask for one?”

“I really don’t,” Gabrielle admitted.

“You have three options,” she said. “Anal rod, vaginal rod, and clitoral mount. You can have any of them, or all three.”

Gabrielle played the words over in her mind.

“Some girls like it, um, in their, um, anus?” she asked.

“A few,” Lynn said. “Vaginal rod and clitoral mount are the most popular though.”

“What’s the clitoral mount?” Gabrielle asked, suspecting she already knew.

“It’s a sort of knob you press against,” Lynn explained.

“Okay.”

“Now, one thing about the anal rod to keep in mind. It goes only up your anus. If you allow it up your vagina, that’s five units.”

“Oh, god,” Gabrielle blurted, trying to imagine the horror of a black tag with the number five hanging from her sex organ.

“It’s probably part of the reason more girls don’t ask for it,” she said. “Of course, the same rules apply to the vaginal rod. It goes up your vagina only. If you take it up your rectum, then back up your vagina, five units. And that’s on top of the infection you’ll probably get, fifty percent of the time.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said. “Thanks.”

Lynn stepped away and Gabrielle scanned the room. The first milking of the day was always the busiest. Most of the stations were occupied, two service females and three males making the rounds, including Cameron Flasche. He was crouched before a girl at the other end of the room, his leash in the hands of another female staffer Gabrielle had never seen before.

Gabrielle looked down, studied her hands and tried to shut out the sounds of the production room. She’d be with George tonight, she reminded

herself, and he was beautiful and his penis was beautiful and she was looking forward to giving herself to him, taking him inside her, allowing him to release in her vagina with no concerns about pregnancy or having to have him be her boyfriend or having to be his girlfriend.

She was looking forward to it enough that she felt herself starting to warm up, the lubrication soaking her pink tunnel.

“Hey, want a boost?”

Someone was speaking.

Gabrielle looked up, into the dark, deep-set eyes of Cameron Flasche, the boy who could have been the mayor of Lakemore at age 18, the object of her dreams since fifth grade, the most wonderful thing in the world.

She looked into his face, then down at his feet, then between his legs, at the penis that was fully-erect, pointing up at her. Then she looked at his testicles, saw that a tight metal band had been secured around them, and the leash ran from it to the hand of the female staffer behind him. Boys here weren't leashed by the anus, she realized. They were leashed by their genitals. Why? Did it hurt?

She looked back into the eyes of Cameron Flasche. He was smiling, the same way he had at city hall, the same way he had the other night, a friendly, open smile that said he owned the world and he would share it with any girl who entered his orbit.

He'd asked her if she wanted something. A boost. A boost? What was a boost? What was he offering her?

She looked back at his penis, thick and hard and pointed straight at her mouth, and she wanted to speak, to say something clever or sultry or merely sensible, but she could not speak, she could not form words, she could not even form thoughts.

And then, Cameron Flasche was gone, standing, his beautiful eyes and his penis moving to the girl chained next to Gabrielle.

“Hey, Tammy,” he said to her, “want a boost?”

“Thanks, yes,” she said.

“Mouth or vagina?” he asked her.

“Yes,” she said.

Cameron laughed, knelt before the girl and she opened her mouth, holding still while he raised his penis, feeding his tip to her, his shaft to her,

while she closed her eyes and ate him, her lower jaw moving up and down slowly while she savored his length, and his taste.

“Okay,” she gasped, pulling away after a minute of sucking. “Other hole.”

Cameron Flasche stood, the staffer walked with him behind the girl, fastened his leash to the ring between the girl’s legs, and he went to work, pushing up the girl’s hole while she sighed and rocked.

Boost, Gabrielle said to herself.

Boost boost boost boost.

BOOST.

It means sex. It means the boy is offering you sex. Boost. As in, presumably, a boost to milk production. Or a boost to something. It didn’t matter. Boost means sex.

Gabrielle was alone in the universe. Just herself, and the universe’s most important word: Boost.

She’d had her chance. She’d been offered the thing she wanted most in all the world: Cameron Flasche.

But he’d said boost and she didn’t understand and now, forever, she would be alone and lonely, because Cameron Flasche had looked into her eyes and offered her his body, his love, and all she’d done was stare back, like an idiot, like a frightened animal, milk pouring from her tits like a cow.

Gabrielle wanted to stay there, alone in the universe, with that word, but sounds were perplexing her mind, forcing her back to the present. Something was happening to the girl beside her. A terrible thing. She was moaning. She was dying. He voice was almost completely choked off, as if she were being strangled. The only sound she could make was a soft “uh-uh-uh” over and over, and Gabrielle could see out of the corner of her eye that with every “uh,” the girl was jerking forward, the chain from her collar swaying back and forth, her restrained hands balled into fists.

Then she heard a boy’s sounds. He was grunting, or crying out, probably because he was dying too. Just a few feet to Gabrielle’s left, a boy and girl were dying, gasping through the last moments of their lives.

“Augh,” the boy said, obviously trying not to be too loud, and the girl started jerking more quickly, more violently, as she and the boy died. “Augh,” he said again.

Why would two people be dying beside her? Gabrielle wondered. How had she ended up in a place where people just died?

The boy cried out again, and this time, he couldn't control the sound he made, a quick, sharp "AH!" and Gabrielle believed she knew at least one of the people beside her. Possibly the boy.

Yes, the boy beside her was named Cameron. Cameron Flasche. She knew him. He had saved her father's life. Yes, she knew him.

It wasn't death. He was having sex with the girl. The girl wasn't dying. She was living. She was doing more than that. She was conquering life. The universe. All that was good.

She was taking the penis of Cameron Flasche up her vagina. And now, Cameron Flasche was squirting his semen into her. Some of it would remain inside her. Some would drip out, wetting her lips.

The semen that had been meant for Gabrielle.

No, they were not dying.

Gabrielle DeBeers was dying.

Gabrielle DeBeers was dead.

Then she was in her bed. Alive. Barely.

She looked up at the bottom of Roxanne's bed. It moved. Someone was up there, apparently.

She'd finished being milked. Someone removed her cups, stuck the leash up her anus and unchained her. Someone had asked her if she was okay. At that point, her memory went thin. Maybe she'd said she was okay. Maybe several staffers were talking about her, as if she wasn't there. She was walked through the halls on a group chain. Someone said hi to her, possibly. She remembered getting her leash pulled out at the port. It had hurt, and it still stung now. She didn't remember walking to her bed, but here she was, under the covers, watching her life spin away, all the promise and the hope and the things that could have been turning to ash.

"Gabrielle," someone said.

It was Roxanne, sitting next to her on her bed, stroking her hair.

"Gabrielle."

With supreme effort, as if she were attempting to talk in a dream, Gabrielle opened her mouth, opened her throat, finally made a single, soft sound: "Huh?"

"You seem kinda sideways."

Gabrielle laughed, recognizing that, even in the midst of deep tragedy, some things could be funny. Word choice could be funny.

"She just laughed," Roxanne said. "I think."

Whom was Roxanne speaking to?

Gabrielle looked toward the next stall, saw Austen and Penelope staring at her through the bars, concern in their eyes.

This was supposed to be her private pain. She didn't need anyone else involved. And yet, knowing other people cared made all the difference. She had friends here. They probably couldn't understand, at least not fully, but she could perhaps hint at the source of her pain, and ease their concern even if she could do nothing for her own agony.

Gabrielle rose up, slowly, propped herself on one arm, put her hand to the side of her head to make sure it was still there.

"I just . . . I just . . . turned down Camero— . . . Raphael," she moaned quietly.

"You turned down Raphael?" Roxanne echoed.

"Yeah."

"You mean, in production? For sex?"

"Yeah."

"Why?"

Roxanne's question cut through the air like a knife, lodging in Gabrielle's heart.

Why? Why did she reject Cameron Flasche?

"I don't know," she said at first, and her mind returned to that moment of failure. "No, wait, he used a word. He said, he said 'boost.' I didn't know what that was. Boost. Boost means sex."

Austen issued a laugh, quickly stifled it.

"Yeah," she said, trying to sound sympathetic. "That's how he usually starts. 'Want a boost?' Like, boosting your milk. All the guys say that sometimes."

"What did you say back?" demanded Penelope. "Like, you told him hell no? You told him to fuck off?"

"No," Gabrielle moaned. "No. I just stared. I just looked at him. Like an idiot."

"He didn't ask again? He didn't ask if that was a yes, or a no?"

"No, he just went to the next girl."

"Oh, and they did it?"

"Yeah," Gabrielle whispered. "Right next to me."

All the girls were silent. Gabrielle studied each of them, expecting to see three expressions of deep sympathy, three of the faces people make

when one among them has been consigned to perpetual loneliness.

Roxanne stroked Gabrielle's hair again.

"That's kind of how it works," Roxanne said. "You know that, right? You can say yes, or no. We say no all the time. I've told Raphael no, like, every other day."

"Wait," Penelope said, and she had adopted the tone of the problem-solver. She just wanted to understand. "Are you upset because you told him no, more or less, or because he did it with another girl?"

"Both."

"You mentioned Raphael the other day," Roxanne recalled. "Isn't there a history there?"

"Oh my god, he's her ex!" Austen exclaimed. "He's her fucking ex!"

Gabrielle sat up, a range of emotions fighting for dominance, embarrassment for the moment winning. She was, she realized with sudden clarity, being completely ridiculous.

"He's not my ex," Gabrielle said. "That was Roger. He's not here. This is . . . someone else. But I do know him, sort of. I . . . sort of . . . grew up with him."

"Wait, so did he say 'hi' to you first?" Austen asked. "Like, 'Hi, Gabrielle, fancy meeting you here. Would you like a boost? Do you even know what a boost is? Because I pack a mean boost.'"

With every word from the other girls, Gabrielle felt more foolish, more juvenile, more immature. She picked up her pillow, forced it against her face and screamed into it for a good five seconds, dropped it and slid off the bed.

"Oh my god, everyone, can we just forget this ever happened?" she said. "I'm good, I'm fine."

She went to the toilet and closed the curtain.

When she emerged, everyone looked at her, so she did her best to smile.

"I'm eighteen," she announced. "Let me be eighteen now and then, okay?"

Roxanne stepped to her, wrapped her arms around her, eyes brimming with tears.

"I was really worried, girl," she said. "You looked dead."

“Oh, thanks,” Gabrielle said, and she stepped to the cabinet, put on fresh lipstick and touched up her eye liner.

“He’s going to ask you again,” Penelope said. “You know that, right? It’s like, gonna be a daily occurrence.”

Gabrielle nodded, but she didn’t believe. From now on, Gabrielle would be the girl who just stared like an idiot when you offered her love. Why would he ever ask again?

She grabbed Roxanne’s book, sat on her bed and tried to forget everything. Maybe all was not lost. That thought sustained her. It was almost all lost. But not completely.

Roxanne and Penelope were taken at ten for their second milking. Gabrielle felt good enough to talk, so she looked at Austen, saw she was staring back from her own bed.

“You really like boys, don’t you?” she asked.

“Yeah,” Gabrielle said, sliding off her bed and stepping to the bars. “I guess I’ve made that obvious.”

“But you’re okay with girls?”

“I’ve had some fun with Roxanne,” Gabrielle admitted. “As you’ve probably noticed.”

“I have. But Roxanne only?”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, you know what happens tomorrow night?”

“Uh, more milking? And everything else?”

“On Sunday night, we switch stalls.”

“What do you mean?”

“Me or Penelope go over there, and one of you come over here.”

“Why?”

Austen laughed nervously.

“Just, um, because.”

“Wait,” Gabrielle said. “So, like, we can, um . . .”

“Whatever. It’s not required.”

“Oh,” Gabrielle said. “Why?”

“I don’t know, just to mix things up. Some people complain, but most people like it. It comes up for a vote every six months or so, and the council always votes to keep it going.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said. “That’s fine.”

“So me and Penelope, we talked about it . . .” Austen said. “And, if it’s okay with you . . . you’ll come over here first, and Penelope will go there. To be with Roxanne.”

“Oh, sure,” Gabrielle said. Without really intending to, her eyes wandered over Austen’s body, imagining her as a sexual partner for the first time.

She was tall, long-legged, with dirty-blonde hair and the largest breasts of any of the four of them in Gabrielle’s pair of stalls. She let her pubic hair grow thick, as Gabrielle planned to do. Gabrielle tried to imagine licking it, realized she preferred Roxanne’s bare mound and hole, but guessed she could adapt.

More important, she liked Austen. Austen was funny, and nice.

“So that’s okay?” Austen said.

“Of course,” Gabrielle said. “I like you.”

Austen nodded. This was all Gabrielle needed to tell her, apparently.

“Where are you working today?” she asked.

“In the kitchen,” Gabrielle replied. “Roxanne said it’s boring.”

“It depends. I’m working there too, but I’m not sure when today. I’m trying to get punishment taken care of.”

Gabrielle looked down at Austen’s middle, remembered that the black tag was still hanging there, mostly hidden by her hair.

“Did it bother you to sleep with that tag on?”

“No,” Austen said firmly. “It’s on, I’ll get through it and it’ll come off. End of story.”

Ronnie appeared, leading a group chain, three girls on it, and George. Gabrielle’s heart leapt when she saw him. Not with love or romance, just with the knowledge that she would probably be having sex with him tonight.

She stepped to the leashing port.

“Hey, Ronnie,” she said, hoping she wasn’t blushing furiously.

“My, um, my anus is kind of hurting. So could you, um, could you leash me by my vagina?”

“Yeah,” he said. “I remembered to bring one.”

“Could I see it first? Do you have time?”

“Sure,” he said, and he pulled one of the leashes from around his neck and held out the end for Gabrielle’s inspection.

Instead of a short plug that thickened at the tip when it was locked, the vaginal leash featured a pointed rod, six inches long and about the thickness of a penis.

“How does it lock?” Gabrielle asked.

Ronnie turned the base and short, rounded pegs emerged from dozens of holes along the length of the shaft.

“Oh, god,” Gabrielle said.

“It looks worse than it is,” Ronnie said. “It’s designed to be comfortable.”

“Are you going to lube it?” Gabrielle asked.

“Just masturbate while I get Austen’s leash in.”

Gabrielle, face on fire with the blush of the century, looked down, pressed a finger between her lips and realized she was probably already wet enough. Maybe she had ovulation to thank, or maybe it was seeing George. But she went ahead and worked on her clitoris and hoped no one was watching while Ronnie stepped to Austen’s stall to insert her leash.

Ronnie returned and Gabrielle turned and bent, waiting with fear and curiosity for the restraint to be pushed into her chamber.

“Turn around and face me,” Ronnie said.

Gabrielle turned, continuing to look down, as if something on the floor were of particular interest.

“Grab the bars, lean back and angle your vulva up toward me.”

Gabrielle obeyed, closed her eyes and bit her lip. She felt Ronnie spread her lips, the tip of the rod touching the mouth of her vagina.

“Be gentle, Ronnie,” George said. Gabrielle opened her eyes, looked at him, and he smiled, and she smiled back and remembered that she liked George, perhaps even loved him, probably since the first moment she saw him, being sucked by Beverly, touching her hair.

“Uh,” she grunted as Ronnie pushed the leash rod up her vagina. “Oh, god.”

As soon as it was fully-inserted, Ronnie turned the base and the pegs drove into the walls of her sex.

“Oh, shit!” Gabrielle exclaimed, more alarmed than pained by the sensation.

“Want it out?” Ronnie asked her.

“No, it’s fine, it’s fine, just not something I’ve ever felt before.”

Gabrielle tightened her vagina, felt the pegs all along the length of the shaft, realized that, under certain conditions, it might almost be arousing. She looked at George again and he looked back. He didn't smile this time. His penis had grown to its full length while Gabrielle was being leashed, sticking straight out, thicker than what Ronnie had just pushed into her. She looked at George, and at his erect penis, and imagined herself making love to both this evening. It wasn't hard to do.

"I think we have a date tonight," he said quietly once she'd been put on the group chain and they were making their way to production.

"Yeah, Arwen kind of set it up," Gabrielle agreed.

"She's a real matchmaker," George observed.

"I asked for you on my report this morning too, though," Gabrielle said. "Just to be sure."

"I appreciate that," George said. "Do you know Dan?"

"Oh, the, um, big guy?" Gabrielle asked.

"That's one of the things people say about him," George observed. "He's in the stall next to mine."

"Okay," Gabrielle said, not sure why that mattered. Did he sing in his stall?

Her second milking was uneventful. She glanced at George, was surprised by how little she cared about what he was doing. She didn't want it done next to her, though, and fortunately, the girl he serviced was at the other end of the room.

Lynn appeared soon after the machine beeped.

"Want to keep using the vaginal leash?" she asked.

"Yeah, for now," Gabrielle said.

Lynn retrieved it from the peg where it had been hung.

"Arch up," she said.

Gabrielle obeyed, grunting as Lynn pushed the rod up her front chamber and locked it in place. The pegs that drove into her walls weren't surprising this time, just a little maddening.

"You know you're going to the kitchen, right?" Lynn asked, opening Gabrielle's cuffs, removing her collar.

"I'm going now?" Gabrielle asked, standing. "I knew I was going, but not when."

"Yeah, they need help with lunch."

Chapter 24: In the Kitchen with Beverly

Lynn walked Gabrielle out of the production room and to the same flight of stairs she'd climbed five days ago, on Monday. It felt like a lifetime ago, Gabrielle thought.

She passed the doors that said "Staff Room," "Lab," "Laundry," and she and Lynn stopped at a locked door that said "Kitchen."

Lynn pushed a buzzer, and after a brief wait, the door was opened by a heavysset, middle-aged woman.

"Doris, this is Gabrielle," Lynn said. "She'll be helping you today."

"Very good," Doris replied, reaching out to take Gabrielle's leash.

Gabrielle followed Doris into the kitchen, a bustling room of steaming pots, the clatter of equipment, five clothed workers and, standing on either side of a long table in the middle of the room, six production females, nude except for a belt around their hips that held a strap between their legs.

"First time here?" Doris asked brusquely.

"Yes, Ma'am."

"Start over here," she said, leading Gabrielle to an area where chains and leashes hung on pegs along the wall. Gabrielle noticed several canes as well, like the one Grendl wielded.

Doris looped Gabrielle's leash through a ring in the wall, grabbed what looked like a pair of handcuffs from a peg, turned and knelt to fasten them around Gabrielle's ankles

Still kneeling, Doris pulled a small key out of her pocket, unlocked the vaginal leash plug and withdrew it slowly from Gabrielle's body.

"You're wet," she said, hanging the leash on a peg.

"I'm ovulating."

Doris stepped to the cabinet, looked inside, looked back at Gabrielle, looked inside again and pulled out the same belt assembly the other girls were wearing.

"The Department of Health won't let us use you girls in the kitchen unless you're wearing one of these," she said. "Arms up."

Gabrielle raised her arms and Doris wrapped the belt around her waist and buckled it in back.

“Legs apart.”

Gabrielle obeyed and Doris knelt behind Gabrielle, reached between her legs and pulled the strap from the front of the belt to the back, where she fastened it in place, cinching it tightly against Gabrielle’s vulva and anus.

“This way,” she said, walking Gabrielle to the table where the other girls were assembling lunches. No one from her stall or the adjoining stall were here, Gabrielle noticed with some disappointment, but she quickly recognized Beverly, and Beverly seemed to remember her as well.

“Could you chain her next to me?” Beverly said. “I need help here.”

Doris didn’t answer, but she walked Gabrielle to an empty position at the table next to Beverly, a chain fastened to the floor and coiled at her feet.

“Hi, Beverly,” Gabrielle said, watching as Doris padlocked her shackles to the floor chain.

Arrayed on the table before her were dozens of meal trays, each with a small tag that featured a female’s ID number and her meal components.

There were codes for regular bread, gluten-free, meat and non-meat, extra protein, certain kinds of fruits and vegetables. Gabrielle helped Beverly with three kinds of gravy – regular, gluten free and low-salt, each a distinct shade of gray.

The girls didn’t talk much, dedicating themselves to their task until all the trays were filled. Gabrielle never saw her own tray, but guessed it was being assembled competently.

“We’re ready,” announced the female at the end of the table.

Doris walked over with another staff member and they quickly examined each tray, looking for errors, Gabrielle assumed.

They found two.

“No egg on this one,” she said, sliding it back to the girls, who quickly reassembled it.

“This tray isn’t gluten-free,” she added.

Errors corrected, Doris and the other woman dropped in pills and sealed the lunches while the girls talked, immediately beginning a half dozen conversations.

“How have you been?” Beverly asked.

“Going crazy,” Gabrielle replied.

“What kind of crazy?”

“Boy crazy,” Gabrielle said.

“Who’ve you been with?”

“No one yet.”

“And you’re already crazy?”

“I keep seeing things.”

“Like what?”

“In production. People doing things. People I know sometimes.”

“You know them?” Beverly asked. “Like, before you got here?”

“Yeah.”

“Wow, that’s gonna be weird.”

“It has been,” Gabrielle said.

“Who?”

“Raphael.”

“Yeah, he’s a sweetheart.”

“You don’t know,” Gabrielle asserted.

“I’ll take your word for it.”

Lunches all wrapped, Doris began freeing the girls from their chains, walking them one by one in shackles away from the table and back to get their leashes in and attached to the group chain.

“You know we’re going to get punished, right?” Beverly said quietly.

“Yeah, I kinda figured. How much?”

“Two. One per fuckup.”

“Why do we keep meeting like this?” Gabrielle asked.

“I get popped a lot,” Beverly said. “So it’s probably not going to be the last time we get it done together.”

“Sorry,” Gabrielle said.

“Well, better than not meeting at all.”

Gabrielle looked at Beverly, wondering what she meant. Beverly looked back and smiled. Friendly, not seductive.

“Thanks for taking my last swat.”

“Huh?” Beverly said. “Oh, you mean when we got caught talking?”

“Yeah. You didn’t have to confess.”

“Well, I sort of did,” Beverly said. “What would you think of me if I’d let you have another for me?”

“I would’ve thought you were a bitch,” Gabrielle said. “But still, you didn’t wait, you spoke right up. Let me give you a little credit.”

Doris released Gabrielle from her chain, walked her over to the girls on the group chain, removed her belt.

“Thighs open, pelvis forward,” she said, kneeling, spreading Gabrielle’s vaginal lips and sliding the leash rod up her chamber.

“Uh,” Gabrielle grunted. She wasn’t as wet as she’d been, and the leash stung slightly as it went in. Doris locked it, the little pegs drove into Gabrielle’s flesh, and she thought of George.

Beverly was added to the chain beside Gabrielle.

“Okay,” Doris said simply, grabbing one of the canes that hung from a peg.

Every girl turned, the chain that joined her to her neighbors rattling as it swung, and each put her hands on the wall and waited. Gabrielle followed suit, looking back at Doris, then at Beverly, who offered another smile, then grimaced.

Doris punished casually, raising the cane and bringing it against each girl’s backside with quick, fluid motions.

“Ow,” “Ow,” “Ow,” each girl said as the cane popped her bare flesh, as if they’d all been instructed to make the same noise.

“Ow,” said Gabrielle. It stung, but not as badly as Grendl’s punishment, and she was glad she was only getting two.

The second swats were lighter, and then they were done, shackles removed, walked back to the entrance to the kitchen, where Ronnie was waiting for them.

“Everyone got two swats,” Doris informed him.

He nodded, seemed to be making a mental note, took the end of the group chain from Doris and led them to the elevator instead of the stairs, where they filed in, packed tightly for the short ride to the second floor.

Gabrielle and Beverly ended up facing each other, jostled together until their breasts were touching.

“How do you like the vaginal leash?” Beverly asked quietly.

“Kinda driving me crazy,” Gabrielle said.

“I’ve asked for it a few times,” Beverly said. “It has the same effect on me.”

“I just needed a break . . . back there,” Gabrielle said.

“Some girls ask for it because they like how it feels.”

“Getting off while I’m walking?” Gabrielle said. “Not my first choice.”

Beverly laughed, a sweet, healthy laugh, and Gabrielle looked at her mouth and remembered what was in it the first time she saw Beverly in production, then she looked down at Beverly’s full breasts, their heat passing into her body.

“Where do you live?” Gabrielle asked.

The elevator had reached the second floor, the clump of girls decompressing as Ronnie led them into the hall.

“Block 2,” Beverly replied, backing away and turning. “Visit me.”

Gabrielle studied Beverly again, trying to understand her meaning. Was Beverly propositioning her? Or just inviting her over to talk? She looked at Beverly’s breasts again, noticed that her nipples had hardened. Gabrielle’s had as well.

“I’m in Block 3,” Gabrielle said. “I’ll do that.”

“You just graduated from high school?” Beverly inquired as they walked into the first block.

“Last Saturday,” Gabrielle said. “It feels like a year ago. What about you?”

“I did a year of tech school, decided to take a couple of years off.”

“You’re 20?”

“21. I’ll be here another year.”

“I’m trying to go to college in January.”

Ronnie returned three girls to their stalls in Block 1, headed to Block 2.

“You might get to see my stallmate,” Beverly said.

“Is she nice?”

“Her name is Heather,” Beverly replied, ignoring the question.

Heather was indeed there, sitting on her bed, legs crossed, and she looked up briefly and looked down again, possibly studying her feet. Her black hair was cut short, and she looked a little Asian to Gabrielle. Possibly Korean. She didn’t seem happy.

“See you,” Beverly said, touching Gabrielle’s arm.

“Bye.”

Back in her stall, she and the other girls enjoyed the lunches she’d helped put together, and they talked about George and what Gabrielle should expect from him tonight.

“You know Dan’s in the next stall,” Austen said with a smirk.

“Yeah, George mentioned that,” Gabrielle said, still not sure why it mattered.

“So, Gabrielle . . .” Penelope began cautiously, looking at Gabrielle’s slot. “Did you get fucked in the kitchen?”

“No,” Gabrielle replied, “they made us wear these things.” She looked down at her vulva.

“Oh, god,” she said. Her opening was soaked, fluid dripping onto the floor, her lips bright pink.

“I guess it looks like it,” she said. “But I’m just ovulating. I haven’t had sex since last Saturday.”

“Other than with me,” Roxanne corrected.

“Oh, sorry,” Gabrielle said. “I mean, the kind of sex where someone puts, um, cum in you. And Roger didn’t cum anyway, on Saturday. Because we got into that fight.”

“Ovulating shouldn’t make you that wet,” Roxanne said.

“I think it’s the vaginal leash,” Gabrielle said. “Every time they stick that thing up me, I want to scream.”

“Do you want to masturbate?” Roxanne asked, and Gabrielle could tell by her tone that she’d be glad to help if Gabrielle requested for it.

“No,” Gabrielle replied. “I’m about to go to my next milking, and I’m saving it for George anyway.”

“That’s a lot to save,” Austen said.

“It’s your body,” Penelope said, “but I’d suggest you get a little relief in production and not let it build up all day.”

“What if there’s not a guy there?” Gabrielle asked.

“Just ask for a post,” Roxanne advised. “Have you done one yet?”

“No. I’m kind of shy about that.”

“If they put us next to each other and I ask for one, would you?” Austen asked.

“Maybe,” Gabrielle said.

“I saved it all day for a guy once,” Roxanne said, laughing. “They brought me to his stall, and he’s like, ‘What’s up?’ and I’m like ‘Fuck me now you bastard’ and . . . it kind of went downhill from there.”

“Oh, that time with Al?” Austen asked.

“Yeah,” Roxanne said, looking at Gabrielle. “We told you he did porn, right?”

“Yeah, I heard that.”

“He’d just started here, and I heard about the porn, and I thought he was gonna be a porn star with me and it was gonna be a big production, but it turns out he does it like everyone else.”

“What happens in porn?” Gabrielle asked.

“You’ve never seen it?”

“Maybe a quick glance or two, but I’ve never sought it out. Or watched a whole movie.”

“It just takes a long time, lots of positions, lots of everything. I don’t think anyone has sex like that. Not even porn stars.”

“Special effects and editing,” Austen asserted.

Lynn showed up as they were finished clearing up from lunch, a set of leashes over her shoulder and an empty group chain in her hand.

“Can you put us next to each other?” Austen asked as soon as she and Gabrielle were fastened to the chain.

“I’ll try,” Lynn promised.

“I’m going to teach Gabrielle how to do a post.”

Gabrielle blushed, but recovered before they’d picked up another three females from Block 2.

The production room was relatively empty, plenty of vacant spaces next to each other, so Lynn put the other girls in place, then secured Gabrielle and Austen beside each other.

“Same thing as always, Austen?” Lynn asked.

“Yeah, and the same for Gabrielle too.”

Lynn stepped to the supply closet, Gabrielle watching her. “What did you ask for?”

“Very standard,” Austen said. “Vaginal insert and a clitoral mount. Just don’t let anything up your anus.”

“Yeah, they told me about that.”

Lynn returned with two short poles, set them into the holes in the floor between Gabrielle’s and Austen’s knees, did some more things that Gabrielle couldn’t see.

“Slide back, Gabrielle, let’s make sure I’ve set it at the right height.”

Gabrielle eased back, felt Lynn’s fingers on her vaginal lips, spreading them, then the tip of the insert at her opening. She moved backward slowly, allowing the object slowly up her sheath.

“Uh, god,” Gabrielle said, continuing to slide until her vagina was full and her clitoris stopped on something smooth, yielding slightly as she pressed against it.

“Oh, oh, damn.”

“I knew you’d like it,” Austen said.

Gabrielle looked at her and scowled, then scanned the rest of the room. She didn’t want to see George, because she’d feel guilty about giving some of her arousal to a pole instead of to him tonight. And she didn’t want to see Cameron Flasche, for reasons too complicated to go through while her sex organ was being ravished.

Only Al was here, however, doing non-pornographic sex about five positions down, his mate enjoying him serenely, smiling, while he thrust in, pulled out, repeated.

Austen slid back, gasped, slid forward, studied Gabrielle.

“You like it, right?”

“I guess,” Gabrielle said. “I wouldn’t be doing it if you weren’t next to me.”

“Partner in crime,” Austen said, panting, eyes closed.

Gabrielle closed her eyes as well and concentrated on the sensations between her legs. The clitoral mount helped, but having something penetrating her was most important. She thought about Roger, chased the thoughts out of her head, replaced them with George, and told herself that this is what happened here, and it was meant to happen. Milk, she reminded herself. I’m here for that. This is a production room.

Austen quickly settled into a rhythm, rocking steadily.

Gabrielle was more experimental, gyrating her pelvis, allowing the insert to stretch her walls, pushing back against it, allowing the clitoral mount to press hard against her knob.

Angling forward felt the best, so she settled on that, felt the rod get wetter every time she swallowed it with her body, moving quickly enough now that her breasts swung, the lines sliding back and forth along the floor.

When she felt the orgasm start to build, she settled against the pole, insert filling her, mount grinding on her, and gasped through a quick, solid orgasm.

Austen came soon after, hips shaking against the pole, breath coming fast and sharp.

Both girls spent a minute recovering, and then Austen looked up and smiled at Gabrielle.

“I told you,” she said.

“Told me what?”

“That you’d like it.”

“You never really said that. You just said I had to do it.”

Lynn walked up. “Done?”

“Yeah,” Gabrielle said, wanting the post gone, the evidence of her little crime removed.

“You want to stay on the vaginal leash, Gabrielle?” Lynn asked, pulling both posts out of the floor.

“Okay,” Gabrielle replied, hoping the stimulation wouldn’t keep bothering her.

A few moments later, she felt Lynn push the rod up her vagina and lock it in place.

“Already?” Gabrielle asked. She’d never heard the machine beep.

“Yeah, your machines finished five minutes ago,” Lynn said.

Gabrielle looked down, surprised her breasts had already been emptied.

“Great way to pass the time,” Austen observed.

Gabrielle and Austen were restrained with four other girls to Lynn’s group chain, and Gabrielle noticed for the first time that the black tags were gone from Austen’s ear and vulva.

“You went to see Greta?” Gabrielle asked quietly.

“Yeah.”

“Did she let you do the stocks?”

“No,” Austen said, and she turned so Gabrielle could see the faint streaks across her bottom.

“Ow,” Gabrielle said.

They left production but, for the first time, turned left instead of right.

“Where are we going?” Gabrielle whispered.

“Commons.”

“Oh, yeah,” Gabrielle said. “I guess that’s a good thing.”

“It is.”

They passed the window, two girls talking at the table, more people beyond them, lounging, talking, sitting on the floor.

They stopped at the commons door. Further down the hall stood doors for the infirmary and the clinic, and lastly, punishment. She wondered who was suffering in there now. If she stood here long enough, would she hear someone scream?

Lynn swung the commons door open, revealing a large cage. She led them in, locked the door, removed everyone's leashes, opened the cage door and let them pass into the room.

Gabrielle's first impression was of a very large living room, with a dozen couches and chairs. There were at least a dozen naked females and three males here, as well as Lynn and two more staffers, one sitting at a desk near the door. One corner held what looked like a small gym. Another corner was stocked with desks, bookshelves, and three computers.

The list of rules and punishments Gabrielle had been told about was posted prominently on a nearby wall. She saw animal pictures, and two windows, to the outside. Gabrielle had forgotten how much she'd been missing the outdoors and open spaces until she looked across the commons. The day was partly cloudy, white clouds moving across a blue sky.

And Cameron Flasche was here. Sitting by himself, at a table, looking at a magazine.

"You can check out books over there," Austen said, but Gabrielle ignored her, stepping through the room, waving to Helen and another girl she knew on one of the couches, reaching the table where Cameron Flasche sat.

"Is this seat taken?" she asked, standing at a chair on the other side of the table from where he sat.

He looked up, smiled, recognition registering in his eyes.

"It's yours."

"I didn't know what boost meant," she said, pulling the seat out and sitting.

"Huh?"

"This morning, in production, you asked if I wanted a boost," she said. "I didn't know what you meant. So I stared at you."

The words were just tumbling out of Gabrielle's mouth. She had imagined this moment for years – an uninterrupted conversation with Cameron Flasche, a chance to pick back up on the conversation they'd had at city hall, to continue their introduction, to get to know each other. None of the words, nor any of the details of the imagined meetings, had anything

to do with what was happening now. And yet, she felt ready for it, so well prepared by her imaginings that even now, he naked, she sitting before him nude as well, a tag dangling from her labia, she was ready to talk.

“I remember that,” he said. “I thought you were scared.”

“I wasn’t scared,” she said. “I was confused. I just got my tag switched this morning.”

“You’ve only been here since Monday.”

“Yeah, they moved me up. Because I’m super-mature and amazing.”

Cameron Flasche looked at her, analytically, head tilted to the side, as if trying to discern if she were joking or personality-disordered.

“I’m joking,” she said.

“I knew that,” he said.

“What else do you know,” Gabrielle asked, “about me?”

“That we haven’t already discussed?”

“Yeah.”

“You grew up in town. You went to Lakemore. You’ve known the Arnolds all your life.”

“How do you know that?”

“They announced it last Sunday. Mr. Arnold said you’d probably be joining us, if you could deal with how things were here.”

“Seems like I could.”

“Not everyone can, but he was pretty confident in you.”

Gabrielle looked down. Her nipples were bright red and firm, and she knew her vagina was leaking, like it had been all day.

“Okay,” she said. “So you decided to go with Raphael?”

“Yeah.”

“It’s not your real name, is it?”

“No. But then, you know who I am, don’t you?”

“Of course I do. You and I have a long history.”

“I don’t remember that history.”

“Of course you don’t. It all happened in my head.”

“Explain.”

Cameron Flasche leaned back, put his hands on his belly, looked down and looked back up. Something in his eyes told Gabrielle he was erect.

“The first time I saw you, I was in fifth grade, the year was almost over, and my mom took me to the middle school to sign up for some stuff, and I saw you in the hallway.”

“I was a sixth grader,” he said. “We’d just moved to town.”

“I pretty much fell in love with you, at that moment,” Gabrielle said.

“Why?” he asked, leaning forward. There was a challenge in his tone, in his eyes.

“Why what?”

“Why did you fall in love with me?”

“Because of what you looked like.”

“Doesn’t that seem kind of shallow?”

“No, not in my case.”

“Explain,” Cameron Flasche said again.

“You’re not making this easy,” Gabrielle said.

“Since I don’t know what this actually is, I’m not sure how to make it easier. Or harder either.”

Cameron Flasche laughed, but his deep-set eyes remained focused on Gabrielle.

“This is, a, a confession, okay?” Gabrielle said. “I’ve been in love with you since I was 11. And I think you should know that, so the next time you offer me a boost or whatever you call it, you’ll know what it means to me.”

Gabrielle paused to consider her next words. “So, if I fell in love with Dan, because he looks like a movie star, that would be shallow. But if I fell in love with him because there’s something about him that reminds me of something . . . like, my lover from another life . . . or a part of me that got, um, torn away when I was born, and now I see it walking around, on earth . . . or it’s like looking at a picture of a face I’d been seeing in my dreams . . . I don’t think that’s shallow.”

Gabrielle drew in her breath.

“There’s something about you, in me,” she said. “In your eyes. Something dark. Something . . . disorganized.”

Cameron just stared, not like he was staring through her, more like he was dismantling her, piece by piece, so he could see what lay beneath, how she was made, how she worked, how her parts fit together.

“Okay,” Cameron Flasche said at last. “So, you’ve been in love with me for seven years.”

“Yup.”

“Except for when you were in love with Roger Parsons.”

Gabrielle swallowed.

How did he know that?

Yes, she thought to herself, there is depth here. Cameron Flasche was complicated. But he wasn’t mean or intimidating. Just challenging. So she narrowed her eyes at him and forged ahead.

“That wasn’t love,” she said.

“What was it then?”

“Affection . . . attraction . . . rebound.”

“Rebound?”

“From you.”

“How can you rebound from something that never was?”

“It was, for me,” she said. “I already told you that. You lived in Lakemore. Then you went to West Point. Then you reappeared. Then you disappeared. I thought you were dead.”

“I didn’t disappear. I was here.”

“No one knew that.”

“Some people did.”

“I wasn’t one of them.”

“You are now,” he said.

Gabrielle took a breath. This conversation wasn’t going at all like she’d expected.

“We talked once,” she blurted.

“At city hall.”

“You remember?”

“Yes. Not your last name, though. Since you never told me.”

“There wasn’t time. Your stupid friends showed up and you ran off with them.”

“That’s right,” he agreed. “So I had to ask someone else.”

“For my last name?”

“Yeah.”

“Why did you care?”

“Because I wanted to ask you out.”

“No you didn’t,” Gabrielle said flatly.

“Yes I did.”

“Why didn’t you, then?”

“Because of what happened. With your father.”

Gabrielle paused, stared.

“You saved his life,” she said. “That would have been an awesome icebreaker.”

Cameron Flasche smiled, but there was pain in his eyes too.

“‘Hello, Miss DeBeers,’ Gabrielle said, deepening her voice. “‘You know how I saved your dad’s life that time?’”

“I sure do, Cameron Flasche. That was awfully nice of you.”

“‘All in a day’s work.’”

“‘Well, how shall I ever repay you?’”

“‘You could let me buy a soda for you, at Chippers.’”

“‘Why, that would certainly be nice, Mr. Flasche.’”

“‘And afterwards, we could park in the woods, and I could give you a boost.’”

“‘Well, Cameron Flasche, I’m not sure what a boost is, but I’m certainly eager to find out.’”

Cameron Flasche’s deep-set eyes opened as wide as they could go, wider than Gabrielle had ever seen them, on the occasions when she was close enough to see his eyes. Something in her impromptu performance had shocked him. Or offended him. Or infuriated him, perhaps.

“Time, Raphael,” said Lynn’s voice from across the room

Still looking surprised, or merely puzzled, he pushed away from the table and stood. As Gabrielle suspected, his penis was fully erect, pointed slightly up, ready for the next female.

Gabrielle, at peace with the fact she would not be that female, stared at it without shame, studied his bound testicles.

He stepped around the table, stopped beside her, put his hand on her shoulder and bent over to whisper into her ear. She felt something touch her other shoulder, saw that it was the tip of his penis and knew he was touching her with it on purpose.

“You need to know something,” he whispered.

“What?” she whispered back.

“I didn’t save your father’s life.”

He removed his hand, and his penis, from her presence. She turned to watch him report to Lynn, get added to the group chain, get walked into

the cage, pass with everyone else back into the hall. She didn't know why her eyes were wet, because she wasn't sad or happy. But she was moved, in ways she couldn't explain to herself yet. She raised her hand, saw it was trembling, set it back on the table.

"Gabrielle?"

Gabrielle turned to the source of the voice, the employee she'd seen seated at the desk when she walked into the commons, a girl her age, in blue coveralls. The girl was standing a few feet away, as if waiting to be invited into her space.

"Hi," Gabrielle said.

"Gabrielle, my god, you don't remember me?"

"Doria? Oh my god, Doria?"

"Uh, yeah."

Gabrielle stood, embraced her old friend.

"What the hell, Doria?" she asked. "It's been what, five years?"

"Missed you too," she said. "I couldn't believe it when Mom and Dad told me you were coming to work here."

Gabrielle looked down at her naked body and recognized with a sudden, overwhelming shame the vast gulf that had opened up between herself and Doria since the last time they'd talked.

Gabrielle was nude, Doria was clothed. Gabrielle slept locked in a stall. Doria slept free. When Gabrielle left this room, she'd be holding a leash in her anus, or up her vagina. Doria would walk out unrestrained and walk home.

"Hey," Doria said, perhaps sensing the awkwardness too, "come to my desk, let's catch up."

Gabrielle followed her back to the corner with the desk and chairs, and they sat beside each other and quickly resumed a friendship that, while it had cooled before Doria left town, had been very close once.

Her hair was long and black, like Gabrielle's, a pair of thick, corrective lenses on her rounded nose. She'd made up her eyes, and she wore her coveralls open at the neck. Gabrielle couldn't help looking at Doria's breasts, saw that they were full and forced herself not to imagine her friend giving milk. Bringing a family friend into production was one thing, doing it to your daughter was another, and Gabrielle guessed that wouldn't happen.

As Gabrielle recalled, Doria's first two years of middle school had gone increasingly badly, academically and, eventually, socially. She wasn't bullied, exactly, but she wasn't always included. Gabrielle did her best to pull her in, her overtures rejected often enough for reasons Gabrielle didn't always understand, and she backed away, the friendship waned without acrimony, but she'd always felt guilty.

As she leaned toward each other over Doria's desk, she told Gabrielle her problem had been a learning disability, a form of dyslexia that made reading difficult, so she went to a special high school where she excelled, graduating more than a year early. She came home to help her parents, taking a few business classes at the community college each semester as well.

"So you've been here, right down the street from me, for more than a year?" Gabrielle said.

"I'm sorry I never caught up," she said. "I'm out here all the time. I even spend the night here sometimes. And after I started disconnecting – that's the word my therapist uses – after I started disconnecting from everything in seventh grade, I kind of lost that part of my life. I haven't looked anyone up."

Doria frowned, then smiled.

"But really, it's so nice to see you. So nice to catch up."

Gabrielle smiled back. "So what do you do here? I don't think I've ever seen you in production, or in the halls."

"I'm everywhere, so you'll see me, but mostly I'm here. I do business stuff. I'm taking over from my mom – stuff she didn't want to do anymore."

"Business stuff?"

"Yeah. I track people's points, do tag swaps, record production . . . You're doing great, by the way."

"What do you mean?"

"Your numbers. You got thirty-four ounces one day."

"Which day?"

"I'm not supposed to say that."

"Okay, I'll take your word for it," Gabrielle laughed. "So, what's a tag swap?"

"If someone gets in trouble," Doria said, and her tone changed slightly. She looked down, and Gabrielle could tell this was a little awkward

for her. "I decide who can swap, who can't."

"How do you decide?" Gabrielle asked.

Doria looked surprised by the question, glanced up at the clock on the wall by the door.

"Hey, you're going to have to go in a few minutes," she said. "Let me show you something."

She rose and Gabrielle followed her to the windows at the other end of the room, trying not to feel self-conscious. She wondered if Doria envied the girls who had sex all the time, if she ever wished she could be with the boys. When they were growing up, they had the same curiosities, she recalled, speaking furtively about boys and their things and what they would do with them when they were hard.

"Look," Doria said, standing at the window, pointing down.

Gabrielle looked at the woods and the grass and the fields where she and Doria used to play.

"Do you remember the ruins?" she asked.

"Oh, that pile of rocks?" Gabrielle said, pointing to the overgrown mound where she and Doria used to hide.

"You called it the ruins," Doria said. "Don't you remember? You said it used to be a giant's house, until he stood all the way up and brought the ceiling down."

"I don't remember that," Gabrielle said. "It sounds like something I'd say, though."

Gabrielle was still shaking when she returned to her stall.

"You look far away again," Roxanne said from her bed.

"I thought I was just going to quietly give milk for a few months," Gabrielle said, striding to the toilet. "But most of the time, that's the last thing on my mind."

"What happened this time?"

"I talked to two ghosts."

"Real ghosts?" Roxanne queried, eyebrow raised, clearly wondering if Gabrielle had begun hallucinating.

"Ghosts aren't real," Gabrielle retorted, not wanting to say anything further. "Real people. Ghosts to me."

The rest of the day passed without event, other than the reflection Gabrielle found incapable of stopping her mind from conducting. Cameron had dropped a series of bombshells, each of which would have sent her into

a state of frenzy a week ago. He wanted to take her out. He knew about Roger. He didn't save her dad's life.

And then, Doria. Her best friend for years. Back here, helping her parents farm milk. There was something else going on here, she thought, a suspicion she couldn't put her finger on. But she knew Doria well enough to believe there were other stories playing out.

Chapter 25: George

Gabrielle didn't see George again in production, but by the end of her last milking, her mind was turning away from unfathomable mysteries and back to him, and to the simple carnality of this place. By 9, her nerves were jangling. She was sitting on her bed, trying to read a novel she'd taken from the commons, but her mind was on other topics.

She wanted George, and she didn't. What would his stall be like? Would Dan be watching? What would George himself be like, with her?

At 9:05, Gabrielle heard the clang of doors opening and closing further down the block, looked up and saw the mattress above her shake and knew Vanessa, the redhead who'd been Roxanne's last stallmate, must be on her way.

Vanessa appeared at the bars a moment later, hair flowing across her shoulders, her leash in Lynn's hand.

Roxanne descended her ladder and moved to the door of the entry cage, waiting with barely-concealed impatience as Vanessa passed into the stall and bent over at the port to have her leash removed.

"See you in an hour, Vanessa," Lynn said.

Vanessa ignored her, straightening and, after a quick smile at Roxanne that spoke volumes, embraced her, arms tight around her waist, kissing her on her neck and then on her mouth.

Gabrielle had promised she wouldn't be jealous, but now she was, and she looked down at her book and bit her lip and tried to pretend she was reading.

"Hi, Gabrielle," Vanessa said, still embracing Roxanne.

"Hey, Vanessa," Gabrielle replied, looking up and trying to offer a welcoming smile.

"You want a quick round now?"

Gabrielle looked up, lowered her book. Roxanne was looking at her too, expectantly, and she began to suspect there was something she was supposed to know that she didn't.

"What do you mean?" she asked, wishing she didn't have to confess more ignorance.

"Before I'm with Roxanne," Vanessa said, pausing. "Um, you."

“Wait,” Gabrielle said, and she set her book down and turned, planting her feet on the floor. “What?”

“Stall visits are shared,” Roxanne said. “I thought I told you.”

“Shared?” Gabrielle queried.

Vanessa laughed, a little nervously, and stepped over to the beds, looking down at Gabrielle.

“You don’t have to if you don’t want to,” she said.

“I told her you’re very sweet,” Roxanne said. “She wants to see for herself, though.”

“Oh,” Gabrielle said, no longer jealous at all, but confused instead. “Okay. But they’re about to take me to George.”

“You’re okay with this, then?” Vanessa queried.

“Sure,” Gabrielle said. “But I’m not sure what we can get done. They’re about to take me to George.”

“We don’t have to finish,” Vanessa said. “That’s George’s job. Just call it a warmup.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said. “What should I do?”

“Get on your back, and I’ll get on top. You like oral, right?”

Roxanne laughed. “She already knows you like oral, Gabrielle,” she said. “She’s just being polite.”

“You’re not jealous?” Gabrielle asked.

“No,” Roxanne replied firmly. “Of course not.”

Gabrielle smiled, understanding now. Once again, when there was a choice between less sex and more sex, Arnold Farm selected more sex.

Gabrielle slid back onto her bed, lay back, and Vanessa clambered over her, knees at her shoulders, her shaved vulva above Gabrielle’s mouth, white tag dangling, her own mouth above Gabrielle’s sex.

Once in position, she dropped her mouth down, first licking around Gabrielle’s opening, along her outer lips, across the mound where her hair was starting to grow back, and then she ran her tongue along Gabrielle’s slit, working it in, between her lips, against her clitoris, down the groove to her opening.

Gabrielle did her best to serve Vanessa the same way, licking her opening, tasting the musky fluids leaking out of her hole, touching her clitoris and her lips with her tongue.

Suddenly, Vanessa’s whole mouth was on Gabrielle’s organ, licking and tasting and exploring. Not wanting to cum so soon before she was taken

to George, Gabrielle pulled her mouth away from Vanessa's slit.

"Wait," she gasped. "Stop."

With one more run of her tongue across Gabrielle's folds, Vanessa ceased, crawled over Gabrielle and slid to the edge of her bed, looking back at her.

"You wanted me to orgasm," Gabrielle said.

"I did," Vanessa confessed. "I almost had you too."

"I would have let you if I wasn't going to see George," Gabrielle said. "But, uh, thanks."

Roxanne, standing by the foot of the bed, laughed wickedly.

"Enjoy your visit," she said, motioning to the bars.

Lynn had arrived, two leashes hung over her shoulder.

"How long have you been waiting?" Gabrielle asked, sliding off the bed and stepping to the port.

"I just got here," she said. "Anus or vagina?"

Gabrielle thought briefly, decided her front hole couldn't take any more stimulation.

"Anus," she said, turning and bending. "But go slow please."

Lynn eased the leash plug up Gabrielle's anus, locked it in her rectum and passed the leash through the port.

"Still a little sensitive?" she asked.

"A little," Gabrielle replied. She stepped to the entry cage with one more glance at Roxanne and Vanessa, standing by Roxanne's ladder, preparing to ascend.

"Have fun," she said sincerely.

She left the cage, took her place behind Lynn and immediately suffered through a return of the jitters.

"So, sharing always happens?" Gabrielle asked quietly.

"If everyone agrees," Lynn replied.

"And George has to share me?"

"It's considered a courtesy."

"He told me his stallmate is Dan."

"Not his stallmate," Lynn corrected. "But he's in the stall next door."

"So we're separated from him by bars."

"Yeah," Lynn agreed, leading Gabrielle into the hall and toward the male block. Gabrielle had never been on that block before, and her nerves

continued to jump as they approached it.

“Dan’s sort of big,” Gabrielle observed.

“Have you held him yet?”

“God no,” Gabrielle said. “I haven’t had anyone inside me yet. I mean, not since I got here. I was with my boyfriend last Saturday. That was the last time.”

“Well, the choice is yours,” Lynn said, “but if you don’t think you can, you’ll want to let Dan know as soon as you get there.”

“Shouldn’t he have a girl tonight?” Gabrielle asked.

“No, he was put through his paces earlier. They wanted to keep his evening free.”

“Because of me?”

“I think so,” Lynn said. “Arwen said in some notes on you that you tend to react strongly to sex.”

“My notes?” Gabrielle repeated.

“Yeah,” Lynn said. “We keep a record on everyone.”

“That’s something I hope I’ll never get to read.”

Lynn laughed. They had arrived at the door to the male block, and she stopped and turned toward Gabrielle.

“It’s nothing bad,” she said. “In fact, you’re doing really well so far. Everyone’s impressed.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said.

“And you’re big enough,” Lynn added.

“For what?”

“For Dan. They measured you, on the first day.”

“I barely remember,” Gabrielle said. “Okay, yeah, they put a thing up me, and then, uh, Esther said I had, um, full capacity. I remember that word. Capacity. Like I was a car.”

Lynn laughed again, turned toward the entrance to the male block, Gabrielle trailing obediently behind, anus registering a mild sting she barely noticed through her clanging nerves.

The layout was the same as the female stalls – a pair of stalls with bars between them, separated from the next pair of stalls by a solid wall.

The appearance was the only thing similar, however. Gabrielle noticed the smell immediately, not delicate and sanitized like the girls’ stalls. Not foul either, just more like a boy’s room. A little sweat, the smell of basic soap, a trace of aftershave and deodorant.

George was in the first stall, sitting on the lower bunk, the upper bunk empty and, as far as Gabrielle knew, unnecessary.

George was looking at her, a slight smile on his face, while Dan sat on his bed in the next stall and looked down, reading.

Gabrielle heard voices further into the block, a boy's voice, and then a girl, saying, "Yeah, yeah." She couldn't see into the next set of stalls, but she knew that Cameron Flasche must be there, and Al, and Ronen. Did Cameron know she was here? Was he entertaining the girl who had just spoken?

Gabrielle stepped into the entry cage, passed into George's stall and bent at the port so Lynn could remove her leash.

"Be back in an hour," she said.

"Okay, thanks," Gabrielle replied.

George scooted off his bed and moved to the floor, standing, smiling broadly, penis fully erect.

Gabrielle looked at him and all her doubt and fear evaporated. She remembered seeing him the first time, with Beverly, then walking with him on a group chain, flirting with him, and her middle was suddenly on fire with a lust so strong it was almost like sickness.

She stepped to him, smiled briefly and, without a word, fell to her knees, taking his penis, sucking it, allowing it to fill her mouth, moving her lips up and down the shaft.

He grunted, touched her hair as he had with Beverly, stood still and allowed her to service him for close to five minutes while her aching hole soaked itself.

She leaned back, pulled her mouth away, reached up and touched his balls, and the metal band that secured them. A small ring dangled from the side of the collar, where the leash was attached.

"Does it hurt?" she asked.

"Not at all," George replied.

"Do you ever worry someone might pull on your leash too hard?"

"The leash has a catch that's supposed to open if that happens. But I'm told that will hurt, so I've just taken their word for it."

She stood, allowing the tip of his penis to touch her mound.

"Where?" she whispered.

"On my bed."

“I kinda figured,” she said, stepping over to his bed, dropping down on it on her hands and knees.

George slid up behind her, pulled her tag out of the way and unceremoniously mounted her, driving his penis up her sheath with a single motion.

“Oh, god, yeah,” Gabrielle sighed. “Oh . . .”

George pulled back until just his tip was inside her, encircled tightly by her lips, then he pushed back in, shoving in hard and fast, pulling back out again, then thrusting back in.

“Oh,” Gabrielle grunted with every thrust. “Oh. Oh. Oh.”

His rhythm picked up and she sensed he was about to cum, but then he slowed and she realized he was dragging it out, maximizing the pleasure of being inside her.

“You’re making it last,” she observed quietly.

“Yeah,” he agreed breathlessly. “Is that okay?”

“I didn’t know guys could do that,” she said, struggling to breathe. “But it’s fine. As long as I get to cum.”

He settled into a slow, steady rhythm, easing into and out of her, breathing deeply but not, for now, nearing orgasm.

Gabrielle was the first to crack.

“Okay, you win,” she said, stifling a laugh. “I need to cum. Now.”

“How?”

“On my back.”

George withdrew his penis from her chamber, she rolled over on her back and spread her legs, reaching up to grab his shoulders as he guided his sex up her slot.

“Grind in me, okay?” she panted. “Press my clit.”

George obliged with deep, firm thrusts, pushing himself into her over and over while she cried out quietly, the climax building quickly once it started, emanating between her legs, spreading into her belly, her thighs, her breasts and her mind.

“Uhuhuh,” she gasped, tightening her sheath around George’s swelling member, forcing him into the orgasm he’d been resisting.

She sensed that his thrusts were timed to match his squirts, and she knew his semen must be pouring into her hole now, making her wet chamber so deliciously slippery there was almost no friction as he finished, bouncing up and down on her to complete his release.

Still holding his shoulders, she pulled him down toward her. She wasn't sure if kissing was allowed, but she didn't care. At this moment, she liked George. Possibly, she even loved him.

He understood and offered his mouth, his taste, and he held his penis up her, resting inside, while they made love with their mouths.

He softened slowly, making Gabrielle wonder if he could go again, but as they kissed, he slipped out of her, his cum and her lubricant coursing out from her vagina and down across her anus and onto his bed.

"We're making a mess," she said.

"It happens all—" George began, interrupting himself.

"the time," Gabrielle said, finishing his sentence for him.

"I wasn't going to say that," George said.

"Don't lie," Gabrielle said, laughing into his ear. "I know how it works."

"Okay," George said. "I'm glad."

He rose up on his knees, smiling.

"I'm your first visit, right?"

"Yeah."

"You know about sharing?"

"Yeah, as of, like, 30 minutes ago."

"Oh, yeah?" he said.

"Yeah, Roxanne had Vanessa visit, and the first thing she did was get on top of me."

"I kind of figured."

"What do you mean?"

"Your pussy was soaked. Girls don't get that wet before they start having sex."

Gabrielle laughed, sat up and looked over at Dan in the adjoining stall, still sitting quietly on his bed, looking down, giving the couple their privacy.

"So, he's expecting it, right?" she whispered.

"Yes," George said. "Oh yes."

Chapter 26: Dan

“How’s it done?” Gabrielle asked him.

“Through the bars,” George replied. “And . . . you’ll be restrained.”

“What do you mean?”

“The same as when you’re getting milked. No collar, though, just hands and feet.”

“Why?” Gabrielle asked. This wasn’t something she’d anticipated.

“To discourage pulling away,” George said.

“Because Dan’s too big?” Gabrielle inquired nervously. “I’m not going to let you chain me so he can tear me up.”

“It’s not just for Dan,” George said. “There’s restraints in all the male stalls. You can still slide forward if it hurts, and Dan’s not going to complain, but they don’t want you just getting up and walking away once you’ve said yes.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said. “So, supposedly, I’m big enough to hold him. And he did some things in the production room to the girl next to me. He was gentle.”

“He’s the same way here,” George said.

“Still,” Gabrielle said. “I need to see how this works before I’m going to say yes.”

George rose from his bed, Gabrielle following him, feeling George’s semen continuing to spill out of her sex. She looked through the bars at Dan, and he looked back. He was sitting cross-legged, his penis swollen, pointing up toward the ceiling.

“Hey, Dan,” she said, trying to sound casual.

“Hi, Gabrielle,” he said, and he slid to the edge of his bed but didn’t rise.

“This is my first time in a boy’s stall,” she said. “There’s some stuff I didn’t know about.”

“I understand, Miss,” Dan said with a level of politeness Gabrielle found, under the circumstances, ridiculous.

George raised a small metal plate set into the floor, a few feet from the bars, exposing a single cuff at the end of a short chain.

“This is for your left wrist,” he said, pulling the cuff out, lifting a second plate and drawing out that that cuff as well. “And this one if for your other wrist.”

“So, you put them on me?” Gabrielle asked.

“Yes. They don’t lock. They can be opened as soon as you’re done.”

“As soon as Dan’s done,” she corrected.

“Okay,” he agreed.

Dan rose, looked down at his penis and smiled awkwardly.

“There’s a second set in my stall, for your ankles,” he said, and he touched one of the metal plates with his toe.

“Okay,” Gabrielle said. “Whatever. But you gotta go slow.”

“I promise,” Dan said, and he smiled in a way that told Gabrielle he was very much hoping she’d say yes.

She turned around and dropped to her knees, putting her feet and calves through the bars and into Dan’s stall.

Dan took her left ankle and gently cuffed it, then her right. George knelt before her and did the same to her wrists, securing each within a cuff.

Like George, Dan didn’t wait for an invitation, but he was true to his word, touching the mouth of her vagina, spreading her lips without putting anything inside her yet, inspecting her first to make sure first she could fit him comfortably.

She could, he apparently decided, because the next thing she felt was the tip of his penis at her opening, just touching her, feeling her, sensing her, as if it had a mind of its own.

“Okay so far, Gabrielle?”

“Yeah, go ahead.”

Slowly but relentlessly, the penis began boring into her, forcing her lips apart, stretching the walls of her vagina beyond anything she’d handled before.

As the first half of his member entered her, however, the sensation was all good, her chamber adapting to the size quickly, her walls closing around it, embracing it.

It helped, she knew, that her vagina was coated with both her own lubrication and George’s slippery cum. For all the cream that had gushed out across her lips and anus, plenty still remained within her, smoothing Dan’s journey up her breeding tunnel.

“Oh, god, oh, god,” Gabrielle said rhythmically, holding her pelvis still, letting George do all the work.

“Want me to stop?” he asked.

“No, keep going,” she said. “You can go deeper. I’ll tell you when you hit the end.”

Dan kept pushing, his thick shaft, his bulky tip invading Gabrielle’s sex organ inch by inch.

He stopped before she told him to.

“That’s it,” he said.

“You hit something?” she gasped.

“Yeah, the end of your vagina,” he replied in what might have been a sarcastic tone, although Gabrielle couldn’t tell because he was starting to pant.

“How much of you is in me?”

“All but maybe a quarter inch.”

“Okay, okay,” Gabrielle said. “You need to move it, right?”

“To cum, yeah,” he said.

“How much will you need to move?” she asked.

Dan laughed quietly, to himself.

“The usual amount, I guess.”

“Can you start slow?” Gabrielle asked. “And then, I’ll tell you if you can go faster.”

Gabrielle looked up, saw George on his bed, observing the proceedings with a disinterested air. He looked at her and smiled, and she saw herself as she was, a girl chained to the floor, negotiating how she should be fucked with one guy while the guy she’d just fucked looked on. Briefly, she pondered the differences between tonight’s sex and what she’d done last Saturday – a week ago – with Roger: furtive, back-seat intercourse that was ruined when she started giving milk.

There were a lot of differences.

Dan was moving now, and she turned her attention back to that, the way his heavy rod wracked her walls with every thrust.

“Uh, uh,” she grunted.

“Stop?”

“No, it’s okay, keep going. You can go a little faster. Uh, uh.”

Dan moved slowly, deliberately within her until the end, when he began to gasp and his thrusts sped up.

Gabrielle held still, bottom pressed against the bars, concentrating on the feel of his penis as it swelled.

“Ah!” Dan cried, and he slid all the way up Gabrielle’s chamber and stayed there, tip against her cervix, gentle even in the throes of release, semen rushing from his body and into hers.

“Ow, ow, ow damn,” Gabrielle said quietly to herself, still not sure if this was good or terrible, if Dan was ripping her or giving her ecstasy. In the end, ecstasy won out, a solid orgasm that came from nowhere and had her grunting with surprise, pulling at her chains and tightening around Dan’s organ as he continued to squirt into her.

She squirted as well, a healthy stream that shot from her organ, spilling onto the floor, and coating Dan’s collared testicles as well.

“Oh, yeah,” she said, spasming through the final wave of pleasure, pulling away slightly from Dan, then ramming backwards, to be impaled one more time before she pulled away completely and dropped her head to the floor, one hand in her hair, her wrist restraint taut.

She lay there, panting, the world spinning, while Dan opened her ankle cuffs and George freed her wrists. For another minute, she just crouched, on her arms and knees, forehead against the cool concrete of George’s stall.

She could feel the trickle of fresh cum at her lips, dripping down across her clitoris and soaking the short pubic hairs across her mound. It was all she thought about until George spoke, standing above her.

“Everything okay, Gabrielle?” he asked her.

Gabrielle laughed, began to stir, pulling her legs out of Dan’s stall, drawing them beneath herself, preparing to stand.

George took her upper arm in his hand and helped her rise, guided her over to his bed and let her sit, settling next to her.

She put her hand on George’s thigh, looked through the bars to Dan, who was washing up at his sink, then looked down at her vulva.

Now that the orgasm was receding into memory, she could feel the raw sting of what had been done between her legs.

“It’s starting to hurt,” she said.

“Are you bleeding?”

“I would be, probably, but all that’s in there now is the cum you guys put in me.”

George laughed. “I’m sure you’ll recover soon.”

She turned toward him, an unexpected relief washing over her. She'd survived. She'd performed. She'd pleased two boys, and they'd pleased her.

"Hey," she said. "Thanks."

"Anytime," he said, squeezing the hand that rested on his leg.

"Anytime."

She kissed him again, the kiss of a spent lover, closing her eyes. When she opened them, it was dark.

"Oh my god, what time is it?"

"10:30."

"I thought they were going to come for me by now."

"Lynn showed up about 10 minutes ago, saw that you were, uh, busy, and left."

"Is she coming back?"

"I'm sure," he said. "But they don't mind giving girls a little extra time when they need it."

"Nice of them," Gabrielle said.

Lynn appeared in the half light, two leashes slung over her shoulder. Gabrielle gave George one more peck on the cheek, stood and stepped to the port.

"I hope you have one for my anus," she said.

"Yeah," Lynn said, "I kinda figured that's what you'd want."

Gabrielle turned and bent at the port, allowing Lynn to part her lips and check her opening for semen. Satisfied with the impromptu inspection, Lynn inserted the rod and locked it.

"God, even that hurts," Gabrielle said, moving to the entry port. "I'm sensitive everywhere."

She remembered to wave just before Lynn walked her beyond sight of George and Dan. Both smiled and waved back. She wanted to think they'd enjoyed her. Perhaps they even liked her. But then, they had a lot of girls to like.

With every step through the dark back to her block and her stall, semen, lubrication and ovulatory fluid leaked from her opening, onto her lips and down her thighs. Suddenly, more than anything else, she wanted a shower. But, returned to Roxanne and the girls in the stall next door, all she could do was sit on the toilet and wipe, and then soak her rag in the sink and pass it across her legs and over her hole.

Done, she hung up the rag and turned to Roxanne, who was peering down at her from her bed, eyes shining.

“Success?” she asked.

“Define success,” Gabrielle countered.

“You came and they came,” Roxanne clarified.

“God yes,” Gabrielle replied. “I mean, what do you think I was wiping from between my legs?”

“It coulda been something you spilled,” Roxanne said. “Milk, maybe.”

“No, it was cum.”

“From both?”

“Yeah.”

“How did you like Dan?”

“I was there for George,” Gabrielle retorted. She was starting to feel sorry for George. Because of who he’d been paired with, the main event anytime a girl visited George was going to be the boy in the next stall, his prodigious cock the star of the show.

“Are you saying you couldn’t handle it?”

“Oh, I handled it,” Gabrielle said. “Oh yeah.”

“Tell me.”

“It hurt and it was good, and I told him not to move too much, and he listened to me, and he figured out how to cum anyway, and then I came too, I guess because of the laws of nature.”

“You were very sweet to Vanessa,” Roxanne said.

“She tried to make me cum,” Gabrielle said.

“She’s like that. Considers it a challenge.”

“I hope you came for her then.”

“Twice.”

Gabrielle smiled, returned to the sink to brush her teeth, went to the bars with Roxanne to say goodnight to Austen and Penelope, who were sitting together on Austen’s bed, talking quietly, not making love as far as Gabrielle could tell.

“Congratulations,” Austen said, offering her mouth between the bars. Obviously, they’d heard everything she told Roxanne.

“Thanks, I guess,” Gabrielle said. “I didn’t do much.”

“I’m sure you were good,” Penelope said.

“Yeah,” Gabrielle said, kissing her, “I got an A in spreading my legs in high school.”

Done kissing their neighbors, Gabrielle and Roxanne shared a long embrace and a kiss that was not quite sensual, but not quite how sisters kissed either.

She dropped to her bed, exhausted, and fell asleep immediately.

Her first thought upon waking was dedicated to Cameron Flasche. Not the two boys she’d been with last night. Not her vagina, still throbbing. Not the entire strange aspect of her current existence.

Cameron Flasche.

It was Sunday. The girls would be trading stalls tonight. Beyond that, no one visited anyone on Sunday nights.

She needed to ask for Cameron Flasche now, today. She needed to be with him.

They’d talked yesterday like they’d always known each other. Not just like she’d always known him, which was almost true, but that he’d always known her, which was decidedly untrue. She hadn’t been nervous. Neither had he. Of course, he was Cameron Flasche, and he didn’t get nervous. But still. She could talk about anything with Cameron Flasche. Indeed, she already had. They’d talked about sex. They’d more or less agreed they would be doing it. What other topic could be harder to bring up than that?

And yet, if she had to sum up the conversation with one word, she would choose . . . humor. He was toying with her. She was toying with him, too. They were both . . . playing.

But then, he said he hadn’t saved her father’s life. Why did he say that? He was wrong. This was something over which there could be no doubt. It was official. It was in the papers.

Yes, Gabrielle thought to herself – he just wanted her to have a reason to talk to him again.

The Sunday morning routine proceeded the same as all other days – she had breakfast, dutifully filled out her report, noting with a sense of accomplishment, if not pride, that she’d enjoyed two orgasms yesterday, both under the power of male penetration.

In the space at the bottom of the report, she wrote “Please bring Raphael to my stall.” Her hand didn’t shake. Her heart didn’t flutter. It was

simply something that needed to be done.

She worked on her board while Austen drew messages on hers. Gabrielle's drawing of the park was coming along, in fits and starts. It reminded her of a freedom she had lost. She had other freedoms now, but the right to be outdoors was sad to lose.

She had no interest in sex this morning, so the commotion in the production room during her first milking had no effect on her. George and Ronen were making the rounds, as well as one girl, but Gabrielle just shook her head. She did smile at George, however, and he smiled back, as if they were secret lovers.

After her second milking, she was walked to the kitchen to work on lunch. Like yesterday, she was chained beside Beverly, and they shared a quiet word now and then, Gabrielle revealing the details of her visit with George and Dan.

"Sill sore?" Beverly whispered.

"A little," Gabrielle confessed.

The meals were prepared flawlessly this morning, so no swats, but after lunch, during her third milking, Ronnie approached her.

"Hey," she said, looking up at him quizzically.

"Hey, Gabrielle," he said. "You got a post yesterday, didn't you?"

"Yeah," she said. "I was next to Austen. We got the same thing."

"Did you orgasm?"

"Uh, yeah," Gabrielle said.

"There was nothing in your report about that," he said. "Just the two males from last night."

"Oh, sorry," Gabrielle said. "I lost track."

"Okay," Ronnie said, "that's a black tag."

"Oh, damn," Gabrielle said. "Sorry."

Ronnie affixed the tag to her ear first, then stepped behind her and knelt. Gabrielle opened her legs and arched her back, making her labia easier to reach, wondering if he'd appreciate her cooperation so much he'd decide not to tag her after all.

He didn't, of course, stretching out her vaginal lip, pulling her ring out and securing the punishment tag to it.

"It's just a one, right?"

"Yeah, but if you keep making mistakes on your report, it'll go to two."

“Okay,” Gabrielle agreed. “Yesterday was kind of a unique situation.”

To her surprise, Gabrielle didn't really care that she'd gotten in trouble again. She'd ask for stocks, and if Grendl insisted on spanking her, she'd survive.

The machine beeped and Lynn appeared, moving behind her, slipping the leash into her anus.

“Want to get that tag off now?” she asked.

“Yeah, I guess,” Gabrielle said. “Where would I be going otherwise?”

“Just back to your stall.”

“Okay, fine,” Gabrielle said.

There were four girls in punishment today, none of whom Gabrielle knew other than by appearance. Two were seated, hands and feet secured in stocks, one was standing, and one was leashed to a post, her welt-free bottom telling Gabrielle she hadn't been struck yet.

There was no Grendl here. Instead, the desk was occupied by Doria.

“Oh, hey, Gabrielle,” Doria said, trying to sound natural.

“Hey, Doria,” Gabrielle said, trying to sound the same, and failing. Seeing Doria in the commons yesterday was embarrassing enough. Going to her old friend for punishment was an entirely new level of awkwardness.

Lynn offered Doria Gabrielle's leash, but she waved it off, so Lynn let it fall between Gabrielle's feet and exited the room.

“I didn't know you worked in here,” Gabrielle said. She knew she was blushing, which made her blush harder.

“I'll work here in a pinch,” Doris said. “Greta's off most weekends, and our usual weekend manager is out sick.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said.

“What did you do?”

Gabrielle, blushing more fiercely, remembering a thousand innocent childhood conversations with the girl before her, forced the words to leave her mouth: “I left something off my, um, um, orgasm report.”

“You didn't forget a boy, I hope,” Doria said, eyebrow raised, voice even.

“No. It was, uh, something I did, in production. Boys were last night. So I kind of lost track of things.”

Doria just stared, expression unreadable.

Gabrielle put her hands on her hips and looked down. “So, um . . .” she mumbled.

“I’m not going to swat you, if that’s what you’re wondering,” Doria said, and she laughed disarmingly.

“Uh, yeah, that would be kind of weird,” Gabrielle said. “What are my choices?”

“Room or stocks,” Doria said, standing.

“Stocks,” Gabrielle said. “The standing kind.”

“Have you been in them before?”

“No,” Gabrielle said.

Doria walked over to the row of stocks, chose the one next to the girl who was already secured there, unlatched the wooden plank and raised it.

“I guess it’s kind of obvious,” she said. “Neck here, hands here.”

Gabrielle stepped up, wishing she’d chosen the room instead, but now forcing herself to go through with the inevitable, putting her neck and hands into the little slots, bending uncomfortably.

“Do you want me to raise it a little?” Doria asked.

“Yeah, if you can. I didn’t know that was an option.”

Gabrielle stepped back and Doria grabbed the post, released a catch at the base with her shoe, and slid it up half a foot.

“Okay,” she said.

Gabrielle returned her neck and wrists to the slots, held still while Doria angled the top board down, latching it shut.

“How’s that?” she asked.

“Better,” Gabrielle said. “Thanks.”

“Sure,” said Doria. “Forty five minutes.”

Doria disappeared, returned with the cane and walked up the girl at the post.

The girl looked at Doria as if trying to gauge the pain she was going to suffer, then she turned, put her hands on her knees and closed her eyes.

“Whack, whack, whack,” went the sound of wood on bare flesh, the girl issuing a soft gasp with each blow, but otherwise remaining silent.

Doria unlocked the girl’s leash, walked her to a standing cage, locked her in and returned to her desk.

Gabrielle, with no choice but to stand and stare, gazed about the half of the room she could see, wondered if anyone was locked within the little punishment stalls. The covers were closed on two of the doors, and Gabrielle suspected she had her answer, that the covers were latched when the rooms were occupied.

She heard Doria typing, then speaking quietly into her phone. Lynn appeared, released the girl from the standing cage and walked her out. Gabrielle envied her, at least for the fact she was done with this place. No choice here was good, she reminded herself, a combination of pain, or boredom, or both. The stocks were both somewhat painful and somewhat boring. Maybe she'd choose them again, she thought, maybe not. She shifted on her feet, her leash swinging between her thighs.

More females were brought in, one choosing swats, the other the sitting stocks. Gabrielle closed her eyes during the next round of spanks, not sure she liked being able to see it being done. Two girls were freed from their stocks and walked out. Then Lynn came for Gabrielle, removed her black tags and walked her out of the room.

“Company meeting today,” Lynn said.

“When?”

“After your next milking. Everyone goes.”

“That happens every Sunday, right? Roxanne mentioned it yesterday.”

“Yeah, in the commons.”

“Everyone there at one time?”

“Yes.”

“Boys too?”

“Yes.”

“What do we do?”

“Same thing you ever do in there. But Mr. Arnold will talk some too.”

“About what?”

“Production, mostly. Profit sharing. New rules. New people.”

“Anyone new starting this week?”

“Not that I've heard about. I think for now he's got all the girls he wants.”

Chapter 27: Back to the Commons

“You got something,” Roxanne announced as soon as Gabrielle was returned to the stall. “I put it on your pillow.”

Roxanne was sitting at the bars, talking to Austen, but she looked up as Gabrielle passed by.

“Long milking,” Roxanne observed.

“I went to punishment.”

“I guessed. What did you do?”

“I forgot about the post in production yesterday,” Gabrielle said. “I came so much last night I lost track of everything else.”

“Slut.” Roxanne observed. “What did they do?”

“They let me have stocks. The one I got put in had your name on it, since you’re in it all the time.”

“Did you enjoy the show?”

“Two girls got swatted. I closed my eyes for the second one, since I don’t like watching as much as you do.”

“Who was doing the honors?”

“Doria,” Gabrielle said. She wasn’t sure people knew she was the Arnold’s daughter, or that Doria had been her childhood friend, and she had no interest at this moment in bringing all that up.

Gabrielle found the letter on her pillow, recognized her mother’s handwriting, tore open the envelope:

“Dear Gabi,” it began. “You got something in the mail from Brown. They need you to reapply for winter, so you have to update some things. I talked to Mrs. Arnold and she said they have some computers you can use. Love you, miss you, Mom.”

“Hey, can we use those computers in the commons?” Gabrielle asked.

“Yeah, if someone isn’t on them,” Austen said. “You can sign up for them. And it’s one point per hour.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said, joining the girls on the floor.

“Who else was in punishment today?” Roxanne asked.

“I didn’t know anyone’s name,” Gabrielle said. “A black girl, two blondes.”

“Who got swatted?”

“One of the blondes, a brunette. The blonde was kinda short, short hair cut like a boy’s, no pubic hair—”

“Ashley,” Roxanne said. “She’s in block 1.”

“Where’s Penelope?” Gabrielle asked.

“Council,” Austen said. “They always meet on Sundays, before the company meeting.”

“Where do they meet?” Gabrielle asked.

“In the commons usually. Downstairs today. There’s a meeting room down there.”

Lynn came for Roxanne a little before 3, and Ronnie showed up for Gabrielle and Austen about 3:30, securing them to a chain with six other girls, as well as Dan and Ronen.

“I’m still sore,” Gabrielle whispered to Dan as they walked.

“So am I,” he said.

“Boys don’t get sore,” she said.

Dan just smiled at her.

There was as much commotion in the production room as Gabrielle had ever seen, every position full, all five boys there now. Gabrielle would have said yes to Cameron Flasche on principle, but any other male would get a firm no.

Cameron was otherwise occupied, however, thrusting slowly behind a dark-haired girl, her head lowered, her eyes closed, her mind concentrating on mating with the world’s most beautiful boy.

Everyone was going to the commons, Gabrielle knew, and they were most likely cycling all the boys through now to burn off the lust so things wouldn’t get overly awkward there.

She needed to get on one of the PC’s to check her Brown account, Gabrielle reminded herself, but she would also be catching up with Cameron Flasche, no matter what else he was doing. She wanted him to know she’d asked for him, that she looked forward to having him in her stall. She even looked forward to sharing him with Roxanne – after she’d had her way with him, of course.

Milking stations were opening up quickly as she and the other girls waited on their chain, Lynn and Ronnie securing them, and massaging and cupping their breasts with impressive efficiency.

“Hey, Helen,” Gabrielle said, noticing her friend to her left, wincing as the machine made its first firm tugs on her nipples. “How’s it going?”

“Good,” she replied. “I’m done with my period.”

Gabrielle glanced over at her, noticed that the red tag was gone from her ear, replaced by the standard white.

“They give you enough tampons, right?”

“Yeah, you should always have enough. They kind of track it, in fact. Leave one in too long and you’ll get in trouble.”

“Like, punishment room trouble?”

“Yeah.”

“Another rule not to break,” Gabrielle observed. “There are a lot of them.”

“Yup, but it keeps Grendl employed.”

Gabrielle laughed.

“That’s not the worst thing about periods, though,” Helen said.

“Then what is?”

“No visits.”

“Huh?” Gabrielle asked. “Oh, you mean, you can’t go to other stalls?”

“Yeah,” Helen said. “I’m always climbing the walls by the time I’m done.”

“You’d do it during your period?”

“With a guy, yeah.”

“I’m not sure about it for myself,” Gabrielle said. “I mean, the average guy . . .”

“The guys here wouldn’t mind it,” Helen said. “I’ve asked.”

Gabrielle laughed again.

“I hear you saw George and Dan last night,” Helen said.

“Yeah. First visit. Quite an adventure.”

“Would you visit a girl?”

“I think so,” Gabrielle said. “Depending on the girl.”

“Would you visit me?”

Gabrielle looked at Helen, met her eyes.

“Are you asking me for a date?”

Helen smiled and nodded.

“I would, sure,” Gabrielle said. She looked over again. Until this moment, Helen had been in her mind simply the girl on her period. Now she was another potential lover, and Gabrielle tried to imagine being with her.

Helen was blonde, long-haired, small-breasted, with a pixie face, sort of like a girl in a Japanese cartoon, with thick, light brown pubic hair.

Gabrielle wasn't sure if she preferred hair. She'd only licked Roxanne and Vanessa, who were both shaved. But then, Gabrielle was planning to let her own hair grow. Not liking it on another girl would make her a hypocrite. She hoped it wouldn't be coming off in her mouth, though.

“You don't mind being hit on?” Helen asked.

“Is that what that was?” Gabrielle said.

“I guess. Sort of.”

“No,” Gabrielle said. “Usually not. Well, unless the guy was a jerk and kept bugging me, but that almost never happened. Maybe twice. But overall, I like attention. I guess most people do.”

Gabrielle felt the slightest tingle at her opening, the first hint of lust she'd experienced all day. It wasn't necessarily that she found Helen particularly arousing. It was more about the way things were handled here, that sex was a given, that it could be proposed casually, and accepted or refused just as casually, that it was simply another part of what happened, without embarrassment.

Of course, Gabrielle realized, if a boy had been in Helen's place, naked and chained next to her, asking for a visit, Gabrielle's hole would have been wetting itself shamelessly. She was ovulating, after all, and she was all but recovered from last night. Suddenly, she wanted to be in the commons with five naked males, talking to them as if everything were completely normal. Talking to Cameron Flasche was her first priority, but if she got a chance, she'd speak to all of them, particularly Ronen and Al, neither of whom she'd met yet.

Helen's machine beeped and Lynn showed up moments later to remove her cups, insert her leash and free her.

“See you in commons, I guess,” Gabrielle said.

“Yeah, see you there.”

Gabrielle finished next, one of eight girls who got done at the same time and were put on a long group chain with Al and Dan, both bearing soft, wet penises.

Al was secured beside her on the chain, so she looked at him and smiled.

“Gabrielle, right?” he said as they made their way out of production.

“Yeah. And you must be Al.”

“Nothing you heard is true,” he quipped.

“What do you think I’ve heard?”

“Tell me.”

“Something about being an international jewelry thief.”

Al stared at her, too surprised to say anything for a moment.

“Well, that part is true,” he said. “What else?”

“Piloting spaceships? Or was that Ronen?”

“No, that was me.”

She looked down at his penis. “And then . . . movies.”

He smiled. “Okay, that one is completely false.”

“Too bad,” she said. “I’d watch.”

“Or you could be part of the real thing.”

“Something tells me that’s going to happen.”

They were brought into the commons entry cage, freed from the chain and allowed into the room.

There were at least thirty girls here, and all the boys except George and Cameron Flasche. The room was full of noise, the sounds of people talking, laughing, moving furniture around. Chairs and blankets and beanbags had been set up at one end of the space, where Mr. Arnold himself sat with a laptop and a projector, typing something.

Gabrielle looked at him, thought about saying something, decided she didn’t want to interrupt and wasn’t sure what she’d say anyway. Thanks for all the sex? Giving milk here is a lot of fun? It was nice seeing Doria yesterday and getting punished by her?

“Hey, Gabrielle!”

Gabrielle turned to find Beverly standing beside her, arms wide.

“Hi, Beverly,” Gabrielle said, embracing, wondering if Beverly wanted to kiss her, remembering that was frowned upon.

Done hugging, they continued to stand close, nipples almost touching.

“Okay, tell me, what happens now,” Gabrielle said.

“As soon as everyone gets here, Mr. Arnold will do a presentation, and then we just hang out, talk, whatever.”

“I need to get on a PC.”

“For what?”

“College stuff. I have to reapply or something.”

“Over there.”

“And then, I want to talk to boys.”

Beverly laughed. “Which ones?”

“I haven’t met Ronen yet. And then, um, Raphael.”

Beverly grabbed Gabrielle’s hand and dragged her over to a knot of girls gathered around Ronen, who was seated on the floor, raising one finger to make a point.

“No,” he was saying as they approached, “politics is an extension of the personality. The nicer the people, the kinder the nation.”

“The nicest people I ever met were in Namibia,” one of the girls countered. “And then they did all those things to Botswana.”

“There can be exceptions,” he said. “It’s not an absolute.”

“Ronen,” Beverly interrupted, “this is Gabrielle.”

Ronen looked up, smiled and stood.

“So nice to meet you,” he said, offering his hand.

Gabrielle’s eyes went from Ronen’s face to his penis, saw that it was semi-erect, and wondered if it was still firm from what he’d done in production, or it were getting hard again now amidst the presence of dozens of naked females.

For his part, Ronen cast his eyes quickly all along the length of Gabrielle’s body, lingering longest on her breasts and the thin patch of hair on her mound.

“I’ve heard good things about you, Gabrielle,” he said with a slight bow. She couldn’t tell if he were being sincerely formal, or this was the mock formality one would expect in a place where everyone was nude.

“I look forward to working with you,” she said with a half smile, and her mind went to what it would be like with Ronen, under him, or in front of him, or on top of him. Would he let a girl get on top?

“Have you met Raphael?” Ronen asked.

Gabrielle felt the brush of fingertips on her shoulder. She thought it might be Beverly, letting her know she was taking her leave, but when she

turned, she found Cameron Flasche there, standing beside her, staring at her.

“Oh, hi, Raphael,” she said.

She turned to Ronen. “Yes, Raphael and I go way back.”

He gazed at her, unsure of her meaning.

“Past lives,” she said. “I was an Egyptian princess and, now, Raphael, what did we decide you had been? I think one of my servants?”

Cameron laughed and put his hand around Gabrielle’s upper arm. “I’m always your servant,” he said. “In every life.”

Gabrielle stared at him. There were four regular boys here that she would be having sex with, and she’d enjoy it and love them and would, at least in theory, produce more milk under their attention.

And then there was Cameron Flasche.

He stepped back, his eyes locked on hers, willing her to follow him.

There were no jitters here, Gabrielle noticed. She was not afraid, or nervous, or scared.

She made her way after him, moving through little gatherings of girls and the occasional boy, not seeing them as individuals, just as obstacles to navigate.

Cameron stopped by the wall, in a space of relative quiet, turned to her, put his hand on her arm again.

“How often do you want to see me?” he asked.

“Every day and every night, forever,” Gabrielle replied. “If you can get that arranged.”

“I can’t,” he said, offering a pained smile.

“I know,” Gabrielle said. “The rules have been explained to me. No boyfriends.”

“You can see me every fifth time,” Cameron said. “Maybe a little more. And in production too. But we won’t be able to talk there.”

“Oh, you want to talk?” Gabrielle asked.

“Every day and every night, forever.”

“I love you,” Gabrielle blurted, and her eyes filled with tears, her sudden, raw emotion surprising her.

Cameron held up his hands, and at first, Gabrielle was afraid it was an act of protest, that he didn’t like what she’d said, but then he looked around the room, and she knew he just needed things kept secret.

“If anyone sees you crying with me, they’re going to know,” he said. “And they might keep us apart.”

Gabrielle raised her hand to her eyes, wiped her tears. “Is that what they do?”

“Yeah. They won’t let you sign up for me.”

Gabrielle sniffed. “Oh, these allergies,” she said. “You don’t know how hard it is to work in a place like this when you’re allergic to sex.”

Cameron smiled at her.

“I signed up for you this morning,” she said.

“My stall or yours?”

“Mine. So I’ll have to share you with Roxanne. I don’t think she’ll mind.”

Cameron smiled. “You know they do private stalls too.”

“Private? Like, just to ourselves?”

“Yes, on the male block. There are empty stalls. They’ll put us in there. But it takes ten points.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said. “That would be nice.”

“Do you know how to get points?” he asked.

“Yeah, just keep getting milked, do chores,” she said.

“There are other ways.”

“Like what?”

“Get on the council. Say something sensible during the meeting. Work the production room. Do staff supply.”

“Staff supply?”

“You go to the staff room.”

“What for?”

“The staff . . . put you in their coffee, or whatever.”

“Oh, god,” Gabrielle said. “Every time I think I’ve heard everything, something else comes up.”

“And then . . .” Cameron continued, hesitating.

“What?”

“Trading tags.”

“What does that mean?”

“You can take a girl’s punishment tags,” Cameron said, speaking hesitatingly, “and she’ll give you her points for it.”

“How many points?”

“Three points per punishment unit. At least, that’s the going rate, but you can sometimes get more.”

“Okay.”

“You’d do that?”

“Yes,” Gabrielle said firmly. “I’ve been in punishment twice. It’s not terrible.”

Cameron looked at her with a dazed expression she interpreted as fumbling love. She’d seen it in Roger’s eyes once or twice, right after they had sex. She had never had sex with Cameron Flasche.

“You’ll do the same, right?” she asked him.

“No,” Cameron said. “I can’t.”

“Why?”

“Boys don’t get points. We don’t get punished.”

“What?” Gabrielle demanded.

“We’re just here to have sex,” he explained. “All the focus is on you girls.”

“This is going to be a very lopsided relationship,” she observed.

“Maybe I’ll get to make it back up to you. Someday. I’ll get all the groceries.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said. “So, it’s that easy?”

“What?”

“We talked yesterday, and now we wanna talk all the time? Like lovers?”

“This won’t be easy at all,” he said cryptically.

“Why? Because of the rules?”

“No, because of other things.”

Gabrielle looked at him, but his face was blank and she knew he wasn’t going to explain.

“How much longer are you here?” she asked.

“Another year. I’m hoping to go to school next fall.”

“Not West Point?”

“No.”

“Why?”

“Long story.”

“Alright, everyone, let’s get started,” Mr. Arnold announced.

“You owe me two long stories then,” Gabrielle said, whispering in the sudden hush that followed Mr. Arnold’s announcement.

“What’s the other one?” Cameron asked, stepping away from the wall.

“About how you didn’t actually save my dad’s life, even though everyone thinks you did.”

“It’s not a long story, and I’d rather not tell it.”

“You know you don’t have a choice, right?”

“Yes.”

They moved slowly toward the area where the rest of the company were gathering to see Mr. Arnold’s presentation.

Cameron grabbed her upper arm one more time, put his mouth close to her ear.

“We’ve already talked more than we should have,” he whispered, “so we need to talk to other people now. But I need to say one more thing, and you need to not cry.”

“Okay.”

“I love you too,” he breathed into her ear, squeezing her arm.

“You don’t even know me,” Gabrielle protested, but by the time the words left her mouth, his hand was gone, his body was gone, and Gabrielle was by herself, at the edge of the audience that had assembled for Mr. Arnold’s presentation.

She blinked, smiled, decided she would be fine, and she went with her mind to a safer place, to the conversation she would have with Betsy if she were suddenly transported to her best friend’s bedroom.

“Yeah, I’ve just been talking to Cameron Flasche,” she would say. “Why am I naked? Well, he was too. And his cock is just as big as you’d expect. Oh, and we decided we’re in love.”

Chapter 28: Company Meeting

Gabrielle scanned the gathering, saw that Cameron had taken a seat on the carpet next to Al and a few girls and, after a little more searching, she spotted Roxanne, sitting with Austen and Penelope, and she took a seat on the floor among them.

Mr. Arnold began his presentation as soon as everyone was settled, covering the week's production statistics, average outputs, intercourse. He spoke drily, flashing black and white slides up with numbers and charts, but Gabrielle found the information fascinating, and perhaps a little obscene at times.

"Orgasms per girl are at just under one per day," Mr. Arnold said. "I'd love to see us get that number back up over one. I'll be glad to listen to suggestions on how to do that, but this is something that's really up to you girls, each of you, to work on. And no, we're not going to give bonuses for climaxing, so don't even ask. The orgasm is its own reward, I believe."

He smiled and looked out at the room, and a few girls tittered. Gabrielle suspected it was a joke he'd told before.

"We're at 33.2 ounces of milk per average female daily," Mr. Arnold continued. "That's a small jump from last week, and still a good bit more than our average for last year. Girls doing profit sharing will see another five dollars thirty-seven in their accounts this week."

He presented several charts about how the money was being allocated to the girls' accounts. Gabrielle assumed she'd be seeing some of that money herself.

"Our males delivered an estimated one point five cups of semen this week," Mr. Arnold continued, as if talking about how much it had rained over the last seven days. "Seventy-seven percent of it was delivered vaginally, fourteen percent was placed in the mouth, seven percent went in the rectum, and the rest was released outside the female's body."

Gabrielle wondered about that remaining two percent of semen, guessing that Dan had to pull out once or twice in consideration of his partners, and squirt on their bellies or rumps.

"If industry averages are to be believed, you boys are helping our girls produce fifteen extra cups of milk per week."

After he finished talking about production, he introduced a girl name Pam as council secretary. She stood up, holding a sheet of paper before her, nude otherwise.

“We voted on three things today,” she said. “The vote to recommend meatless Tuesdays failed, six to one. We voted unanimously to recommend that a sixth male be added to the five here now. And we voted four to three in favor of reducing the punishment for reporting errors to once per every two infractions.”

“Thank you, Pam, I’ll take all that under advisement,” Mr. Arnold said.

Roxanne sighed under her breath, and Gabrielle suspected these were things that had been voted on before – particularly the sixth boy – and not yet acted upon.

“Last item of business,” Mr. Arnold announced. “We need at least one new girl on the council. Who’s interested?”

No one stirred. Then Austen grabbed Gabrielle’s elbow, tried to force it up. Gabrielle pulled her arm away and half-glared, half-smiled back at her.

“Austen, were you volunteering?” Mr. Arnold inquired.

“No, Sir, Gabrielle was,” Austen said. “But she’s really shy, so she’s not sure.”

“Gabrielle?”

“Yes, Sir?” Gabrielle replied.

“You wanna be on the council?”

“I don’t feel qualified,” Gabrielle said, and knew she was blushing a deeper red than she had all week.

Everyone was staring at her, and she knew what they were seeing: an arrogant teenager who thought good grades in high school made her worthy of serving on an official board.

“You’re qualified,” Mr. Arnold said.

“I’ve only been here a week,” Gabrielle protested. “Oh, and I wasn’t really raising my hand. Austen was sort of grabbing my arm to raise it.”

Everyone laughed, bringing Gabrielle a rushing sense of relief. An arrogant girl wouldn’t have said any of the words that just left her mouth, and now they probably thought she was being both humble and funny.

“We always need fresh blood on the council,” Mr. Arnold said. “If appointed, will you serve?”

“I will, if no one else wants to be on it.”

Mr. Arnold surveyed the room. No one else moved, so he pointed at Gabrielle.

“All in favor, raise your hands.”

Gabrielle looked down, not wanting to see if anyone didn’t put up a hand.

“They ayes have it,” Mr. Arnold said. “Welcome to the council, Gabrielle.”

Gabrielle tried to smile without any pride through the light applause that followed, and she glanced at Cameron, and he looked back at her and nodded. She could get points for serving on the council, she recalled. They were already executing their secret plan. She looked away, trying not to make things too obvious, but her smile was meant for him, and she knew he knew it.

The meeting ended with a few more words of encouragement from Mr. Arnold. Gabrielle accepted congratulations from several of the girls, grinned self-deprecatingly, made her way to the three PCs in the corner. To her surprise, none were occupied, so she settled at one, turned it on, made her way to the internet, remembered her Brown University password after a few tries, logged in and updated the spaces for current employer and address. After verifying that she wanted to be considered for the spring semester, she listed herself as “Arnold Farm Production Assistant,” hoping no one at the school would ask for more information.

And then she checked her email, sucked in her breath when she saw that more than 40 messages had been sent since last Monday. Roger alone had sent at least ten.

She didn’t want to talk to anyone right now. Not even Betsy, who had sent three emails. What would she say? How could she describe her life, even with the barest of details, without sounding obscene? And she couldn’t talk about Cameron Flasche, even though it was fun to imagine doing so. Cameron wouldn’t want her to, and even if he did, there were rules against sharing Arnold Farm secrets. She’d signed that contract, after all.

So she just ignored everything, closed her email account, opened a search page and looked up Arnold Farm LLC. To her surprise, there was a

website, with several pages about milk production. There were no pictures, and it just said “alternative dairy,” so no one outside the industry would probably be able to guess what was going on here, unless they dug through the website. But Gabrielle knew, and she eagerly took in the descriptions of product quality, accreditation statistics, customer testimonials.

She’d approached her last job, at A&P, the same way, finding the maps of warehouses and shipping routes and inventory sources fascinating.

There was a whole page about “Credence Baxter Arnold,” with a picture of him behind the desk in his office at home. Among his list of accomplishments were papers he had authored, some with links, and Gabrielle clicked one, found it full of incomprehensible terms and math. But there were references to “production females” and “improved output events” and “reproduction-focused stimulation,” and Gabrielle knew he was reporting everything he had learned and applied, about how girls like Gabrielle orgasmed as often as their bodies could stand it because it increased the milk the machines could draw from their nipples.

“Time to go, Gabrielle,” Ronnie said.

Gabrielle looked up, surprised to see the room almost empty, a few girls in the entry cage bending to have leashes inserted, a half dozen more outside the cage, waiting their turn. Cameron was gone. So were all the other boys but Ronen.

Gabrielle turned off the PC, walked to the cage, bent and grunted as Lynn installed her leash.

She went straight back to the production room, just as bustling as it had been prior to the company meeting, got chained to a station after a short wait, gave her milk without interacting with anyone, and headed back to her stall.

“Congratulations!” Roxanne exclaimed, hugging Gabrielle as soon as she had returned.

“Thanks, I guess,” Gabrielle said.

Penelope, like Austen, was beaming from the other side of the bars, and Gabrielle recalled that she was already on the council.

“Okay, Penelope,” said Gabrielle, determined to continue on the path of humility, “you have to tell me everything you know so I don’t make a complete fool of myself.”

“You’ll do fine,” Penelope insisted.

“I’ve been here a week,” Gabrielle said. “I don’t know anything.”

“People who don’t know anything are good,” Austen said. “They come in with new ideas. That’s why I made you raise your hand.”

“You didn’t make me raise my hand. You grabbed my arm and I pulled it back and I think Mr. Arnold thought you had some kind of giant itch somewhere.”

“He picked you,” said Roxanne. “You can always tell when he wants someone on the council, and that’s why no one else said anything once he started talking to you.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said. “Whatever. I’m flattered. I’ll try to help out.”

“How was Raphael?” Austen asked.

“Who?” Gabrielle asked, deciding to play dumb.

“You know exactly who,” Roxanne said.

“Oh, that boy?” Gabrielle said. “He wouldn’t leave me alone, so I had to talk to him.”

“I thought you had a history.”

“Yeah, sorta. That’s why he wanted to talk. To get things resolved. And they’re resolved and everything’s good. I’ll be visiting him, and the other boys too.”

“If you visit a girl, it counts the same as visiting a boy,” Roxanne said.

“What do you mean?”

“So, say hypothetically,” Roxanne began, looking up the ceiling, “say there was one boy you were particularly sweet on, but you didn’t want anyone to know.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said. “Not that that could ever happen. But okay.”

“You can’t see just him. You have to visit other people too.”

“Yeah, that was explained to me. No boyfriends.”

“So if you don’t want to have to see all the other boys to get your time with your sweetheart,” Roxanne continued, “you can see a girl instead, and that counts. So you could see Ronen and Raphael and Al and then two girls, and then you could see, just for example, Raphael again.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said.

“Meaning, you only have to take two other dicks inside you,” Austen offered, “before you get his dick up you again.”

“God, Austen,” Gabrielle blurted. “Now you’re just being crude.”

Gabrielle scowled, but she appreciated the wisdom. It wasn't true at all that she knew nothing about how things worked here. She was collecting crucial knowledge from everyone.

The rest of the day passed uneventfully. The commotion before and after the company meeting seemed to have slowed everything down. Or maybe it was just that it was Sunday.

Chapter 29: Stall Swap

At 10 p.m., as she sat and talked by the bars, she heard the opening of doors at the end of the block, girls conversing quietly, doors opening and clanging shut.

The girls were swapping stalls, Gabrielle realized.

“I’m gonna miss you tonight,” Roxanne said, hand on Gabrielle’s arm.

“You’ll have Penelope,” Gabrielle said. She smiled and looked at her neighbors, sensing a tension. This was a disruption, a change from six nights of routine, and it probably caused stress in most of the stalls. Gabrielle understood the reason for it, though. Mix things up. Don’t let couples get too attached. Lots of sex without lots of attachment.

And lots of milk.

Ronnie appeared at the bars, and Gabrielle and Penelope stood.

He opened one door at a time, allowing Gabrielle to step into the entry cage first before locking her in. He opened the other door next, Gabrielle stepped into the stall and Penelope took her place in the cage. Another round of doors opening and locking back, and the switch was complete.

Austen stood, greeting Gabrielle with a hug and a kiss on the cheek.

The lights dimmed while they were still embracing, and Gabrielle could feel Austen’s body tighten.

“What do you like?” she whispered.

“Anything,” Gabrielle said. “I’ve been saving myself for you all day.”

“I’m touched.”

“You should be. I’m ovulating.”

“So am I,” Austen said. “I think I started this afternoon.”

Austen grabbed Gabrielle’s hand, glanced through the darkness to the other stall, where Penelope and Roxanne were already on Roxanne’s bed, seated beside each other, just talking.

“Kiss first?” Austen said.

“Of course.”

They lay down, side by side, Austen's arm around Gabrielle's waist. Austen kissed with her whole mouth, breathing through her nose while her lips lined up with Gabrielle's, teeth and tongues touching.

"You know I've wanted to do this since Monday," Austen said, moving her mouth to Gabrielle's ear, kissing it, licking it.

"Is that why you got me?"

"I think Penelope wants you too," Austen replied.

"You don't know?"

"We don't talk about other girls that way," Austen said.

She kissed Gabrielle's ear again.

"I want you to do something you haven't done before, with me."

"Okay," Gabrielle said. "Any ideas?"

"Have you ever rubbed yourself on a girl's part?"

"What do you mean?"

"I'll take that as a no."

"Get up on your hands and knees, but with your back facing the bed."

"Like crab walking?"

"Sort of."

Gabrielle did her best, and Austen assumed the same position, their knees bumping as she moved closer.

Guessing what would happen next, Gabrielle held still while Austen closed the gap between them, their vaginal lips barely touching, tags ringing lightly together.

"Oh, god, what happens if our tags catch on each other?" Gabrielle asked quietly.

"It's never happened to me," Austen said. "They're designed not to."

"Designed not to get stuck if you're rubbing yourself on another girl? That seems like a very specific design feature."

Austen laughed, pressed her sex organ harder against Gabrielle's, pulled away so that just her thick pubic hair was touching Gabrielle's lips, then pressed in again.

Gabrielle pressed back, arching her back to try to get her clitoris involved, hoping that she could find something firm among Austen's genitals to rub against.

Austen kept moving, however, offering nothing stationary for Gabrielle to pleasure herself on. Gabrielle was about to pull away, drop back to the bed and thank Austen for the insight, but Austen was panting now, and Gabrielle felt the unmistakable coolness of lubrication, leaking out between Austen's lips, coating Gabrielle's female spread with a smooth, soft fluid.

Gabrielle felt her own body responding to Austen's pleasure, the heat that had been trapped all day within her breeding organ emanating from between her legs to the rest of her, to her anus and her belly and, most importantly, her mind.

She pressed her own middle in, bobbed it up and down, accepting that she didn't have the skill to get her clitoris stimulated and not caring, the sensations of heat and hair and mingling juice at her lips and opening all she needed for now.

Austen seemed to sense that this was working, and she slowed her own movements, trying to match Gabrielle's clumsy rhythm, the two girls united by the sensation of flesh on flesh, bush against thickening stubble, ovulatory juice coursing among the wash of female arousal.

"Hmmm," Gabrielle sighed involuntarily, staring into Austen's dark eyes in the half-light.

"So, it's working for you?" Austen panted.

"Yes, can't you tell?"

"Sort of. Think you can cum?"

"No," Gabrielle whispered. "Not like this. But it's definitely getting me closer."

"Oral now?"

"Yeah," Gabrielle said. "You on top?"

"Sure."

"I'm going to cum in probably five seconds," Gabrielle warned.

Gabrielle, arms aching with the demands of rubbing genitals with Austen, dropped to her back with relief, helping Austen position herself above in what was an increasingly familiar position, her lover's vulva and anus inches above her mouth, legs spread wide to allow the full attention her own hole craved.

As soon as she was in position, Austen dropped her mouth to Gabrielle's organ, licking her lips, her clitoris, the ring embedded in her pink flesh, forcing her lips apart with her tongue, drinking in the honey she

found waiting on Gabrielle's clit and folds, sucking the thick syrup out of her hole.

Gabrielle did her best to reciprocate, raising her head to suck and drink and lick, moving Austen's tag aside with her cheek, pressing her tongue against the folds and the hole, licking her ring, consuming her.

The thick hair that coated Austen's sex organ didn't bother Gabrielle at all, she noticed. Bare was fine, but she didn't mind licking a muff.

Gabrielle lost track of time, the sensation of somewhere between ten minutes and a century passing as the girls attended each other, mouths working, hips writhing, and then at last, organs climaxing with two hard, wrenching orgasms, enflamed holes tightening as one, fluid rushing out in soft squirts, deep groans filling the darkness.

The girls continued to rock with each other through the aftershocks, Austen kissing Gabrielle's vulva gently while Gabrielle dropped her head to the pillow but reached up with her hand to gently stroke her friend's bottom, hips, waist, then up to her breasts, massaging them gently.

"Do you want to drink?" Austen asked hoarsely.

Gabrielle sighed, preparing to speak after what felt like ages of mere grunts.

"Yeah," she said. "A little. I don't want you getting spanked again though."

Austen lifted her leg, turned carefully over Gabrielle until she was lying next to her.

Gabrielle grabbed her own left breast, raised it to Austen's mouth, and Austen licked the nipple, making sure it was firm before she closed her mouth over it. To Gabrielle's surprise, Austen sucked hard and drank greedily, drawing two swallows out of Gabrielle's breast in less than a minute.

"I think you're taking too much," Gabrielle warned.

"We're safe," Austen said. "The most you can get in a minute is a quarter ounce, and they won't miss that. You just have to make sure to keep it to a minute or so."

"Okay."

"And always suck from both breasts. If there's a big difference, that will get you disciplined."

Gabrielle raised her right breast and Austen sucked for another minute or so before she pulled away.

“Your turn,” she said, swallowing.

Gabrielle shifted against Austen and rose up on her elbow, moving her mouth to Austen’s left breast, licking the nipple as Austen had done, waiting until it was fully erect to begin drinking from it.

Once it was firm, Gabrielle put her lips around it, flicked it with her tongue and sucked in, feeling the warm milk trickle into her mouth, the taste sweet and unexpectedly smoky.

“What do you think?” Austen inquired, her voice straining through the pleasure of feeding another girl.

“Why does it taste like that?” Gabrielle asked.

“Like what?”

“Like, um . . . barbecue,” Gabrielle said. “I guess, anyway. That’s the first thing that came to mind.”

“They’ve told me no one’s got milk that tastes like mine,” Austen said. “I eat the same thing as everyone else, so it’s just the way my body works. They say I’m high on the savory index.”

“Savory?” Gabrielle repeated before she lowered her mouth to the nipple for another suck.

“Yeah, I guess. Like, meat or something.”

Gabrielle, afraid she’d lose track of time and get Austen into trouble, counted out the seconds in her mind as she pulled in another swallow from Austen’s left breast.

She lifted off Austen, and Austen raised her right breast, struggling with its heft before she got a firm grip on it.

Gabrielle stretched across Austen’s body, put her mouth on the remaining nipple to stimulate it, sucked gently for what she guessed was about a minute, and realized she was getting aroused again.

She heard a grunt of pleasure from the other stall and knew Roxanne and Penelope had been proceeding, quietly, with each other.

“You wanna cum again, don’t you?” Austen whispered in the darkness. At some point, the lights had gone out. Gabrielle hadn’t noticed.

“I think so.”

Without asking permission, Austen wrapped one arm around Gabrielle’s shoulders, forced their mouths together, and moved her free hand down to her middle to stimulate herself. Gabrielle did the same,

surprised by the fresh lubricant wetting her lips, the fresh lust so soon after she'd climaxed.

Her hole was deliciously soaked, her clitoris blazing with sensitivity. After no more than a minute of rubbing, she was sighing into Austen's mouth while Austen writhed through her own release, both girls shaking and groaning as they came.

"Okay, okay, I'm done," Gabrielle said quietly into Austen's ear, exhaustion overwhelming her. "I really hope you are."

"God yes," Austen agreed. "Think you can share my bed with me?"

"I'll can try," Gabrielle said. "Would Penelope mind if I got into her bed?"

"No," Austen replied. "But I want you to stay with me."

Gabrielle laughed, dropped her head on the pillow, arm around Austen's waist and, after some adjustments and a little blanket shifting, she was asleep, not stirring until the lights came on the next morning.

At some point in the night, she and Austen had turned away from each other, so Gabrielle rolled back, touched Austen's shoulder, listened as her breath stopped, started again, and Austen opened her eyes and turned to look at Gabrielle, surprised at first, then apparently remembering who she was and why she was in bed with her.

She rolled away, slid off the bed, went to the toilet, finished quickly and let Gabrielle have her turn.

Austen wasn't a morning person, so she got back in bed, sitting and staring at nothing with her arms around her legs, while Gabrielle stood at the sink, washing her face.

Roxanne and Penelope were beginning to stir, Roxanne in her own bed, Penelope in Gabrielle's, so Gabrielle stood at the bars and smiled. She'd completed a week here, she thought to herself. She'd made friends, made love, given milk, learned and, as of last night, joined the council.

And she and Cameron Flasche were lovers, apparently. But with a night's sleep since their last, cautious conversation, Gabrielle was looking at things with him in a new perspective.

He didn't know her, not really. You don't get to know someone after two conversation. Or three conversations if you counted that time at city hall. Of course, besides talking to her, he had looked her up, and found out about her. He even knew about Roger.

And something had happened between her father and Cameron, although she wasn't sure anymore what that was. He knew her, yes, in some ways she knew, and some ways she wasn't quite certain about yet.

Regardless what might come of things with Cameron Flasche, she'd done as well as could be expected, she thought, even though most of her achievements weren't something she could share with anyone outside the farm. Not even her parents.

The clanging of doors told Gabrielle staff had returned, most likely to return the girls to their own stalls, possibly to insert leashes as well.

She heard Arwen's voice, was glad she was back, even if Arwen had sent her to punishment. She was used to Arwen, appreciated her professionalism.

"Hey, Arwen," Gabrielle said brightly.

"Hey, Gabrielle," Arwen said, opening the door into the entry cage.

Gabrielle nodded to Penelope as they passed each other. She briefly considered asking her how she liked the bed, but Penelope was no more a morning person than Austen was.

"Are you leashing us now?" Gabrielle asked.

"I want to let everyone wake up a little more," Arwen said. "I'm just getting girls back into their stalls for now. Leashing will be done in fifteen minutes or so."

"Can you bring me a vaginal leash?" Gabrielle asked.

"If I can find one," Arwen replied. "Anus hurting again?"

"A little," Gabrielle said, "but it's more that I kind of prefer being leashed, um, there."

"Okay," Arwen said, smiling. "But girls in pain get first priority."

Arwen moved toward the last stalls on the block and Gabrielle turned, finding Roxanne just behind her.

"Hey," Gabrielle said.

Roxanne embraced her without speaking, kissed her cheek.

"I missed you," Gabrielle said, feeling slightly awkward.

"I missed you too," Roxanne said. "I missed playing with you. Maybe we can again soon?"

"Definitely," Gabrielle agreed. "I asked for Raphael, but I'm not sure when that will happen."

"You asked for him to be brought here?"

"Yeah."

“Oh god, I promise I won’t touch him,” Roxanne said.

“Why not?”

“I know what’s going on.”

“What’s going on, then?” Gabrielle demanded.

“I know when a girl’s in love.”

“I’m not,” Gabrielle lied.

“And when a boy’s in love.”

Gabrielle just stared at Roxanne. Roxanne stared back, a victorious smile on her lips. She liked knowing things, Gabrielle concluded. She liked mystery, and scandal. And, in the regimented confines of Arnold Farm, a boy and girl who had fallen in love with each other was as close to scandal as she was going to get.

Gabrielle ran through the possible responses. She could declare her love and swear Roxanne to secrecy and hope it never got out. Or she could maintain the lie with everyone, no matter what evidence they thought they’d seen. And if things didn’t work out with Cameron, for whatever reason – if they didn’t decide to maintain their secret love affair, that is, because Gabrielle assumed they would continue to have sex regardless – it would be less embarrassing.

She quickly chose the second option.

“I’m sure he’d not in love,” Gabrielle said. “I think he just feels sorry for me.”

“He’s never looked at anyone the way he was looking at you yesterday,” Roxanne countered.

Gabrielle couldn’t help smiling as she turned to get her breakfast, but as soon as it was in her hands, she turned back.

“He hardly knows me,” Gabrielle said. “We haven’t even had sex yet. Maybe he thinks it will be better than it is.”

Roxanne laughed. “Still, no touching.”

“You’ll get me in trouble if you act weird around him,” Gabrielle said simply. She heard Arwen making her way back through the block, inserting leashes, so she lowered her voice. “Just keep whatever you think you know to yourself.”

Arwen appeared, leashes slung around her neck. Roxanne smiled slyly at Gabrielle, retrieved her own breakfast, set it by the bars and stepped to the leashing port.

“Hey, Arwen,” Roxanne said casually, but she caught Gabrielle’s eye again as she bent, and she winked while the plug was being inserted and locked inside her bowels.

Gabrielle, waiting her turn, tried to keep her face expressionless.

Arwen held up the end of a vaginal leash and Gabrielle stepped up, facing Arwen, widening her legs, grabbing the bars with one hand and spreading her lips with the other.

Arwen slipped the leash rod up her vagina and Gabrielle grunted, the sensation not completely pleasant, her sheath not as wet as she would have liked.

But even before Arwen had locked it, the little pegs driving into her flesh, she could feel the lubricant flowing, her organ wetting itself.

“Thanks,” she said.

“Sure,” Arwen said. “We had a few spares this morning.”

Arwen leashed Austen and Penelope, and Gabrielle tied the leash around her waist while the others put in their vaginal hooks and sat to have breakfast in a sort of quiet, morning-after fog that Gabrielle found disconcerting. Between bites of food, the girls became preoccupied with their leashes, coiling them up or arranging them neatly on the floor beside their ankles.

“Did you like my bed?” Gabrielle finally asked, looking at Penelope.

“I don’t like bottom bunks,” Penelope shot back, not apparently seeing any humor in the question.

“God, Penny, she was joking,” Austen said. “Weren’t you, Gabrielle?”

“No, I really wanted to know,” Gabrielle deadpanned. “Was it lumpy? Or too soft, or too hard? Or just right?”

“It was just right,” Penelope said. “And then I broke it.”

Austen waited until they were both working on their boards to comment on their time together.

“Last night was fun,” Austen said, erasing the heart in which she professed her love for Penelope, replacing it with a bigger heart.

“Thanks,” Gabrielle said. “I loved it.”

“It seemed like it.”

“I’m not really a lesbian,” Gabrielle said, making quick, thin strokes with a black marker to add shadows to her little woods.

“I know.”

“But I’m getting used to being with people who know what feels good.”

“Girls are the best,” Austen said. “It’s too bad they don’t have dicks.”

Chapter 30: The Algorithms of Punishment

Gabrielle was the last on the group chain to get restrained to a station, and Arwen seemed inclined to talk.

“You finished your first week,” she observed, crouching beside Gabrielle’s shoulder.

“Yeah, but it seems like I got here a year ago,” Gabrielle replied, her mind going back to that morning last Monday, saying goodbye to her parents, walking to the Arnolds, undressing shyly in the spare bedroom, walking down to the barn with Mr. Arnold. The shock of being leashed, of being hung, the pain of being pierced and fitted with rings.

“Hey, can I ask you a question?” Gabrielle said as Arwen applied the cups to her nipples.

“Sure.”

“I’m trying to collect points,” Gabrielle began, “and—”

“Why?” Arwen interrupted.

Gabrielle was expecting this question, dreading it, but she had her answer ready, even if she had to blush through the lie.

“I, um, like, um . . . being with people.”

“Any particular people?”

“No,” Gabrielle said, lying still. “I mean, I’ve been with some people, and it’s been, um, really nice.”

“Did you like George?” Arwen said.

“A lot. And Dan. They were both very nice.”

“Did you have any trouble with Dan?”

“A little,” Gabrielle said, “but I got almost all of him up me after we kind of worked at it.”

Arwen laughed. “I saw you asked for Raphael.”

“Yes,” Gabrielle said, ready to speak a little truth now. “We sort of, barely, knew each other in high school. Like, we talked once, at this city hall thing. And he was sort of famous, because he played football and stuff. So it’s been nice to catch up with him.”

“But,” Gabrielle added, “I never thought in a million years I’d be seeing him in a place like this. And so I had to sign up for him. Just to see

what it was like. And I talked to him at the meeting yesterday.”

“And the day before,” Arwen said.

Gabrielle wasn’t quite ready for this. They were watching who people talked to in the commons, and they were recording it, and then everyone was reading the records.

But at least they didn’t know what was being said, she hoped.

“Yeah, it was like, ‘Oh, hey, aren’t you Cameron Flasche?’ and he said yeah, and so we did some catching up, and then, we sort of made a date. I mean, I guess you could call it a date. I wanted him brought to me.”

Arwen, apparently satisfied with Gabrielle’s answers, described her options quickly.

“You can get points by signing up to provide service here,” she said. “You know what that involves?”

“I just walk through and see if anyone wants, um, wants, um, to be like . . . with me?”

“Yes. We could use a few more volunteers. A lot of the girls aren’t comfortable doing it. And you’re on the council now, that’s a point or two every week.”

“Yeah.”

“And you can give milk in the staff room.”

“I heard about that,” Gabrielle said. “What’s it like?”

“I can sign you up and let you experience it. It’s something else we don’t always have someone for.”

“Okay.”

“And you’ve been punished a few times,” Arwen said. “How was that?”

“Not fun.”

“You can take other girls’ punishment tags, if you can stand it.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said.

“But that has to be approved.”

“What does?”

“Which girls can give you their tags.”

“How is that decided?”

“It’s part of Mr. Arnold’s magic,” Arwen said. “Someone looks at the records, and they’ll either say yes or no.”

“What says yes or no?”

“The system,” Arwen said. “The algorithms, I guess.”

“Okay,” said Gabrielle. “So, what do I have to do to sign up for, um, service in here, and the, um, staff room?”

“Consider yourself signed up,” Arwen said, rising and turning on her heel to help get a new group of girls restrained.

George, Dan and Ronen were making the rounds, as well as Dee, all four fastened to a group chain held by Beatrice. Dan was the first to find a partner, kneeling behind the girl Gabrielle knew as Ashley. The rest found partners before they reached Gabrielle’s station, but she probably wouldn’t have asked for their time anyway. For now, the two orgasms she’d shared with Austen last night were all she needed.

But by the time she was done with the day’s first milking, the quiet gasps of males and females in the throes of pleasure had her feeling unsettled, if not mildly aroused.

What if Cameron were brought to her here, in production? She wanted her first time with him to be as much like making love as possible, and that could only happen in her stall. Even if Roxanne were there and – at Gabrielle’s insistence – got her turn, taking him in her bed was far preferable for their first time than the impersonal pumping that boys did from behind while the girl was chained to the floor.

No, Gabrielle decided, she’d reject Cameron if he was brought to her, and she would smile and look into his eyes and she believed he’d understand, that she was saving herself for when they could be together properly.

Once her breasts were emptied, Gabrielle was walked to the commons, learning on the way that she’d go twice a day on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, once the other days.

Doria was there, talking to a girl seated at her desk.

Gabrielle noticed Pam, who’d read off meeting highlights as council secretary the day before. She was sitting on the floor, talking to June, one of the girls Gabrielle had seen providing service in production. Having questions for both of them, she approached, hoping they’d notice her and she wouldn’t have to interrupt.

Pam looked up first, smiled. “Hey, Gabrielle,” she said, standing, offering her hand.

Small-breasted, with wide hips and pubic hair shaved into a thin strip, Pam immediately struck Gabrielle as earnest and sincere, a good

student who probably served as a class officer in high school. How did she end up here? Gabrielle wondered. Maybe the same way Gabrielle had.

“Thanks,” Gabrielle said. “I’ve got some questions for you. Actually, for both of you.”

Over the next hour, Gabrielle received a steady stream of knowledge and advice. The council tries to suggest at least two things to Mr. Arnold every week. Some he’d listen to, some would lead to nothing. He was not inclined to make any changes to the punishment protocol, a topic that the council was particularly interested in. And most members of the council had certain things they were passionate about, and each would push for votes that furthered their agendas, with varying success. Make friends, Gabrielle was told, speak persuasively, and never get mad.

June said she served in production a few times a week, usually enjoyed it, and wasn’t a lesbian. Nor, she said, were most of the girls who engaged her. Having someone to interact with was just a way for girls to pass the time, and the orgasms that resulted often enough didn’t hurt.

“Start with the girls working a post,” June said. “Don’t push if they say no, but sometimes you can tell they’re on the fence, so maybe throw out an idea or two of what you can do for them and, if they want it, they’ll say yes then.

“It’s just oral, right?” Gabrielle asked.

“Or masturbating her.”

“Oh, right.”

“And then, they can lick you, or you can lick them,” June said.

“But there are variations. Some might want to start by kissing, some might their anus licked, or might want to lick yours.”

“Oh, god,” Gabrielle said. “There?”

“Yeah, it happens. Think you could do it?”

“I don’t know. It’s not something I ever thought about. I kind of thought that was . . . that area was . . . sort of off-limits.”

“They’ll wipe it before you start,” June said.

“Still,” Gabrielle said.

“Well if someone asks for it, and you say no, and then you go without a partner that time, it can count against you. If you don’t get a partner a few times, they’ll quit asking you to serve.”

“Well,” Gabrielle said, “who likes, um, licking there?”

“Tanya, Britney, Beverly—”

“Beverly?” Gabrielle interrupted. “Big Beverly, with dark hair?”

“That’s the one,” June said. “You know her?”

“Yeah, I met her in punishment, and then we’ve worked on lunch together a few times.”

“She’s really sweet,” June observed.

Back on the group chain with Pam and June, Gabrielle continued the conversations until they were returned to production.

“Hey, thanks,” she said to them as they were marched off to positions further into the room.

As the machine drew the milk from her body, Gabrielle pondered her life and became profoundly unsettled.

In a few weeks, she could be going to school, where she would meet all kinds of boys, where she could fall in love if she wanted to, and profess that love to the world, and do what she wanted with just that boy. Instead, she would have five boyfriends, and her devotion to one of them would have to be furtive and full of risk. He would have other lovers. She would have other lovers, male and female. Often enough, they would be getting pleasure in each other’s presence.

And being together would require sacrifices, some known, some unknown. Gabrielle would be going to punishment when she could find a girl who’d cooperate and she could get approval for it. But what would being brought to the staff room entail? And how much punishment could she truly endure? Was all this really worth it? Cameron Flasche was a year older than she, far more knowledgeable, far more sophisticated. What if he were just toying with her, for some reason?

But then, what she felt for him – what she’d always felt for Cameron – seemed real to her. And, to the degree she could read the feelings of another person, it seemed like it was real to Cameron as well.

She had no choice but to pursue it. If she were being a fool, if she were on her way to getting her heart broken, she would survive. She was practical, and tough, she reminded herself. And one way or another, she’d be leaving in December, whatever awful things had happened here fading into memory.

She closed her eyes, ignored the things occurring around her and tried to concentrate on giving milk, feeding the two white tubes running from her nipples to the machine ten feet away.

Done with that, she held still while Arwen worked the vaginal leash rod slowly up her sex organ. There would always be sex, she reminded herself, tightening involuntarily around the restraint. No matter what else happened, she would always have partners, and pleasure, and orgasms.

She went to the commons again after her second milking, said hi to Doria but didn't get to chat with her because she was busy at her PC. She noticed Vanessa, Austen and a girl whose face – but not her name – she knew, sitting around a table.

Austen saw her, pushed a chair out, and Gabrielle sat, trying not to stare at the black tag hanging from the girl's ear.

“Gabrielle, have you met Lisa?” Austen said.

“We've been on the same chain a few times, I think,” Gabrielle said, smiling.

“Lisa's in trouble again, so we're giving her advice,” Vanessa said.

“What did you do?” Gabrielle asked.

“Too slow yesterday,” Lisa replied somberly. “The next time it happens, they said I'll get a 2.”

“Have you thought about trading it for points?”

“Yeah, but I'm not going to ask anyone and be pathetic.”

“Three points?” Gabrielle inquired.

“Sure,” Lisa said. “You'd do that?”

“Yeah.”

“Gabrielle's in love,” Austen whispered.

“With who?” Vanessa asked.

“No one,” Gabrielle said. “Well, someone. A few someone's. I love the guys here.”

“Do it now?” Lisa asked, rising.

“Yeah. What's involved?”

“We go to Doria and have her switch our tags, and then you tell her when you want to go.”

Gabrielle followed Lisa to Doria's desk. She was done talking, looked up from her PC and smiled.

“Hey, Gabrielle. Hey, Lisa.”

“Hey, Doria,” Gabrielle said. “Can you, um, give me, um, Lisa's tags?”

Doria looked at her PC, typed in some characters, moved her mouse, typed some more.

“How many points?” she asked, her tone all business, which Gabrielle appreciated. Sometimes, she would be Doria’s friend, and sometimes she would be just another female here that Doria would work with, another female like all the rest.

“Three points,” Lisa said.

Doria typed some more.

“Okay, that’s approved,” Doria said, and she turned in her chair, pulled a tool out of her front pocket and patted the corner of her desk.

Lisa raised her foot to the desk and Doria leaned forward, raised the tool to Lisa’s vulva and removed the black tag.

She set it on the desk and pointed to Lisa’s ear. Lisa dropped her foot, bent, and Doria removed the other tag.

She pulled a spray bottle off the shelf behind her, sprayed both tags, first on one side, then the other. The smell of alcohol filled Gabrielle’s nostrils.

“Okay, Gabrielle,” Doria said, tapping her desk again.

Gabrielle set her foot on the desk, exposing herself completely to her friend, trying not to blush too fiercely.

Doria remained businesslike throughout, screwing the black punishment tag to the ring in Gabrielle’s labia, then affixing the second tag to her ear.

“Do you want me to call Greta now?” Doria asked, looking up impassively into Gabrielle’s eyes.

“Sure,” Gabrielle said, offering a weak smile, wanting Doria to know this was all okay.

Doria typed on her machine, pursed her lips.

“Greta will be here in about five minutes,” she said.

“Okay,” Gabrielle said, “thanks.”

“Sure.”

Lisa stepped back toward Austen and Vanessa, and Gabrielle followed her, feeling suddenly, overwhelmingly awkward, as well as deeply uncertain. She was about to suffer discomfort, if not outright pain, for a boy. This wasn’t at all fair. And yet, not doing this would be worse. Until she decided otherwise, Cameron Flasche would be her primary object of interest here, if not an unhealthy obsession, worth whatever she had to endure.

She followed Lisa back to the table, but she stood beside it while Lisa sat.

“So, Lisa, you’re the only one,” Austen said.

“Only one what?”

“The only one who hasn’t been with Gabrielle at this table,” Austen said. She looked up at Gabrielle, smiling mischievously.

“Vanessa and I have been comparing notes.”

“What did you decide?” Gabrielle asked.

“That you’re good,” Austen said. “We both like you.”

Lisa looked up at Gabrielle.

“You’re straight, right?”

“Yeah,” Gabrielle said. “I mean, I like boys, but I like being with girls too.”

“I’m straight too,” Lisa said without further clarification, and Gabrielle assumed that meant she wasn’t interested. Which was fine. She didn’t need to be attractive to every female here.

“Hey, Gabrielle,” said a voice behind her. Gabrielle turned to find Grendl there, a leash in her hand. “You said you’re ready to go now?”

“Yeah,” Gabrielle said.

“Hands flat on the table,” Grendl instructed. “Legs apart.”

Gabrielle obeyed, blushing at this latest, albeit mild indignity.

“So, Lisa, you dodged it this time?” Grendl said, sliding the leash plug into Gabrielle’s bowels while Gabrielle stared at the wall and winced.

“Yes, Gabrielle saved me,” Lisa said, smiling, perhaps sensing Gabrielle’s discomfort and wanting to ease it.

“What will you want today?” Grendl asked, holding Gabrielle’s leash loosely, standing still beside the table.

“Uh,” Gabrielle stammered. She did not want to have this conversation in front of her friends. “Can I decide when I get there?”

“Sure,” Grendl replied, stepping back, allowing Gabrielle’s leash to go briefly taut.

Gabrielle turned and followed Gredl to the entry cage, staring down, not wanting to look at Doria or anyone else, surprised by how humiliating this felt. Next time – if there was a next time – she’d wait until she went back to the production room to go to punishment. Being dragged out of the commons on a leash made something unpleasant into something almost unbearable.

Gabrielle followed Grendl through the entry cage, into the hall and through the door into punishment.

There were two girls standing in the stocks and two more in the punishment stalls, the little doors latched closed to maximize their boredom.

“What do you want?” Grendl asked.

Gabrielle was overwhelmed by the desire to spend as little time in this place as possible.

“I guess where you spank my bottom,” Gabrielle said. “Unless there’s anything quicker?”

“Whipping’s a little faster, because we can’t hang you that long.”

“Hang?”

“Your feet will still touch, but barely. So I’ll hang you, whip you and let you go pretty quickly.”

“Where will you whip me?”

“Your back.”

“Okay,” said Gabrielle, wondering if her back were less sensitive than her rear. “What do I do?”

“Over here,” said Grendl, leading Gabrielle to the section of wall where three pairs of cuffs hung at the ends of chains.

Gabrielle stepped up and raised her arms without having to be told, allowing Grendl to close a cuff around each wrist. With the push of one of the buttons set into the wall, the chains rose, taking Gabrielle with them, stretching her until just her toes were touching the floor.

“Oh, god,” Gabrielle said quietly.

Gabrielle was still getting used to the discomfort of being hung when Grendl landed the first blow across her upper back, the whip particularly painful against her left shoulder blade.

“Ow, damn!” Gabrielle said, wondering how she sounded to the girls in isolation.

The second lash struck her ribcage, the sting not as severe, and the third wasn’t bad at all, a quick raking along her lower back.

Grendl pushed another button, lowering Gabrielle, and she opened her cuffs, removed her punishment tags and led her into the hall.

“Did you want to go back to the commons?” Grendl asked.

“That’s an option?” Gabrielle asked. “Yes, definitely.”

Less than ten minutes had passed since Grendl had come to get her. And now she had three more points. Was it worth it? she asked herself. The pain in her back was already ebbing, and she'd earned the right to ask for someone – either Cameron, or someone who was part of the path to Cameron.

Was it worth it?

Yes.

Chapter 31: More Clues

Back in the commons, she wasn't ready to talk to anyone yet. Keeping her eyes down, she made her way to the PCs. After a brief glance through the news, she looked up Arnold Farm again, and then the research Mr. Arnold had done. Having seen his charts and graphs at the company meeting Sunday, she was able to decipher more of his documentation, the impact female orgasm had on milk production, the ratio of male ejaculate to breastmilk drawn.

Some of the papers listed him as Credence Baxter Arnold, and some as CB Arnold, so she searched for the latter name next.

He had published at least as many papers under his abbreviated name as under his full one, and she began delving, opening the documents she could. Several were behind paywalls, however, including one with the esoteric title "Negative Stimuli: Identifying Catalytic Impetus Markers."

Gabrielle wasn't sure she would have tried to read it if it were freely available, but the fact it was one of the few protected papers made her curious. Something about "Negative Stimuli" had captured her imagination, and she wasn't sure why.

She looked up from the PC. The three girls were still sitting at the table, but Gabrielle noticed two boys at another table – Cameron Flasche himself and Ronen – and she made her way toward them. With Ronen there, she thought, no one could accuse her of seeking out Cameron exclusively.

Cameron looked up and smiled. She smiled back, smiled at Ronen, then took a seat beside the latter male.

"Where have you been?" Cameron asked her.

She turned toward him, looked at him sharply. "What do you mean?"

"Have you just come from seeing Greta?"

"Yeah. Did she leave a mark?"

"A few."

"Fuck."

"What did you do?"

Gabrielle sat down. She didn't mind telling Cameron about this – she wanted him to know, really – but she wished Ronen weren't there.

“Nothing,” she said. “Just took Lisa’s tags, to get some quick points.”

Ronen leaned back, looked at the mark on her upper back, ran his finger along the welt, gently, kindly. It felt unexpectedly good to be touched that way.

“Does it still hurt?” he asked her.

“A little,” Gabrielle replied. “It’s not a big deal.”

“Why are you getting points?” Ronen asked.

It was a rude question, Gabrielle decided. Her desire to be with boys, or girls, should be a private thing, she thought. Rude questions deserved flippant answers, and she gave him one.

“To be with you,” she said with a quick glance at Cameron before she turned back to Ronen.

She watched Ronen’s face, a smile that said her answer gratified him at first, then the narrowing of the eyes as his rational self took over and he started to suspect she wasn’t being completely sincere.

But Ronen could give as good as he could get, apparently.

“Now, what would make a girl like you want to spend time with someone like me?”

“Oh, you don’t want to?” she asked.

“Of course I do,” he replied, a little defensively.

“Why?”

“Why would I want to be with you?” Ronen asked.

“Yeah.”

“I’d rather show you than tell you,” Ronen replied.

“Fair enough. I’m sure you’ll get your chance soon.”

Done with that topic, Gabrielle continued looking at Ronen, but her audience was now completely Cameron.

“You know Raphael and I go way back, don’t you?”

“No, I didn’t know that,” Ronen replied.

“We went to the same schools. We talked once or twice. And he saved my dad’s life.”

Ronen’s eyes grew big.

“You’re joking right?” he said.

Gabrielle looked at Cameron, who was looking back, one eyebrow raised, clearly wondering where she was going with this.

“It might be a joke,” Gabrielle said. “I’m not sure anymore. But that’s what the newspaper said.”

“Sometimes,” Cameron said, “when two people are where they shouldn’t be, the truth is better left untold.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Gabrielle demanded.

Cameron just smiled, and Arwen’s voice rang out from the entry cage. “Gabrielle, Austen, Tanya.”

Gabrielle stood. So did Ronen.

“Aren’t you going to hug me goodbye?” he asked, his penis fully erect, curving up slightly.

“Of course,” she said, allowing him to embrace her, allowing him to push the tip of his member against her belly.

Cameron didn’t stand, so she put her hand on his shoulder, squeezed it, looking down at his lap, at his soft penis, wondering why he wasn’t aroused.

“See you around,” she said.

“I hope so,” he replied.

Gabrielle stepped over to Arwen, turned and bent.

“Are you up for service after you get milked?” Arwen asked.

“What do you mean?”

“You said you wanted to serve in the production room, right?”

“Oh, right,” Gabrielle said. “You mean now?”

“After you’re milked.”

“Oh . . . sure,” Gabrielle replied, not the least bit interested in this chore. Her mind was still on the two boys she’d just talked to, Cameron’s mysterious words and Ronen’s bent penis. She didn’t have the mental capacity right now to deal with anything else, especially an unfamiliar and potentially humiliating job in the busy production room.

“You’re okay with anal?” Arwen asked. “I don’t have a vaginal restraint.”

“That’s fine.”

“And you’ll need to be on anal to do service.”

“Okay.”

“Enjoy your talk with the boys?” Austen asked after they’d been put on a group leash.

“Of course. Everyone’s very interesting here.”

“Some more than others?”

“No.”

Throughout her milking, Gabrielle first pondered her latest encounter with Cameron, reconsidering anew the sacrifices she was making for him, in light of his cryptic words. Then her mind turned to the title of Mr. Arnold’s paper. “Negative Stimuli.”

Okay.

As soon as the machine beeped, Matthew appeared, crouching before her so she could look into his face.

“You haven’t done service before, correct?”

“No.”

“Any questions?”

“Well, I’ve seen other girls doing it. So I guess I’ll just ask and if someone wants me, I’ll stay with them?”

“Yeah, that’s basically it,” he said, stepping behind her and sliding in her leash.

He freed her nipples and opened her restraints, and she rose, looking through the production room. She counted more than a dozen girls being milked or about to get secured in place. A few she knew. Most she didn’t. This, she realized, was terrifying. No wonder few girls were interested in getting points this way.

“Anyplace you want to start?” Matthew asked her.

“Someone told me to start with girls on posts.”

Gabrielle saw three girls with poles between their legs, prompting a new concern: What if they were already fully engaged or near orgasm?

She studied the pleasuring girls a little more closely, noticed that one of them was Beverly, who had already propositioned her, more or less. And Beverly was the first girl she’d seen getting serviced here, sucking George’s penis while she writhed on a pole. Even if she did mind being interrupted, she was too nice to show it, Gabrielle suspected.

“Her,” Gabrielle said, pointing to the other end of the room.

“Beverly.”

Matthew made his way to her, Gabrielle following close behind, fighting anxiety despite what she believed was a growing friendship with the girl.

As they drew closer, Gabrielle could see that Beverly had requested rods for both her vagina and anus, and she was sliding back and forth on

them, slowly, eyes closed, almost as if she were meditating. Beverly enjoyed anal stimulation, Gabrielle recalled from some recent conversation.

“Beverly?” Gabrielle ventured cautiously.

Beverly opened her eyes, looked up as far as she could raise her head, and smiled.

“Hey, Gabrielle!”

“Hey,” Gabrielle said. “Guess what, um, they’ve got me doing?”

Beverly looked at Matthew, back to Gabrielle.

“Is this your first time?”

“Yeah.”

“Am I the first person you asked?”

“Um, yeah,” Gabrielle said, blushing. “Since I know you, I thought I’d ask. I’m kinda nervous.”

“Perfect timing,” Beverly said, adding with a quick nod to Matthew, “You can leash her in front.”

Matthew padlocked Gabrielle’s leash to the ring in the floor in front of Beverly, gave Gabrielle an encouraging tap on the shoulder, and stepped away.

Gabrielle sat, crossing her legs, grateful Beverly had saved her from having to solicit the whole room, ready to do whatever was asked of her.

“Congratulations on getting on the council,” Beverly said. She pushed back onto her post and held still.

“You’re joking, right?” Gabrielle asked.

“No, it’s an achievement, especially in your first week.”

“Well, me and Mr. Arnold go way back, I think he just wanted something to keep me out of trouble.”

Beverly laughed. “I’m sure you were lots of trouble growing up.”

“A real problem child.”

Gabrielle looked down, watching the little air bubbles move through the white, milk-filled lines that ran from Beverly’s nipples to the machine.

“So, um,” she stammered, “what can I do for you?”

“Just sit and talk, if that’s all you’re up for.”

“I can do more,” Gabrielle said. “And I think they want me to do more, right?”

“Probably.”

“Okay, then, give me something to do, so I don’t get us both in trouble.”

“Well, oral’s fine,” Beverly said. “But the angles are a little tricky.”

Beverly started rocking again, sliding forward to draw the rods out of her chambers, pushing back onto them.

“So, just, up on my knees, or on my back?”

“Start on your knees,” Beverly said.

Gabrielle uncrossed her legs and positioned her knees on either side of the ring that secured her leash to the floor, rising up and parting her thighs. Beverly lowered her mouth to Gabrielle’s sex organ and extended her tongue, cupping Gabrielle’s genitals with it while she continued to rock slowly on her rods.

“Can you spread your lips?” she whispered.

Gabrielle reached down, put a finger on either side of her vulva and spread herself, allowing Beverly to run her tongue against Gabrielle’s exposed vulva, then to her clitoris, where she made a few quick strokes, then a few more against her ring, then back down, pressing her tongue against the opening, working it inside Gabrielle’s hole.

Gabrielle leaned back and shifted, her leash clinking against the floor, while Beverly continued to explore inside, tongue moving in and out, cleaning Gabrielle’s sex, moving up her slit to her clitoris, returning to the mouth of her sex to collect the lubricant that, Gabrielle knew, was beginning to surge.

“Whoa,” Gabrielle whispered under her breath. Beverly’s attention to Gabrielle’s vulva intensified while her hips rocked on the pole. Moments later, Beverly began sighing, groaning deeply, her tongue barely brushing Gabrielle’s clitoris, while she worked through a quick, intense orgasm.

She pulled her tongue back into her mouth for the last few strokes of pleasure, back arching as she pressed against her pole.

Finally still, she sighed as if collecting herself, then she looked up and smiled. Gabrielle relaxed, sat and re-crossed her legs, smiling back, trying not to let her frustration show.

“You wanna live together?” Roxanne asked.

“Sure,” Gabrielle replied. “You’re being serious, right?”

“Of course.”

“But what about that, um, that girl that’s with you now?”

“She’s kind of got a girlfriend, so they’re talking about moving in together.”

This was a relief, Gabrielle realized. She had no idea how she was going to find a new stallmate when the next girl arrived to take her place with Roxanne, and now one had just landed, literally, in her lap. She could probably get used to whatever Beverly liked with her partner. She was good at licking, at least, even in chains.

“You didn’t cum, right?” Beverly asked.

“No.”

Beverly’s machine beeped. “Sorry about that,” she said. “They’re gonna take me, or I’d work on you some more.”

“I’m supposed to be taking care of you,” Gabrielle said. “But I appreciate the thought.”

Returned to her stall, Gabrielle was relieved to see Roxanne sitting on her bed, reading.

Roxanne set her book down, crawled to the edge of her bed, seemed to sense Gabrielle’s state.

“C’mon up,” she said.

Gabrielle climbed the ladder, and Roxanne lay on her back and opened her legs.

Not needing to be told what to do, Gabrielle crawled across the bed, turned and clambered over Roxanne, her mouth above Roxanne’s vulva.

As soon as Gabrielle was in position, Roxanne raised her mouth to Gabrielle’s sex, and Gabrielle returned the favor, the girls licking each other slowly at first, then picking up speed, tongues scraping over and over from clitoris to hole and back again.

Gabrielle was the first to cum, shaking over Roxanne, groaning with pleasure, but keeping her mouth against her friend’s opening until she sensed the orgasm building between her legs, her hips rocking of their own accord, fluid squirting, chest heaving.

Gabrielle held her position for another 30 seconds before she turned and lay next to Roxanne, glad to kiss her, to lick her mouth, to taste her own fluids, to return some of Roxanne’s ejaculate to her.

“I’m gonna miss this,” Gabrielle whispered.

“What?”

“Being able to demand sex from you.”

Roxanne laughed. “What was it this time?”

“I was doing service.”

“Oh, you got licked?”

“Yeah, by Beverly.”

“Mmmm,” Roxanne said, making a sound that didn’t need to be explained.

Chapter 32: A Visit from Raphael

As the day wore on, Gabrielle's thoughts turned increasingly toward Cameron Flasche. During her fifth milking, Arwen confirmed that he'd be brought to her that night, news she received with a mix of aroused anticipation and delirious anxiety.

It was the moment she'd been dreaming of, the consummation of years of schoolgirl dreams about an unattainable boy and his unattainable body. But the consummation would happen in a locked stall that was little more than a cage, with three other girls as witnesses, one of whom – if etiquette were to be followed – would also be a participant.

Gabrielle tried to behave normally over dinner, but she spilled food into her lap and found herself laughing at inappropriate times.

"You're nervous about Raphael, aren't you?" Austen inquired.

Gabrielle gazed at her.

"Maybe," she finally replied. "Wouldn't you be?"

"No," Austen said. "Not anymore. It's just a cock."

"Austen," Roxanne said, her hand at her mouth, speaking in a stage whisper, "it's more than a cock to Gabrielle. It's Raphael."

By her sixth milking, Gabrielle was a bundle of nerves, eyes darting when the group chain arrived, wondering if Cameron would be fastened to it, or servicing another girl in the production room.

She saw no sign of him, however, but her tormented mind couldn't let it rest, forcing her to wonder what he was doing now. Waiting in his stall, most likely. Or talking to Al. Was he reading? Did he read? Gabrielle should know this. Just because they were going to be secret lovers didn't absolve her of the requirement that she know all there was to know about Cameron – what books he read, what music he liked, what games he played in the commons.

Returned to her stall, the other girls ignoring her for now, she stood by the bars, looking at the picture she had marked out over the last week, of a stream running over rocks through a sunny woods.

It wasn't terrible, she told herself. But there were no people. There should be people. She imagined adding herself to it. And Cameron beside

her. Both nude, as if that were normal in the little city park she walked to from her home.

“Gabrielle.”

“Ah!” Gabrielle shouted, starting from her reverie. “Damn it, Roxanne, you scared me.”

Roxanne stood back, a look of mock shame yielding to her normal expression of barely-concealed mischief.

“Well, we need to talk,” Roxanne said.

“About what?”

“Sharing Raphael.”

“I said you can,” Gabrielle asserted. “In fact, you have to. Because Raphael and I are just friends. Colleagues, really. But then, you knew that.”

“Don’t worry, I’ll let you share,” Roxanne said. “I need to know when.”

“When what?”

“When do you want to share him?”

“When he comes tonight,” Gabrielle replied.

“No,” Roxanne said, “when, as in before or after?”

“Oh, okay,” Gabrielle stammered. “Well, I guess after?”

“Normally it’s before.”

“Why?” Gabrielle inquired. “It was after with George. First George had me, ‘cuz he’s the one I was assigned to, then Dan.”

“Well, think about it,” Roxanne said. “After Raphael is with you, there might be nothing left.”

“Nothing left?” Gabrielle repeated.

Roxanne smiled indulgently. Obviously, Gabrielle was missing something that should have been completely obvious.

“Okay, I’m gonna spell it out,” Roxanne said, “but you have to promise not to call me a slut.”

“I promise.”

“Raphael is going to make love to you, right?”

“Yeah. Well, have sex at least.”

“And he’ll cum.”

“Yeah?”

“So if he’s with me next, he might not be able to get it up, especially if you really work him, the way I expect you to.”

“Oh, okay,” Gabrielle said, Roxanne’s meaning starting to dawn on her. “But doesn’t that kind of defeat the whole idea of sharing?”

“Normally, what’s done,” Roxanne said, “is the boy shows up, goes inside the stallmate, but doesn’t cum, and maybe she cums, maybe she doesn’t, and then he gets into bed with his scheduled partner – with the girl who ordered him – and they do whatever they want.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said slowly, trying to work her mind around this latest piece of information. Gabrielle would have to wait until after Cameron had penetrated Roxanne to take him inside her own vagina. It was completely, horribly unfair for her, if Cameron was her lover and this was their first night together. It was completely logical, though, if she and Cameron were merely co-workers, his job to stimulate her, her job to accept stimulation, with the ultimate objective the same as for everything else that happened here: more breastmilk.

“Just say no, and I’ll pretend to have cramps or something,” Roxanne said.

Gabrielle paused, looked at her bed, as if trying to foresee what was going to happen there and how Roxanne’s offer might affect things.

“No,” Gabrielle said at last. “It’s how it’s done. I need to get used to it. And I need to get used to it with you. I really, really trust you. Okay?”

Roxanne stepped up, wrapped her arms around Gabrielle’s waist, and Gabrielle hugged back, kissing Roxanne’s shoulder without any sensuality, any carnality. For now, she felt nurtured, cared for, mothered. This was another difficult thing she would pass through, and Roxanne would be her guide.

She sensed Cameron before she saw him. He was probably talking. He was probably saying hi to the girls in the other stalls he passed on the way to Gabrielle. His leash probably clinked between his legs. But Gabrielle knew he was on the block before she could say for certain how she knew, and when he appeared, his leash in Arwen’s hand, she smiled and felt, for the first time today, fully confident.

He smiled back, stepping into the entry cage, moving into Gabrielle’s stall, stepping to the leashing port, facing Arwen as she removed the leash from his testicle collar.

Gabrielle was waiting for him when he turned into the stall, his penis already at attention, its full girth impressive to Gabrielle even if Dan’s member was thicker.

She wrapped her arms around his shoulders, kissed him like they'd always been lovers, felt his penis at her belly button and pushed against it, desperate to have it between her vaginal lips, probing her sheath, sliding in and out.

She pulled back, put her hands on his shoulders.

He seemed to read her mind, glancing up at Roxanne's bed.

Gabrielle turned to survey the stall, saw Roxanne's feet at the end of her mattress. She was up there, waiting patiently. Not leering, not ogling, not saying anything.

"Yeah, her first," Gabrielle whispered. "It's fine. We've talked about it."

Cameron seemed shocked, and she wanted to imagine he was just surprised by Gabrielle's maturity, by her willingness to share, and not hurt by her decision to send him to Roxanne now.

"I'll be waiting for you," Gabrielle said, pulling away from him, sitting down on her bed. She looked down, saw that she was already wet, a trail of lubricant staining the sheets as she slid toward the middle of the bed.

She watched Cameron climb the ladder, his chest, his belly, his penis, then just his legs and feet disappearing. Then she heard whispers from the bunk above hers – not the furtive whispers of lovers, just the unintelligible sounds of two people quietly making arrangements for intercourse.

Gabrielle guessed Roxanne was on her hands and knees and Cameron was behind her – the production position, entirely impersonal, the position required to deliver stimulation to the vagina while the girl was chained and collared and her milk was being drawn.

Gabrielle heard Roxanne grunt, a sound so slight she might not have noticed it if she hadn't heard it before.

She sensed the bed rocking, barely, and knew that Cameron was fully engaged now, moving in and out of Roxanne's vagina the same way he did in production – respectfully, slowly.

Gabrielle braced herself, waiting for the sound of orgasm – Roxanne's, which would have been uncomfortable for Gabrielle but expected, or Cameron's, which would have been a disaster.

Whether or not he could get erect again, if he yielded to the pleasures of Roxanne's sheath, Gabrielle would be desperately hurt. She

had made peace with his penetration of her stallmate, but his semen was only for her tonight.

She sensed more movement on the bed above, wondered if they were changing positions, and what that meant, when she saw Cameron's feet, his legs, his penis, belly and chest on the ladder. He was finished, the sharing complete. Had Roxanne orgasmed? Probably not. She tended to climax pretty energetically, and Gabrielle had heard nothing like that.

Gabrielle rose up her elbows, her belly taut, her entire body tense, looking up at Cameron, he looking back at her, no smiles now, simply the faces of two people who had waited a long time – years, in Gabrielle's case – for this moment.

Cameron sat down on the bed and Gabrielle immediately spread her legs wide, her knees bent, her feet raised, positioning herself so that Cameron would have no troubling entering her, would have no doubt that he was welcome, that she wanted him inside her, and that whatever had happened on the bed above was of no consequence.

Cameron lifted his feet off the floor, pulled his legs onto the mattress, moved his body into position, kneeling before Gabrielle, as if here to worship her.

His penis, wet with Roxanne's honey, was fiercely erect, the veins standing out, the tip almost purple. He looked down at her sex, and Gabrielle knew she was showing him the female equivalent of what he bore between his legs, her fully-aroused slit wet and pink and so swollen the lips were opened without having to be spread.

He dropped down on her, but at first only to kiss, his penis against her mound, the hair finally thick enough that she knew he could feel as well as see her black triangle.

And then they kissed, almost fighting with their mouths, bringing them together so hungrily they forgot to breathe, both gasping for air as one before going in again, lips and tongues and teeth pressed together, exploring. For at least a minute, but probably more like two or three, they did nothing but kiss, and Cameron's penis remained firm between them, pressing against Gabrielle's mound and belly almost painfully.

He was waiting for her to invite him in, she realized. He wasn't going to penetrate her until she was ready.

She was ready now, but she didn't want to disengage her mouth long enough to tell him, and she didn't want to reach down, push him off

and fumble between their hips. Pondering the problem briefly, she arrived at a third solution. She raised her pelvis, lifting her feet toward Roxanne's mattress, sliding up until her spread and her tag were beyond the tip of Cameron's penis, so that it dropped to her vulva.

Then, as soon as she felt his swollen tip at her entrance, she straightened her back, swallowing him, forcing him up her sheath with a single movement, her walls screaming with the sudden, luscious strain of being impaled by a cock almost as thick as Dan's, but infinitely more significant.

For a moment, there was silence in the universe, simply Gabrielle DeBeers and the penis of Cameron Flasche and nothing else, his member a new organ in her body, not separate from it, as essential as her heart, throbbing in time with it, every pulse of his thick rod another tap within her roaring, aching loins.

As quickly as it began, the sense of otherworldliness ended, and she was back here, locked in her stall, a girl whose breasts filled with milk and had to be emptied six times per day, a girl for whom being licked and fucked was simply part of her job description, a female who a few moments ago had chosen to spread her legs for a male, to bring him into her slot, a girl who was now grinding and crying and groaning and squeezing with all the power she possessed, determined to pull every last ounce of semen out of Cameron Flasche.

Polite until now, respectful until now, being welcomed into Gabrielle's chamber seemed to represent an invitation beyond mere penetration for Cameron. After a few quick insertions to test her vagina and distribute her lubricant, he began pounding her in earnest, each thrust as fast and deep as the laws of physics would allow, his pelvis striking her mound and clitoris with bone-jarring force, her labial tag clinking with every push, his tip like a weapon, striking to the depths of her cunt as if he were trying to reach her belly, her lungs, her heart.

"Oh, my fucking god," Gabrielle groaned quietly into Cameron's ear, the obscenity of what they were doing suddenly obvious to her, suddenly delicious. "Oh my fucking god, fuck me, please just fuck me. Oh god. Oh god."

Cameron gasped quietly, and she imagined him climbing, about to reach the summit of a mountain he'd been ascending for all of Gabrielle's life, as if this were the only reason he'd been born, to enter her, to thrust

into her, to scrape her wet walls with his penis, reducing them to raw, ecstatic agony.

Cameron's breathing changed, came more quickly, and she knew it was time, for her, for him, and the earth went still and silent again.

She knew that Roxanne was masturbating above them, quietly, discreetly, Cameron's brief visit just a warmup to her own pleasures, administered with the aid of a dildo that Gabrielle somehow knew Roxanne had slipped under her pillow earlier in the day, so she wouldn't have to get it after Cameron had finished with her.

Gabrielle sensed that Austen and Penelope were in Penelope's bed, mouths against sex organs, making the quiet love of two girls who had grown comfortable with each other and, soon enough, would bring each other so soft, pleasant orgasms.

Next, for some reason, her mind went to the term from Mr. Arnold's paper: Negative Stimuli. What did it mean? Why did she care?

And then, the orgasm took her over, possessing all of her body and soul, and she issued a quick, sharp cry of confusion and unbearable joy, her organ tightening and spasming around the long penis of Cameron Flasche as he continued to slide it in and out while it spit its own milk into her chamber, the jets of cum shooting out so hard she could feel them, one after the other, against her cervix and the walls at the deep end of her chamber.

Both gasping now, Cameron still deep within her, they hugged and held still, Gabrielle feeling the rise and fall of Cameron's ribs, his soft breath on her shoulder, the gentle pulsing of his cock, still buried inside.

Her energy slowly returning, she grabbed the hair at the back of his head, raised him that way and forced more kisses on him, sucking him in so hungrily she wondered if she might end up inhaling his soul.

He was still moving in and out of her, slowly, until his penis softened and he finally withdrew it. Gabrielle's vagina squeezed shut after it, pushing out a warm string of semen and lubricant that ran down to her anus and from there to her bed.

At this moment, there was nothing to be said, because they had answered all the questions, so Gabrielle continued to lie with her legs spread beneath Cameron, running her hands along his back, his arms, down to his hips.

When Gabrielle at last found the will to speak, she knew that nothing needed to be said about what they had just done.

She put her mouth against his ear and whispered, “Why did you say you didn’t save my father’s life?”

Cameron laughed out loud.

“Because I didn’t,” he said. “Why are you asking me that now?”

“Why shouldn’t I?”

“We’re having sex.”

“I’m pretty sure we’re done. And I got all the questions about that answered. So now I have some new ones.”

“Okay,” Cameron sighed, and he raised himself on his knees, fully upright, his head almost bumping Roxanne’s mattress. He turned and sat at the edge of the bed, feet on the floor. Gabrielle sat beside him, close, their thighs touching.

“Your dad,” Cameron began, pausing. “Your dad and I were at a place where we shouldn’t have been, and—”

“You mentioned that before.”

“And, and . . . have you ever heard of a cathouse?”

“A cathouse?”

“Yeah.”

“Like, a house where cats live?”

“Not exactly.”

The lights dimmed.

“No way is it already 10:30,” Gabrielle lamented. “You just got here.”

“Well, we got a few things done,” he said.

Gabrielle smiled, and then her eyes filled with tears and she choked on a desperate sob. She wasn’t ready for this. She hadn’t prepared for this part at all. They were going to take Cameron Flasche away from her, and now she had to be with other people, and he had to be with other people, and she wouldn’t see him for days. Or a week. Or more than a week. He lived on block 5, and he’d be there at night, and she’d be here, locked in, yards away from him, but a distance that might as well be a million miles.

Suddenly, Roxanne was beside her. Gabrielle wasn’t sure if she’d climbed down her ladder or jumped off the side of her bed, but now she was sitting beside her, on the bed, arm wrapped around her shoulder, words being whispered into her ear.

“You can’t cry, baby, please don’t cry,” Roxanne whispered.

“They’re not going to like that.”

Gabrielle looked at Cameron, still seated at her side, his thigh still touching hers. She expected to find the same stoic grace that had possessed him for all the time she had known him, and when she saw the tears in his eyes, the mouth twisted in despair, she knew she wasn't suffering alone, and for now, this was what she most needed.

For a moment, they looked into each other's eyes, no words necessary, or possible, and then Gabrielle searched her mind for something that would jar them out of this moment, because they had no other choice.

"Oh my god, Raphael," she said, "you're still here?"

He grimaced and reached down to squeeze her hand, and she knew he understood. This was how it had to be. She had learned quickly.

Gabrielle heard voices, doors opening and clanging shut, and then Arwen was there, George and Al on the chain, Cameron about to be added to it.

He wiped his eyes and rose from Gabrielle's bed, and she and Roxanne stood. He turned first to Gabrielle, kissed her on the lips, kissed Roxanne the same way.

"Thanks for having me over," he said. "We'll have to do it again some time."

"Maybe I can go to your place next time," she said, stepping to the bars to watch Arwen apply his leash. "Al, would that be okay?"

"I think I could manage," he replied.

"By the way," Cameron said, "nice picture."

"Thanks," Gabrielle said, smirking humbly.

"No, I'm being serious. It's good."

"I'm gonna change it, though."

"To what?"

"Something with people in it."

"Who?"

"Two people."

Chapter 33: To the Staff Room

After Cameron was gone, Gabrielle accepted hugs from Roxanne, and from Penelope and Austen, passing their arms through the bars. The first male visitor a new girl brought to her stall was always an event, Gabrielle learned, but tonight's session was especially noteworthy, for reasons that didn't require voice.

Gabrielle, tormented by a mix of pride, a deep sense of accomplishment, and a feeling of bitter loss, washed up for bed and lay down, face against the wall.

In the half light, Roxanne joined her, lay beside her, wrapped her arm around Gabrielle's waist and breathed against her hair, saying nothing, nor needing to.

"How much longer do you think I'll be with you?" Gabrielle asked.

"I don't know. They're thinking about trying to get a few more girls now, at least one, maybe two, but I don't think anyone's going to be arriving in the next week or two."

"Okay."

"Do you know where you'll go next?" Roxanne asked.

"Yeah, I think Beverly."

"You've talked about it with her?"

"Today in production, after she licked me, she brought it up. It's fine. She's nice."

Gabrielle shifted her legs and felt Cameron's semen spill out of her vagina and onto her thigh. She'd let it dry there, she decided. If she couldn't have him with her, at least she had this.

She slept soundly, waking only once in the silent darkness to urinate and wipe herself, the tingling of sperm at her vulva too stimulating now for sleep.

When morning came and the lights flashed on, she woke with the faint hope of a new day. She'd see Cameron often enough. She'd be in the same rooms with him often enough. They would look at each other. They'd talk at times. And she'd have fun, working her way back to Cameron Flasche, partnering with boys, partnering with girls, four times, and then back to him.

After she was leashed and she and Austen showered together, Arwen appeared, while she was still studying her picture, holding a pair of handcuffs.

“You wanted to work the staff room, Gabrielle?” Arwen asked.

“Yeah, I guess,” Gabrielle said. “How many points?”

“Five.”

“Oh, that’s a lot,” Gabrielle observed.

“You’ll earn them,” Arwen said without elaborating. “Hold your hands out.”

“You’re handcuffing me?” Gabrielle queried, holding her hands before her.

“Yeah, we’re going down to a less secure area, and you won’t be on a group chain.”

Arwen closed the cuffs around Gabrielle’s wrists.

“Give me your leash.”

Gabrielle removed the leash from her vaginal hook and handed it to Arwen.

“What should I do with my hook?”

“Austen, can you get Gabrielle’s hook where it belongs?” Arwen asked, putting it over one of the crossbars at the leashing port.

“Sure,” Austen replied absently, scribbling out another love note to Penelope. “Good luck, Gabrielle.”

“Thanks,” Gabrielle said, wondering what awaited her in the staff room. But five points would help. She had 12 now, enough for four visits, so today’s work would pay for her next session with Cameron.

She followed Arwen out of the block, into the hall.

“I’m not being milked this morning?” she asked.

“You’ll give milk downstairs,” Arwen said.

“How long will I be there?”

“Through your first two milkings. Three hours or so.”

Arwen walked her to the elevator, pushing the down button, and Gabrielle knew it was too late to have second thoughts.

On the first floor, they went straight to the door that said “Staff Room” and Arwen led her in.

It was a large, open space, smaller than the commons but just as comfortable, with couches, chairs, tables and a small kitchen, equipped with a refrigerator, two coffee makers, and a microwave.

It wasn't until Gabrielle had taken in all the familiar items in the room that she noticed something strange in the far corner of the room, a sort of framework or scaffolding, about the height of a girl, with belts and chains and cuffs.

Arwen grabbed two wipes from a dispenser on the counter and brought Gabrielle to the framework.

"So, um, you're putting me on that?" she asked.

"Yup. Like I said, you'll earn your points."

"I'll stay on it for three hours?"

"Yup."

"Will my leash come out?"

"Yes, as soon as I get you fastened in. Stand here."

Gabrielle stepped within the framework, looking down. Arwen knelt, picked up a cuff, fastened by a short chain to the base of the frame, and Gabrielle moved her right foot over, allowing Arwen to cuff her ankle. Arwen repeated the process with Gabrielle's left ankle, then she stood and removed Gabrielle's handcuffs.

"Right hand," Arwen said. Gabrielle moved it toward the cuff Arwen was holding, secured by a relatively short chain to the side of framework. Arwen cuffed her right hand, then her left. The chains were long enough that Gabrielle could reach the middle part of her body, from mid-thigh to her ribs, but no higher.

A pair of adjustable leather belts, fastened to the vertical bars that held Gabrielle's wrist chains, hovered in front of Gabrielle's breasts, and she studied them and understood with a sick feeling what they were for.

"Okay, lean forward," Arwen said. Gabrielle leaned, Arwen positioned her breasts within the belts and tightened them around the base of each.

"Ow," Gabrielle protested. "Do those have to stay on the whole time?"

"Yeah," Arwen replied.

"Why?"

"Some girls will move when their nipples are pulled, and it makes a mess."

Next came the collar, leather and more comfortable than the metal ring in the production room. Chains ran from it to the vertical posts, allowing Gabrielle limited movement within the framework.

Done fastening Gabrielle in, Arwen stepped behind her and removed the leash from her anus, then stepped in front and wiped her nipples and breasts. She pulled a small plastic bag out of her pocket that said “Sanitized” on it, opened it, withdrew a white, plastic clamp, opened it and applied it to Gabrielle’s left nipple.

The clamp didn’t hurt, but it surprised Gabrielle enough that she uttered a shocked “Oooh,” before she looked up at Arwen.

“What’s that for?”

“Nipple selection. Make sure it’s switched every time someone gets milk.”

“Okay.”

Gabrielle, done studying her humiliating attachment to the frame, noticed that she and Arwen were no longer alone. A man she didn’t recognize was at one of the coffee makers, and a woman she’d seen in the kitchen was standing near the fridge, steam rising from her mug.

“I’ll come get you around 11,” Arwen said, massaging Gabrielle’s breasts, “and Brianna will check on you before then, to see if there’s anything you need.”

Gabrielle looked at the clock on the opposite wall: 7:43.

As soon as Arwen was gone, the woman from the kitchen stepped up, put her cup under Gabrielle’s right nipple and pulled on it. Gabrielle looked down, saw the milk spraying from her nipple into the coffee and fought tears. She wasn’t sure what she’d imagined when they told her she could work in the staff room, but this wasn’t it.

After three or four hard pulls, the woman moved the clamp to Gabrielle’s right nipple and left, their interaction only that, Gabrielle nothing more than a cream dispenser. For five points. She wanted Cameron to know, now, what she was doing.

The man, done brewing his coffee, stepped over to Gabrielle, squeezed her left breast and tugged on her nipple, her milk rushing out, as it always did at the start of the day.

He moved the clamp and left, and Gabrielle looked down, trying to imagine herself like this for another three hours. It was as bad as punishment, and more embarrassing in some ways.

“Hey, Gabrielle,” said a female voice.

Gabrielle looked up, a slight, dark-haired woman with big eyes and a large jaw regarding her.

“Hi,” Gabrielle said. “I don’t think we’ve met yet.”

“We haven’t,” the woman said. “I’m Brianna. I do programs and recreation.”

“I didn’t know we had a person who did that,” Gabrielle said.

“Yeah, I kind of work behind the scenes,” she said, stepping to the microwave with what Gabrielle guessed was tea. “But if you like the games and books in the commons, you can thank me.”

“Okay, thanks,” Gabrielle said.

Brianna put the tea in the microwave, hit the button, turned back to Gabrielle.

“How’s your first week been?”

“Interesting,” Gabrielle said, and she laughed despite not feeling particularly amused. “I had no idea all this was back here. And I’ve known the Arnolds for years.”

“You knew Doria before she went away to school?”

“Yeah, we used to explore. Every day. I loved this farm.”

After a little more small talk, Brianna grabbed her tea from the microwave and approached Gabrielle, continuing to converse as she grabbed Gabrielle’s right nipple and pulled on it twice, her brown tea growing cloudy with Gabrielle’s milk.

“Your contract’s up in December?” Brianna asked.

“Early January,” Gabrielle said. “I’m hoping to go to college.”

“I heard about that. Good luck with it.”

“Thanks,” Gabrielle said.

This wasn’t terrible, she thought. At least she was allowed to talk. And she had a little more freedom of movement here than in production, or the punishment room.

“Are you going to want stimulation?” Brianna asked, taking the first sip of tea.

“What do you mean?” Gabrielle asked.

“We can bring you a rod, about halfway through.”

“Wait,” Gabrielle said. “You mean here? While people are, um, getting milk?”

“Yeah,” Brianna said. “Just like in production.”

“Let me think about it,” Gabrielle said, although she couldn’t imagine asking for relief here, in front of male and female strangers.

“Okay, I’ll make sure someone checks with you in an hour or so,” Brianna said, stepping toward the exit.

“Hey, Brianna?” Gabrielle said.

“Huh?”

“Aren’t you supposed to move my clamp?”

Brianna laughed, returned to Gabrielle. “I was just testing you,” she said, moving the clamp back to Gabrielle’s right nipple.

She took another sip of her tea.

“You’re sweet,” she said.

“I’ve been told that before. Thanks.”

For the most part over the next hour, Gabrielle was a fixture, an appliance, her breasts merely the equipment that delivered milk to coffee and tea and, in one strange instance, an open-faced biscuit with jelly on it, brought by another kitchen worker.

Most people came and left, but Bruce Cartwright, the man who processed her on her first day, stopped to chat.

“I hear you’re doing well,” he said while his coffee brewed.

“It’s hard to screw up,” Gabrielle said. “And you and, um, Esther did a good job with training.”

“Yeah, but you got your tag early, and now you’re on the council.”

“Mr. Arnold did that,” Gabrielle said. “I was just sitting there. I think he felt sorry for me.”

The coffee maker dinged, the same way the milking machines did, at least to Gabrielle’s ears, and Bruce retrieved his cup.

“How’s your ring?” Bruce asked, stepping back, reaching up to massage her breast.

“My ring? Oh, you mean, in my, um, there?”

“Yeah.”

“It really hurt the first few days, but it’s fine now. A twinge now and then, nothing bad.”

“New alloy,” he said, pinching her nipple, her milk shooting out, clouding his coffee while Gabrielle watched.

This is a normal conversation, she told herself.

“You were the first girl we tried it on. It burns hotter during crimping and cauterization, but it’s less susceptible to degradation from urine and blood.”

“Okay.”

Bruce was about to say something else, but Gabrielle interrupted him.

“So, what’s the deal here?” she asked. “Why not just use regular milk, or cream? Or Cremora? Or something else?”

Bruce stood back, raised his cup to his mouth, sipped carefully.

“It’s better than anything you can get at the store,” he said. “Simple as that. Try it once, and you get a taste for it.”

Gabrielle stared at him. “Okay, then. It seems like a lot of trouble, though.”

“Fringe benefit,” Bruce said. “And since we have you girls here, why not?”

Chapter 34: Relief in the Staff Room

After Bruce, there was a long, quiet half hour, Gabrielle watching the clock tick, her mind turning inevitably to Cameron.

She'd read about infatuation, sometimes wondered if she was feeling it with Roger, when they were together.

No.

Now, she was infatuated, her mind turning to her new lover over and over, playing out the sound of his voice, the gaze of his eyes, the way he thrust inside her, the way he grunted when he came.

She had made love to Cameron Flasche last night. Or had sex. Or done something in between. Or something outside any of it, something strange and primitive and deeply, deeply satisfying.

She heard his words over and over again, her own words in reply, imagined the next things she would say to him, the things he might say back. And, despite the lingering questions about what had happened between Cameron and her father – things she believed Cameron was worried over, or even ashamed of – that might make a true relationship impossible, she couldn't stop pondering the way they might live, in that impossible time an eternity away when they were both free of Arnold Farm.

As she stood in her restraints, her mind went from the complex and imponderable to the base and carnal, replaying the night before in all its graphic detail, and she found herself getting wet, a sense of fullness and heat between her legs. She could reach her vulva and clitoris with both hands, and she was considering masturbating when Brianna returned.

"More than halfway through," she said. "How's it going?"

Gabrielle looked at the clock. 9:56 a.m.

"It's boring," Gabrielle replied. "No one's been here in the last half hour."

"That's normal. There's usually another rush right before your time's up."

"Okay."

"How's your milk holding out?"

"Fine, I guess," Gabrielle said. "Every time someone pinches me, something comes out, anyway."

“Do you want relief?”

“What do you mean?” Gabrielle asked, but then she understood.

“Oh, that?”

“Yeah.”

“I don’t know,” Gabrielle said. “I don’t get how it works.”

“The base sits on the floor, between your feet, and you mount it.”

“Mount what?”

“It’s called a relief attachment, but it’s basically a curved dildo at the top of the pole. It goes inside you, and if you move forward and backward, it goes in and out.”

“Okay, I’ll look at it,” Gabrielle said. She was much more willing than she’d been two hours ago to alleviate the boredom through whatever means were available. Besides, she’d probably be alone. And if she weren’t, she could stop moving and hope they didn’t notice the thing between her legs. Or if they did notice, they wouldn’t care, most likely, or wouldn’t say anything.

Upstairs, in production, the fact that girls got pleasure was understood. It probably was here too, Gabrielle reminded herself.

Brianna stepped to a small door and opened it, revealing the usual cleaning and maintenance supplies – vacuum cleaner, brooms, buckets, tools on a pegboard – as well as some less identifiable things Gabrielle guessed were unique to a milk production facility.

Beside the mops stood a vertical pole on a thick metal plate, and Brianna picked it up with a grunt and brought it to Gabrielle, setting it between her chained feet.

Back in the closet again, she grabbed a clear plastic bag off a shelf. Gabrielle glanced at it, saw that “SANITIZED” had been stamped on the outside, and that it held a black dildo, bent in the middle at almost a ninety degree angle.

Gabrielle was still making peace with doing this when one of men she didn’t recognize returned for another cup of coffee, brewing it with his back turned.

Restrained as she was, Gabrielle couldn’t see what Brianna was doing behind her, but she guessed it involved kneeling to attach the dildo to the post. Mortified almost to the point of feeling woozy, Gabrielle looked down, willing the man to get his coffee and leave without putting milk in it

this time. Or if Brianna changed her mind and put everything up, that would be fine too.

But neither happened. Instead, as the coffee machine hissed and fizzled out the final drops into the man's cup, Gabrielle perceived things happening between her legs, the sound of metal against metal as the pole was lengthened and locked in place, the tip of the dildo brushing her vulva, fingers against the insides of her thighs.

Then, Brianna lay two fingers on her labia, parted them and slipped a third finger up her vagina.

"I think you're wet enough," she said. "But I can get some lubrication if you'd like."

The man stepped to Gabrielle, cup in hand, observing the proceedings.

"That's okay," Gabrielle said, dying inside.

Please, just get your milk and go, Gabrielle thought to herself. Please, just get your milk and go.

"Todd, can you give us a moment?" Brianna asked.

"Want me to come back?" he asked.

"No, this'll take a second. I just need to give some instructions."

"Sure," he said, crossing his arms, balancing his steaming mug in the crook of his elbow.

"Gabrielle, this is Todd, by the way," Brianna said. "Todd, this is Gabrielle. Todd works in the lab."

"Hi, Todd," Gabrielle said, her voice breaking, her face sweating with what she was sure was the blush of the century.

"Hey, Gabrielle," he said, giving no indication whatsoever that he sensed Gabrielle's unease, or felt remotely awkward himself. "How's your first week been?"

"Fine," Gabrielle said, trying to remind herself that to Todd, at least, this was all normal, all routine.

"You're A positive," he said.

"Huh?"

"A positive. That's your blood type."

"Oh. How did you know that?"

"I'm the one who got your samples to test last Monday," he said. "Very clean, by the way."

Gabrielle looked at him directly for the first time. He was overweight, with a thin beard and unkempt hair, and she guessed he'd been obsessed with technology and science fiction and games in high school, and now he had a technical job, which probably came as no surprise to his parents.

"Did you find any beer?" Gabrielle asked, desperate to have a normal conversation.

He laughed. "No, I don't test for that."

"Gabrielle," Brianna said, "can you see what I'm doing?"

"Yeah," Gabrielle said, looking down, wishing she couldn't. The dildo had been positioned just beneath her vulva, parallel to the floor at first and then bending upward toward her.

"Slide forward."

Gabrielle obeyed, feeling the end of the toy just beneath her anus.

"Now, slide back until you feel the relief rod at your sex opening, and then drop down, and it should slip inside you."

Gabrielle complied, the first half of the rod entering her chamber.

"Now, slide back again."

The rod continued driving into her, pivoting up at the base, then straightening to conform to the shape of her body as it went deeper.

"It got straight," she observed, glancing at Todd and wishing she hadn't said anything.

"It's got a hinge in the middle, on a spring," Brianna said. "It's bent so it's easier for you to bring into your body, but then it straightens as it goes deeper. But don't worry, it's covered with latex, so you won't get pinched."

"Okay," Gabrielle said. She allowed herself to sense the rod. It had some heft, but wasn't as thick as Dan. Or Cameron, for that matter. It felt good, though. If she were alone, she would probably be enjoying this.

"Thanks," Gabrielle added, because she wanted Brianna to be done and go away.

"Now, slide all the way down," Brianna instructed, apparently not nearly done.

"Sure," Gabrielle said, trying to use the same tone as when she was trying on a new pair of shoes. She lowered herself onto the object, its base pressing against her vulva, a small attachment rubbing her clitoris.

"You should be feeling the clitoral knob."

“Yeah.”

“Does it feel like it’s in the right position?”

“I guess so.”

“I can adjust it.”

“That’s okay.”

“Or I can remove it, and you can just masturbate with your fingers. Your chains are long enough.”

“That’s okay,” Gabrielle said.

Two more people had entered the staff room since Brianna had begun her little tutorial. One, a woman, was at one of the coffee machines. The other, a man, was standing next to Todd, tapping his phone, empty mug in his hand. He was probably around forty, probably with children Gabrielle’s age, or younger. Did he have a daughter?

“Do you think you’ll want it up your anus?” Brianna asked, unrelenting in her eagerness to make sure Gabrielle got the most out of things.

“Probably not,” Gabrielle said, instantly wishing she’d just said a flat “No.”

She was beyond blushing now. Her face no longer felt hot. She had probably gone completely pale, she guessed.

“If you change your mind, release it and slide forward, and the spring will point it up, and then you should be able to get it up your anus with a little trial and error. Because that hole is smaller than your vagina, it can be a little tricky, though, so you can guide it in with your hands. But try to do hands free if you can.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said. How much longer was this going to go?

The woman’s coffee was finished brewing. Now there was an audience of three people, none of whom Gabrielle knew, watching her get instructed in the process of pleasuring herself while she was chained to a milking frame.

“And if you do take it up your anus, you remember the rule, right?”

“Yes,” Gabrielle said.

Gabrielle turned to Brianna, who was looking at her expectantly, one eyebrow raised. Apparently, she wanted Gabrielle to repeat the rule, not just say she knew it.

“Once it’s, um, in . . . in there,” Gabrielle stammered, “it shouldn’t let it out, or um, not . . .”

“Well, you can release it, but it doesn’t go back up your vagina.”

“Okay. Sure.”

“And if it does, that’s ten units, same as in the production room.”

“Okay,” Gabrielle said.

“Almost done,” Brianna said, smiling apologetically at the waiting group. “Gabrielle, go ahead and rock on it, let’s make sure we’ve got everything right.”

Gabrielle slid back and forth half-heartedly, the rod thrusting halfway into her chamber.

Brianna knelt in front of Gabrielle.

“All the way down, so the knob bumps your clitoris,” she said.

Gabrielle increased the arc of her movement, the dildo driving deep inside, the knob tapping her member. She looked down, as if concentrating, as if this were just a little chore that gave her no pleasure.

“Okay, all set,” Brianna said. “Someone will come get you in about an hour.”

Brianna turned to the three people waiting.

“Thanks for your patience. She’s all yours.”

Brianna squeezed Gabrielle’s shoulder, and Gabrielle smiled at her and marveled at how oblivious someone could be to the humiliation they were putting someone else through.

Todd stepped up, raised his cup to Gabrielle’s free nipple and pulled firmly. The woman and the man looked at each other, not sure who was next in line, so the man gestured to the woman to go first. She stepped up, removed the clamp from Gabrielle’s other nipple and squeezed.

Gabrielle looked down, focusing on being drained, her milk squirting into two cups at the same time. The rod was deep in her chamber, but she wasn’t going to move on it while there was an audience.

“Is payroll on Friday or Monday this time?” Todd asked the woman.

“Friday if we can get the new system to work,” the woman replied. “Monday if we have to use the old one. But no later than Monday, I promise.”

“Friday would be better,” the man said with a final tug.

The woman said nothing, put the clamp back on Gabrielle’s nipple, and they both left the staff room.

The third staff member stepped up, raised the empty mug to Gabrielle's breast, squeezed her nipple.

"There's nothing in your cup," she observed.

"I'm doing Coke," he said.

"You put milk in Coke?"

He looked at her and smiled. "I get that from everyone. But chemically, it's not much different from putting it in tea or coffee."

"Okay," said Gabrielle.

"I'm Steve, in accounting, by the way," he said.

"I'm Gabrielle. I'm new."

"Oh, you're 83?"

"Um, yeah, that's my ring number."

"Okay, I've got you in the log. We use numbers there. Your name is just a footnote."

"Sounds kind of impersonal."

"Best way to make sure you get your money," he said.

"Then keep doing it that way."

The rod in her vagina was becoming a minor torment, and she wanted Steve to leave so she could relieve herself. She looked down, hoping he'd get the hint.

"Nice to meet you," he said at last, backing away.

"Yeah, see you next time," she said. "I hope you like the milk."

He raised the cup to his lips, nodded to her and took a quick sip of what he'd drained from her, an act that Gabrielle interpreted as more than merely the action of a man who liked milk in his Coke.

"It's sweet," he said.

"I've been told that. It's not as sweet as the Coke, though."

Alone at last, she experimented with the rod up her hole, sliding back and forth, dropping down on it, allowing it in and out of her body, and grinding on the clitoral knob, her vagina growing quickly wet and swollen with arousal.

Within a minute, she was fully engaged with the rod and knob, rocking the frame, her wrist chains clanging as her pelvis shook and gyrated with a mind of its own.

In the next minute, she was able to orgasm, alone and unembarrassed, gasping for air while her sex organ twitched.

She was still panting when the first of the final wave of drinkers arrived, a woman from the kitchen first, followed by two people she knew, Arwen from production and Esther, who'd helped Bruce process her on her first day.

"I understand you're settling in," Esther said, tugging on Gabrielle's left nipple.

"I guess so," Gabrielle said. "It's all pretty simple. And everyone here is really nice."

Another half dozen people took milk from her over the next few minutes, and then she was done, handcuffed, leashed, and brought back to her stall, where she and the other girls had lunch.

"How was the staff room?" Austen asked her.

"Mostly boring," Gabrielle replied. "But not terrible. I met some new people, and I got to cum."

"On that rod they put between your legs?"

"Yeah. It actually wasn't half bad," Gabrielle said. "Other than the instructions."

"What do you mean?" Roxanne asked.

"Brianna had to go into extreme detail about how to do it, while people waited for milk. So they're standing there while she's giving me all kinds of embarrassing instructions."

"Was anyone there when you came?" Penelope asked.

"No, fortunately."

Chapter 35: A Dark Secret

Gabrielle was walked to the commons after her third milking, and she headed straight for the PCs, barely looking at the people there, although she confirmed with a quick scan of the room that Cameron wasn't present. Not that she could have talked to him, necessarily. Especially if he were alone. People were watching.

She wanted to look up “negative stimuli.” Something about the expression wouldn't let go of her mind.

She searched that term, found a long list of irrelevant links, searched the term with Mr. Arnold's name, and found two papers behind paywalls. But one of those papers had another author, someone named Shavendra Mukulbay. So she searched that name and “negative stimuli” and found three more papers. Two articles required payment, but the third was available as a scan, a series of pictures of pages from a magazine entitled “Alternative Dairy Quarterly.”

She pushed through the pages quickly, skipping past the formulae and definitions and tedious descriptions of methodology, stopping only when she found what she was looking for, a section contributed by “C Arnold.”

That's all it said. “C Arnold.”

For 30 minutes, Gabrielle studied the data, without looking up, without hearing the voices around her, the coming and going of males and females, the clanging of the entry cage door.

Now she understood.

She understood, at least, what was happening. She had no idea what to do with her knowledge.

For now, she decided to file it away, to ponder but to say nothing, and to gather more information.

Over the next few weeks, Gabrielle made her way, her life becoming predictable, pleasant, despite the dark secret she carried with her.

She went to the Sunday council meetings, voting when votes were called for but staying mostly silent, just there to get a sense of how things worked. She signed up for Ronen, who didn't have to share because he had no one in the stall beside his. There was always one male without a

neighbor, and it was switched up every month, Gabrielle learned. Next month, Ronen told her, Cameron would be the male with no neighbor, and she knew that when she went to him then, they could whisper together while they made love, and answer any questions that still remained, and there would be no second penis at the end.

Would she tell him what she knew? She wasn't sure. Probably not.

Next, she signed up for Helen, enjoying a session that was mostly kissing until the last few minutes, when they wrapped themselves around each other and licked each other to orgasm.

A few days later, Beverly signed up for her, welcoming her into her stall, first sharing her with Heather, who came under Gabrielle's mouth while Gabrielle withheld her climax until she and Beverly went to Beverly's bed for a surprisingly varied session: kissing, fondling, drinking each other's milk, rubbing their sex organs together, and licking each other's vulvas and anuses. Beverly's was the first anus Gabrielle had licked, and she decided it was an acquired taste, but something she was comfortable with as long as it was the right girl.

They continued to make plans to move in together, Gabrielle looking forward to partnering with Beverly even as the thought of leaving Roxanne left her feeling sad.

Gabrielle continued her quest for points, serving in production, giving milk in the staff room once a week (and assuring whoever came to set the relief rod between her legs that she knew exactly how it worked), completing her chores faithfully, and offering to take black tags off any girl she saw wearing them, arranging trades almost every day.

Doria, consulting her PC upon every request, permitted some trades, disallowed others. Gabrielle made a mental note of the girls who almost always got permission to trade points, and the girls who usually weren't allowed to escape punishment. She also made a note of who could usually opt out of corporal punishment, and who almost always had to suffer the blows of Grendl's cane or whip.

Austen was one of the girls who could rarely dodge corporal. So was Beverly. Within two weeks, Gabrielle had discovered another five girls who were in that category, three more girls who might be. Gabrielle didn't believe she was, however. She chose the cane or whip when she was in a hurry, but when she asked to be put in stocks, or locked in an isolation room, Grendl said yes whenever there was space for her. She hated

isolation, though. Like Roxanne, she wanted to know what was going on in the room. Unlike Roxanne, she had a specific reason for gathering that information.

After Helen and Beverly, she signed up for Dan, going to his stall and allowing him to very gently, politely ravish her, lying on top of her and carefully moving his oversized penis in and out of her hole while she grunted and gasped beneath him, first in pain, then in a mixture of pain and pleasure, and finally in sheer ecstasy, his member wringing a long, hard orgasm from her middle.

George watched the ordeal from his stall, his penis at full attention by the time Gabrielle sat up in Dan's bed, his semen leaking out of her throbbing sheath.

She looked at George, and he smiled and stepped to the bars, making no effort to hide his erection.

"Let's give you a break tonight," he offered.

"Why?" Gabrielle replied.

"Probably better if you recover from what Dan did to you before anyone else uses you."

"Why didn't you take me first?" Gabrielle asked, looking at George, and then at Dan, who looked back at her sheepishly from his bed.

"Dan doesn't like to go second," George said.

Gabrielle turned to face Dan, indignant.

"Wait, Gabrielle," George said. "It took me a long time to get him to admit it. And we've got an understanding. If he's too big to enter a girl, or he has to withdraw before he cums, we chain her and I get her – if she's okay with that. But if he finishes, I don't get her."

"You don't get her," Gabrielle repeated. "Do you ever ask her what she wants?"

George looked up, as if he'd never pondered the question before.

Gabrielle continued, "Because it should always be up to the girl, shouldn't it?"

"It should be," George agreed. Arguing with Gabrielle about this didn't seem to be reducing his condition. If anything, he was more aroused as they talked, his penis pointing slightly upward, the head thick and darker than the shaft.

"So, I'm trying to do things right," Gabrielle said. "And I can probably take you, if you can be gentle."

“Sure, I can be,” George said, and Gabrielle could tell he was doing his best to sound calm, and not too eager. She wasn’t fooled, however.

She stepped to the bars, slid her legs through.

“I’m not going to promise I can finish,” she said, “but go ahead and restrain me and let’s see what happens.”

George knelt to pull the cuffs out of the floor and apply them to Gabrielle’s ankles.

Dan, his penis slick and still semi-erect, cuffed Gabrielle’s wrists.

Gabrielle pushed her bottom against the bars, parted her legs and looked back at George, kneeling between her feet.

“Go ahead,” she said. “I’ll tell you if I need you to stop, and then I can just suck you.”

George, apparently satisfied with the invitation, knelt between Gabrielle’s knees, and she arched her back to make her vulva easier to reach. He pulled her lips apart and eased his penis into her opening, her lips straining around his shaft, her inflamed walls stretching out to accommodate him.

“Oh, god,” Gabrielle grunted. “Oh, god.”

“Want me to pull out?”

“No, it’s okay. It hurts a little, but it feels good too, if that makes sense. Just go slow.”

Gabrielle continued to gasp as George fed his entire penis into her soft, aching tunnel. Once it was fully inserted, he held still while she composed herself.

“Okay, okay,” she said. “It’s good. Just keep going slow.”

George worked methodically, calmly, sliding his member in and out of her hole while she sighed, arched her back and moaned quietly.

Knowing perhaps that his time was limited, he seemed to be making each thrust count, pushing all the way up her sheath, holding it there for a few seconds, sliding out until just his tip was within her, then pushing back in all the way, grunting each time he reached full insertion.

After no more than a dozen thrusts, his penis started to throb within her, his breath came fast and shallow, and she knew he was climaxing, his cream shooting into her body, mixing with Dan’s semen and her own lubricant.

He sighed out again, barely moving inside her, and Gabrielle knew he was finishing now, not wanting to waste any semen, holding out until he

stopped pumping.

As soon as he began to soften, he withdrew, semen and juice dripping from Gabrielle's hole to the floor between her legs.

Gabrielle had no intention of trying to orgasm again, but her satisfaction was complete nevertheless. She had performed well, she told herself, standing and smiling after George and Dan opened her cuffs. She liked to be good at things. She had been good at school. She had been good on Lakemore High's varsity volleyball team. And, as dubious as the achievement might seem to some, she was good at this.

A few days later, Cameron came to her in production.

"Hey, want a boost?" he asked casually, squatting before her, Arwen holding his leash, his penis pointing straight up toward her.

"Sure," Gabrielle replied, trying to sound enthusiastic for something she wished could be different.

"Which end?"

"My rear," Gabrielle said.

Arwen walked Cameron behind Gabrielle, did a cursory check of her tag and fastened him to the ring between her legs.

"I probably won't cum," she said. "But this will be nice."

"Sounds good," Cameron said, touching her vaginal opening.

"Am I wet?"

"A little. It's okay if I rub?"

"You're so polite," Gabrielle replied, spreading her legs and arching her back. "Yeah."

Cameron worked her sex for about a minute, stroking her clitoris, putting his finger between her lips, rubbing again.

"Uh," Gabrielle grunted, surprised that she was enjoying this. She believed that she could only take Cameron one way – in bed, whispering intimately while they made love. But impersonal as this was, it was working for her.

"Okay, I think you're ready."

"Go ahead."

Gabrielle felt him part her lips, felt his penis tip begin opening her up, felt him make a short, test thrust, no more than half his organ inside her.

With a few more shallow thrusts, he seemed to be satisfied that he'd distributed her lubricant along the first half of her sheath, and he went

deeper, grunting as he penetrated her.

All the way inside her now, making quick, shallow thrusts, he bent over her, wrapped his arm around her belly, his mouth a foot from her ear.

“I want to tell you everything,” he said.

“I want to hear everything,” she whispered back, searching the room quickly to make sure no one was listening.

“Your dad didn’t get hit by a car.”

“Yes he did.”

“No he didn’t. He fell out a window and landed on a wheelbarrow.”

Gabrielle laughed because she couldn’t help it, closed her mouth, then moaned, hoping anyone who’d heard her would think it was all part of the same reaction, to Raphael’s penis, and not to something he’d just whispered furtively in her ear.

“Are you joking?” she asked. “This isn’t something you should joke about.”

“No, of course not.”

“You saw this?”

“No. I heard it.”

Cameron, thrusting gently up Gabrielle’s chamber, was struggling to keep his voice even, and she knew he was already halfway to orgasm. Would he be able to keep talking while he ejaculated? Gabrielle wondered. Probably not.

“What exactly did you hear?” Gabrielle asked.

“It was awful,” Cameron said breathlessly. “Just a crash, which scared me. And then someone in pain.”

Cameron gasped, raised up from Gabrielle’s back briefly, withdrew his penis and then re-inserted it, and Gabrielle guessed he was trying to find a more comfortable position for servicing her while they talked.

“Who pushed him?” Gabrielle asked.

“No one,” Cameron said, grunting and quickening his thrusts, pushing in deeper and harder, telling Gabrielle with his motions that he was about to cum. “He jumped.”

“Why?” Gabrielle asked, but it was too late, Cameron’s ability to talk subsumed by orgasm, his voice reduced to staccato grunts, his breath coming in quick bursts against her neck.

The machine beeped while Cameron was still recovering from the climax, and Arwen was there before he was soft, putting him on a group

chain, fastening Gabrielle to the other end, the lovers unable to do more than glance shyly at each other as they were brought back to their stalls.

What Cameron said made so little sense that she found she couldn't react to it. Roxanne and Penelope were gone, so she grabbed her dildo, said a quick hello to Austen, explained that she'd been with Raphael, crawled into bed and spent no more than two minutes bringing herself to orgasm, Cameron's semen coating her toy, spilling out across her vulva and onto the bed.

Chapter 36: Al and Raphael

Two weeks after her arrival to Arnold Farm, on Monday, July 1, it was at last time to sign up for a stall session with Cameron again, and her hands shook as she wrote out the request in the morning report.

She hadn't spoken to Cameron beyond a few quick words in passing, and that session in production, so when she saw him in the commons, sitting on the floor with Vanessa and Dan, she decided it was safe to say hello.

She sauntered over slowly, however, wanting to be invited to sit with them.

Vanessa noticed her first, looking up and smiling, the two boys following her gaze.

"Hey, Gabrielle."

"Hey, Gabrielle."

Cameron patted the floor next to him, and Gabrielle sat.

"I heard you signed up for me," he said.

"I did," she said. "It's been a week."

So this is how they'd play it. Like their time together was just part of the normal course of things.

"You're coming to my place?"

"If they put me on your busy schedule," Gabrielle replied.

"Al first," he said, as Vanessa and Dan looked on.

"Not second?" Gabrielle inquired. "Most guys don't like going after."

"It's okay," Cameron said. "Just to get it over with."

Gabrielle studied Cameron's eyes. Was this him making the best of a difficult situation? Vanessa spoke and Gabrielle had her answer.

"Cameron always takes me first, shares me with Al second," she said.

"I thought I'd switch it up a little," Cameron said, a hint of defensiveness in his voice.

"Either way is fine with me," Gabrielle said.

Gabrielle put her mind on other things the rest of the day, but by 9 p.m., she was shaking again, nearly jumping every time she heard a door

open or clang shut, someone speak, the sound of a chain clinking that might be a leash or might be something else.

Arwen appeared a little after 9, and Gabrielle rose from her bed, stood on her toes so Roxanne could lean down from her bed to kiss her, and stepped to the port, turning, bending and relaxing her anus for the leash.

The walk to the males' block was short and free of talk, Arwen having something else on her mind, perhaps, or merely tired after a long day.

Cameron and Al were both on their beds, Cameron continuing to sit when she appeared, Al rising politely, penis erect, his respectable endowment obvious. Gabrielle suspected he'd been masturbating.

Cameron waited until Gabrielle had been unleashed to rise from his bed, offering a half smile before stepping over to the little plates in the floor that hid the cuffs.

He just wanted to get this done, Gabrielle told herself, dropping onto her hands and knees, sliding her legs into Al's stall.

Al cuffed her gently, and so loosely she probably could have worked her ankles out of the restraints with a little effort. Cameron did the same.

"They're too loose," Gabrielle said. "It feels weird."

Neither male said anything.

"Three catches for my ankles, four for my wrists."

The boys tightened Gabrielle's cuffs accordingly, and she tilted her pelvis, angling her vulva up for Al.

He put a hand on her rear, touched her vulva with one finger to make sure she was wet, spread her lips and mounted her, easing the tip of his penis into her sheath.

She looked at Cameron, back on his bed, reading a book, expressionless. Is this what boys looked like when they were infatuated? she wondered. Or horribly jealous?

She wanted to lick Cameron. She wanted him to lick her. How would he feel about oral sex after Al had released in her?

Al continued sliding up, his member filling Gabrielle, eliciting from her a quick, involuntary grunt. An idea occurred to her.

"So, Al," she said, trying not to gasp.

"Yeah?"

"I heard . . . you did porn."

“Not really,” he said. It was the expected response.

“Well, whatever,” Gabrielle said. “Did you ever . . . did you ever, uh, do a girl . . . behind?”

“What, anally?” Al said, his voice lifting a bit. “Yeah. Plenty of times.”

“Do you like it?”

“Love it.”

“You wanna . . . uh . . . you wanna . . .?”

“Do you anally?”

“Yeah,” Gabrielle replied. She had never done it before. She had no interest in it. This was all for Cameron. She looked up at him again. He looked back at her, and there was an expression there now. Something. Love. Gabrielle thought she could feel it.

“I’ve never done it before,” Gabrielle said. “But I’m sort of curious. How does it work?”

“I can get some lube, but I’m not sure we’ll need it. You’re really wet.”

“Will it hurt?”

“Not if we do it right. Once you’re ready, tighten your anus for about ten seconds, and you should be relaxed enough to take me.”

Gabrielle immediately tightened, focusing on her anus, but clamping down on Al as well.

“Whoa,” Al said.

Gabrielle nervous now, afraid she was making a mistake, clenched until her muscles gave out.

“Okay,” she said, shifting in her chains, angling her pelvis down slightly. “Now.”

Al drew his penis out of her vagina, raised the tip to her anus and began pushing. The feeling was at first not unlike being leashed, but Al was far bigger than the leash plug, and he kept pushing, opening up her rear chamber, stretching it.

“Uh, uh, uh,” Gabrielle panted, more with anxiety than pain. “Okay, keep going.”

She guessed that Al had half his penis inside her before he stopped thrusting.

“Okay so far?” he asked.

“Yeah, but stop there,” Gabrielle said softly, her voice a sigh. “Will you need to move a lot to cum?”

“A little,” he said, and she felt his rod dance within her, in and out quickly, shallow thrusts that built in less than a minute to a strong, throbbing orgasm.

“Oh yeah,” Al whispered to himself. “Oh yeah. Oh yeah.”

It was starting to hurt before he was done, but Gabrielle believed she would recover, and she let him finish releasing into her, thrusts slowing and finally stopping, his softening penis pulled from her chamber.

As soon as he’d left her body, she felt his fingers at the tag in her labia, moving it aside to read the number stamped into her ring. He would need that number for his morning report, she guessed. Tomorrow, he’d probably write something like “#083, rectum, one ejaculation,” and Mr. Arnold would add that little statistic to his Sunday report.

Al opened the cuffs around Gabrielle’s ankles.

Cameron rose, his smile plainer now, and released her wrists.

She went straight to the toilet, closed the curtain and wiped her anus, trying to remove all the evidence of Al’s time within her.

Al was nice. Respectful. And cute, she thought. It was just his bad luck he’d been paired with the boy Gabrielle was in love with. Did he really want her anus, or did he agree so quickly because he knew that Cameron loved her and hated sharing her front opening?

Gabrielle stepped through the curtain. Al was on his bed, reading something. Cameron was on his bed, not reading. He was on his side, propped up on one elbow, regarding Gabrielle with what looked to her like bemusement, his penis fully-engorged and waiting for her.

“What’s so funny?” she asked him, sitting on his bed, staring at him without smiling.

“You did that well.”

“You thought I was going to screw it up?”

“No, not really.”

“Because it’s kind of hard to screw my job up,” she said. “Just sit there. Just stand there. Just get on all fours like an animal.”

“You sound annoyed.”

“I don’t know,” Gabrielle said, surprised the conversation had taken this turn, wondering how long they’d just talk. “It’s just, there isn’t much

challenge here. That's one thing I've started noticing. You have to create your own challenges, or . . . there's nothing."

"What kind of challenges have you created?" Cameron asked her, reaching out to stroke her arm, not lecherously, more like something a friend would do.

"I've looked up things," Gabrielle said. "You know, just documents online. Papers. Whatever. Reading things."

"What kind?" Cameron asked. "What do you search?"

"Well, milk production, for one," Gabrielle said. "Alternative dairy."

"You're probably the only one who's done that here."

"Why?"

"We're all living it," Cameron said. "No new information is going to come out of paper."

Gabrielle was tempted to correct him, to at least hint at the things she'd discovered that no one else knew, but she didn't dare. Not yet.

Cameron's penis was pointing toward her. He seemed to be waiting for her to decide when she was ready. She could probably just keep talking, and he'd never complain.

She wasn't going to waste this precious hour, though. She pulled her feet off the floor one at a time, leaning back, revealing her wet, pink vulva to him, white tag against black hair, spreading her legs in a way that she knew parted her lips, so he could see her flower in all its glory.

She closed her legs and leaned over to him, toward his middle, and kissed the tip of his penis. It jerked involuntarily, so she grabbed it and slid her tongue down to the base of his sex, to the collar around his testicles.

She pulled her mouth away and rose up on her hands and knees to get in position over him, but he took her arm.

"Can we do something else first?" he whispered.

She didn't answer, but she allowed him to position her next to him, lying side by side, kissing now, open mouthed and hard.

He moved his hips and the tip of his penis nudged her black triangle. He pulled his mouth away from hers and raised one eyebrow. She nodded and, almost instinctively, raised one leg. He reached down, positioned his penis at her slit, spread her lips deftly with two fingers and eased himself into her, working his way slowly up her sheath while they both sighed.

Without further ceremony, he buried his cock deep inside her, pressing until all of him was embedded within her body, and they kissed while he moved in and out, slowly, methodically.

“Lick now?” he whispered, pulling out.

“Yeah,” Gabrielle agreed, clambering over him, trying to keep her voice steady through the fierce ache of being emptied. She understood. She’d held Al there, and Cameron didn’t want her organ at his mouth until he’d marked it as his. Could a guy sense another guy’s penis? Or was it merely symbolic?

Cameron lay on his back and she positioned herself over him, mouth at his penis, legs spread wide by his shoulders, vulva lowered.

She took a deep breath and devoured his rod, taking it deeply enough that her teeth were near the middle of the shaft, and she sucked and licked, spasming briefly when his tongue reached her opening, licking off the juice, playing with her tag, probing the sensitive place where her ring was embedded, pressing between her lips and entering her chamber.

They both could have cum like this, Gabrielle knew, but she held back, and she sensed Cameron was doing so as well, as if they’d mutually agreed that they were to wait for intercourse to climax.

Gabrielle was the first to give in, overwhelmed by the aching need to have her swollen chamber completely filled.

She took one last, deep suck of Cameron’s penis, pulled her mouth away and ripped her vulva away from Cameron’s attention, turning quickly over him.

Without asking for his permission, she straddled his hips, reached down and raised his penis and impaled herself on it, grunting while she gyrated, forcing his organ to stir around in her chamber as if she were using it to scrub her walls.

“Fuck me,” she demanded, no longer in control of her body, or her mouth. “God damn it, just fuck, just fuck.”

Cameron obeyed as far as he was able, thrusting gently but allowing Gabrielle to do most of the work, her furious exhortations a counterpoint to the rhythmic, steady slick-slick-slick of their organs, dancing together in the deep, rushing stream of Gabrielle’s arousal.

Gabrielle came before she wanted to, a disappointed sigh followed by a scream, then the “uh, uh, uh,” as the pleasure washed over her.

Cameron, perhaps sensing it was time, or maybe as unable as she to hold back, cried out with the beginning of his own climax, his hips jerking beneath her, semen shooting into her, rushing out in the gaps between her opening and his thrusting shaft, flooding her lips and the base of his penis.

For what felt like an hour, they simply reacted to the inexorable demands of orgasm, each writhing through its intoxicating power, each contributing their share of fluid to the union between Gabrielle's legs.

As the last waves of pleasure ebbed, Gabrielle dropped down, keeping Cameron inside her while she brought their mouths together, kissing as deeply as before, kissing well beyond what was appropriate for two colleagues, a boy and a girl who were simply supposed to be working together to maximize the flow of milk from her nipples.

"Yeah," she whispered into his mouth. "Yeah."

Done, completely sated, she rose up, pressing down on Cameron's shoulders, moved her vulva to his belly, unconcerned about the fluids she was leaking onto him, and turned to look past the bars of Cameron's stall, at the clock, which said almost 10. They'd had a lifetime of sex in the last 45 minutes. And before that, she'd served Al.

Now, she needed to talk, and there wasn't much time.

"What happened with my father?" she demanded quietly, wary of being heard by Al. "Why did he jump out a window and fall on a wheelbarrow?"

Chapter 37: What Happened at a Cathouse

Cameron looked up at Gabrielle, a mix of astonishment and amusement in his face.

“Have you figured out what a cathouse is yet?”

“I know what it isn’t,” Gabrielle said.

“What?”

“It’s not a house where cats live, apparently.”

Cameron laughed, rose up his elbows and looked at the place where Gabrielle’s vagina was leaking onto his belly.

“A cathouse is a place where girls do things. For men. For money.”

“A whorehouse?”

“Not really. Some girls just do massages, or aromatherapy, or rocks – usually. Some just do . . . rubs. But if you know how to ask . . .”

“Okay, okay,” Gabrielle said. “What was my dad doing there?”

Cameron just looked at her.

“No way,” she said. “No way.”

“Truth is, I don’t know what he was doing. All I know is he decided not to leave by the front door. So you can draw your own conclusions.”

“Why would he jump out a second story window?”

“The police were coming in through the front door, so I think he decided the window would work better.”

“Why were the police coming in?”

“They were looking for someone. It wasn’t a raid. They know what goes on there, they don’t care. But they got a tip someone was there, and they were going room to room.”

Gabrielle paused, trying simultaneously to imagine a situation she had no familiarity with, and to fit her father into it.

“Wait,” she said. “What were you doing there?”

Cameron just stared again.

“So, when you stare,” Gabrielle said after a long pause, “that means I should just go with the first thing that comes to my mind.”

He kept staring.

Now she had to fit Cameron Flasche into her vision of a cathouse where police entered through the front door and men, including her father, jumped out the windows in back.

“So, how did . . . how did . . .” she began, her tone accusatory now, “how did you end up getting credit for saving his life?”

Cameron looked at the clock, spoke quickly.

“I was on the ground floor, so I didn’t get hurt climbing out the window. I was going to run through the woods behind the place, to Highway 51, and come back for my car later, but then I heard your dad fall and get hurt. So I went to him. I was whispering, ‘Sir, Sir, are you hurt?’ and he looked at the ground, and he said something like ‘Oh, damn, son, I believe I am busted.’ And then he said, ‘I can’t be found here. Just leave me be, and I’ll crawl to the highway.’ So I offered to pick him up, and he just waved his hand, but I got him to sit, and I pulled his arms over my shoulders, and I carried him to the highway.”

“How far did you carry him?”

“I guess a couple hundred yards.”

“Through the woods?”

“Yeah, trees and stuff. Pretty flat though. And I set him down by the highway. Or sort of set him down. He tried to stand, his leg gave out, he fell and cried, and then I cried too. And I left him there, for someone to find him.”

“Goddam,” Gabrielle whispered, eyes tearing up.

“I know, I know.”

“But you were the one who found him.”

“Yeah, I got my car, no one saw me, went to the highway. I was the first one to see him, I guess, because I knew he was there. And I knew someone needed to find him. So I pulled over, he said a car hit him. He was almost delirious by then, but he had his story straight. So I just went with it. I called emergency, waited with him.”

“You lied to the police,” Gabrielle observed.

The rest of the story she knew. The ambulance came. Her father was saved. The police called it hit and run, said her father was struck while he was taking one of his long walks. Her father claimed to have no memory of the accident, so all the police could do was ask publicly if anyone knew of a car with a new dent in the right front bumper.

And Cameron Flasche, adding another achievement to his accolades, was credited with finding her dad, calling for his rescue, tending him while they waited on the side of the road.

“I think they knew,” Cameron said.

“You lied to the newspaper,” she asserted.

“I did one interview,” he said, “because they wouldn’t leave me alone. And if you read it, you’ll see that I didn’t want any credit for it.”

“I read it,” Gabrielle said. “I read every word. More than once. And yes, you were ridiculously modest. Which made me love you that much more.”

She crawled off Cameron, slipped off the bed and went to the toilet, closing the curtain and pulling out tissue to wipe herself.

She pulled a second tissue and wiped her eyes. Two icons had fallen before her in the last five minutes: Her father, who apparently had been to a cathouse at least once, and Cameron Flasche, who also frequented cathouses, and who lied to the newspaper and probably the police too.

Maybe boys did this. All boys. Or most boys. But not mayors.

“Are you upset?” Cameron asked from the other side of the curtain.

“I’m gonna have to work on this,” she said. It was a line she’d used before, when Roger committed the small sins common to an adolescent male with his first girlfriend. This felt different, though. Everything felt different.

“I thought you could be mayor,” she said, sniffing.

“You mentioned that,” Cameron said. “People see one thing, and I’m another thing, and it’s been that way all my life.”

“Maybe you’re both ways,” Gabrielle said, flushing and throwing the curtain wide. She glanced at Al, on his bed, working a crossword puzzle. She turned back to Cameron, so close their toes were almost touching. “Maybe there are two Cameron Flasches. Valedictorian football hero and . . . cathouse boy.”

Gabrielle was being serious, but Cameron laughed, uproariously, his arms crossed over his chest, as if Gabrielle had found his most ticklish place and was digging her fingers in. Maybe she’d said something true, that had never come from someone else’s mouth before.

“So I guess you’ve found your destiny here.”

“It’s been okay.”

—” “How are you going to leave all this behind?” she asked. “Isn’t it

“I’d love to settle down,” he said, staring at her as if willing her to believe him. “Trust me on that. This is a job. Except for you.”

She glanced at the bars, saw Arwen there, waiting. She stepped to the leashing port, turned and bent.

Arwen reached down and spread Gabrielle’s lips, checking for semen.

“How many partners?” she asked.

“Both.”

“And both up your vagina?”

“No, one vagina, one rectum,” Gabrielle replied.

Arwen put her finger up Gabrielle’s anus, seemed satisfied with what she found there, pressed the tip of the leash against it.

Gabrielle looked up at Cameron, who was done laughing and was just studying her now, the way he did.

She gestured and he walked over.

Leash in and locked, she straightened, walked to him, wrapped her arms around his lower back and kissed him.

Upset as she was, to do anything else wasn’t an option.

He kissed her back, looked into her eyes, so she frowned. Kissing didn’t mean closure. Still frowning, she looked into the next stall.

“By Al,” she said.

He waved. “See you, Gabrielle. Thanks”

How much had he heard? she wondered. Not that it mattered, most likely.

Back in her stall, she did her best to seem happy, Roxanne and the other girls knowing she’d been with her lover, even if she wouldn’t admit it herself.

She was glad when the lights went out, however, lying in her bed, facing the wall, blanket up to her chin, pondering.

She’d been told college could be exhilarating and thought-provoking, and sometimes disillusioning.

So could Arnold Farm. Her best childhood friend was involved in something cruel. Her dream lover had been to – one of those places. So had her father.

She didn't want to know what she'd learned. She didn't want to know this about her father. That was the worst of it. What her father had done.

She hadn't thought much about her parents' relationship growing up, but now she had to. They were always quiet, not boisterous fighters, not even much for arguing. But Mom had been working long hours at the store the last few years, and strange hours. Weekends. Nights. Sometimes she didn't get home until two in the morning.

So maybe what her father did made sense.

Did it bother her that Cameron had been there too?

She wasn't sure. No cathouse, she was certain, no matter how many girls it employed and how many males it entertained, could come close to Arnold Farm for sheer carnality, for raw, open and unabashed sex.

But they were doing it at the farm for manufacturing purposes, while Cameron and her father . . . what were they doing it for? What did they get out of it? Was doing . . . whatever . . . with girls like that worth all the trouble?

But yes, she told herself, Cameron Flasche had, in a way, saved her father's life. Just not the way the newspapers told it.

And now, Gabrielle thought she knew why Cameron had come home from West Point. He didn't belong there, not completely. Not the cathouse boy part of his soul. Here, at Arnold Farm, he could be cathouse boy all day, every day. Was that all he wanted?

Over the next ten days, Gabrielle gave milk, had her period, then partnered with Roxanne, Beverly, and three of the boys other than Cameron, continued her chase for points, and cast her mind to Cameron every chance she got.

She didn't like what he said. But she believed he was speaking the truth. And the truth was what it was. All morality, all propriety aside, she wanted to be with Cameron again. Whatever had happened had happened. That was the past. Cameron Flasche was the future, and the future mattered far more than yesterday.

It was time to sign up for him again. She knew she wanted his body. She wasn't sure she wanted his mouth. At least, not to speak.

In the meantime, she and her mother traded a terse series of daily, handwritten messages.

“You got a big packet from Brown,” her mom wrote. “They want you to apply for the fall semester.”

“I’m going in January,” Gabrielle replied, putting the note out that same morning.

“They want you to apply for scholarships again,” her mother said in the next note. “For the fall.”

“I can get loans. In the spring.”

“You just need to sign a few things, and get an updated reference. I’m going to ask Mrs. Arnold for one. I saw her the other day, she says you’re doing great.”

“Fine, whatever.”

The next day – by now it was mid-July – Gabrielle received the relevant forms, signed them and sent them back.

She tried to sign without thinking about them, but the paperwork forced her to ponder Brown, and thoughts of Brown forced her to think beyond the world of her new existence, a narrow world of confinement, restraint, lovemaking and – six times a day – tubes hooked to her nipples.

When she got to Brown – not if, but when – she needed to know she’d been more than a pair of breasts here.

The afternoon she sent in the forms, the opportunity came. She made her way through the commons, chatting with her friends, talking politics with Ronen, and looking for black tags.

Britney, a girl on block 1 who had conservative leanings and liked to argue with Ronen, joined the conversation, black tag dangling from her ear. Gabrielle had tried to trade with her once before, but Doria said no.

“Wanna trade?” Gabrielle asked.

“We can try,” Britney said.

“Ronen, can you give us a minute?” Gabrielle asked, rising. She looked down, noticed that his penis was at full attention, and marveled that he could talk about tax policy and social welfare while another part of his mind prepared for sex.

“Sure,” he said.

Doria was her usual efficient, cheerful self, smiling at Gabrielle but not acting like her long-lost friend anymore. Nor should she, really. This was all business.

“So, Doria,” said Gabrielle. “Any chance Britney could give me her tag?”

Doria consulted her PC, looked up and smiled apologetically, first at Britney, then at Gabrielle.

“Not this time, sorry,” she said.

Britney turned on her heel, apparently expecting that answer and annoyed by it, but Gabrielle lingered.

“So, Britney’s in that group, isn’t she?” Gabrielle asked, after making sure no one was within earshot.

“What group?” Doria asked.

“The same group with Lisa, Beverly, Austen, Debbi, Amber . . . maybe a few others.”

Doria just stared blankly.

“You know, Negative Stimuli Group A.”

Doria’s smile faded, and her cheeks reddened.

“Did my dad tell you about that?”

“No, he didn’t need to. I saw something by Shavendra Mukulbay.”

“Okay,” said Doria, eyebrows raised, as if Gabrielle had just called her a skunk. “Okay.”

Gabrielle smiled, turned and stepped back to the table where Ronen and Britney had been joined by Cameron. She smiled at him, looked down, raised her hand off the table and noticed it was shaking.

“Did you get those scholarship papers signed?” Cameron asked.

In the brief moments they’d had to talk over the last week, this is the subject he’d focused on – Gabrielle’s schooling. She found the topic increasingly difficult.

When she left for school, she’d be leaving him. His contract had been for two years, so he wouldn’t be departing any earlier than next summer.

And what then? What if he decided not to renew his contract? He’d be free. Would he walk away from his life at Arnold Farm the same way he had walked away from West Point, not looking back? She imagined him going south, or west. Or to another country, his time with the girl named Gabrielle just a memory, melting together in his mind with the memories of all the other girls at Arnold Farm, and all the other girls before and since.

This is what she wanted to talk about – not her father, not cathouses, not college, not the Cameron Flasche of old memories – she wanted to talk about their future together.

And there was no way to discuss it. Not in public. Possibly not in private either.

And now, she was beginning to realize, as she sat and stared at the table, she'd started something new, and unpredictable.

Doria's response to her words had been vague, non-committal. What had Gabrielle expected Doria to say? "Oh, everyone knows about that." Or "You're completely mistaken, there's another CB Arnold who studies things. Dan would never do that."

But no, Doria had just arched her eyebrow and said "Okay."

Was Gabrielle the first to figure this out? Did it matter that she knew? She had just set wheels in motion that might spin in unpredictable ways. What if Mr. Arnold tore up her contract? What if they cut off her rings, gave her a change of clothes and escorted her off the property? There was nothing she could recall in the document she'd signed that gave her the right to protest termination. If they wanted her gone, that was it. They probably wouldn't even let her write to Cameron. She would just disappear, as far as he was concerned.

Why had she done it? Why had she said those things to Doria? Suddenly, she felt very foolish.

"Hey, Gabrielle?"

She looked up. Cameron was staring at her. Britney, her disappointment at Doria's desk eased, apparently, was deep into a conversation with Ronen about the taxation of corporate profits.

"Huh?" Gabrielle replied.

"Where did you go?" he asked. "Out of body experience?"

"Oh, no, sorry," she stammered. "Just some things to think about . . . about . . . Wait, didn't you just ask me something?"

Cameron laughed. "Yeah, did you get those papers signed? For Brown?"

"Oh, yeah. I did, yeah. And . . . and . . . I'm sort of worried about it, sorry."

"Worried?"

"Well, it's for starting in the fall, not the spring."

"And that's a bad thing?"

"Well, I, um, I'd always seen myself going this January, not having to wait another year."

“I’ll be here until next summer,” Cameron said, and he looked at her, searchingly, his dark eyes trying to dismantle her mind, to see inside it.

“Yeah,” Gabrielle said, pausing, because there was so much more she wanted to say, and none of it could be said. This might be the last time she talked to Cameron Flasche. Ever. Finally, in a desperate act of hope, she added, “I’m going to sign up for you tomorrow morning.”

“I’d like that,” he said.

“Maybe we can talk a little, too,” she said.

“Of course.”

Chapter 38: A Meeting Downstairs

That evening, just after 9, as males and females were being leashed and escorted to each other's stalls for an hour of relief, Arwen made an unexpected visit to Gabrielle's stall.

"Hey, Gabrielle."

Gabrielle stepped to the bars, heart thumping. "Hi, Arwen. What's up?"

"I need to take you downstairs."

"Oh yeah?" Gabrielle said casually, turning and bending, looking up at Roxanne, who was staring down at her from the top bunk.

Gabrielle glanced at Austen and Penelope, sitting together on Penelope's bed, most likely planning to make love as soon as the lights dimmed. She turned back to the picture she'd drawn, now with a nude couple with their feet in the river, beneath the trees, a boy and girl, indistinguishable, although Gabrielle knew who they were.

She would miss this place, she realized. She would miss everything here. Not just Cameron.

Arwen typically asked her what hole she preferred to have leashed, but tonight, she didn't, simply inserting the plug up Gabrielle's anus and locking it, opening the doors to let her into the hall, walking her to the door that led to the elevator and the stairs.

Still silent at the door, Arwen pulled out shackles and secured Gabrielle's ankles together.

"What's that for?" Gabrielle asked.

"You're going to a less secure area," Arwen replied tersely.

She unlocked the door and led Gabrielle to the elevator.

Gabrielle wanted to scream, to beg for forgiveness, to plead her case to Arwen, to say she was only joking, that she was just repeating things she'd heard from others, to promise never to mention any of it again. Instead, she remained silent, shuffling into the elevator, descending, stepping out and walking slowly after Arwen, who led her into the large, darkened room she'd been processed in, the sets of poles looming where she'd been stretched, inspected and tagged.

Were they going to fasten her between the poles again? Is that what they did to girls when they took their tags off? Would they burn her again, cauterizing her labia with the explanation that it was for her health? Ignoring her screams?

Arwen led her away from the poles, however, and through a door that opened into a short hall of offices, all but one door dark, light spilling through the door's frosted glass pane, "CB Arnold" painted across it in black.

Arwen padlocked Gabrielle's leash to a ring set into the wall, turned, tapped on Mr. Arnold's door and left.

Gabrielle heard a voice – Mr. Arnold's – talking to someone. She couldn't hear his words, but she knew he was on the phone, because he'd pause and there would be silence. He was alone in his office. There would be no witnesses to whatever was about to be done to her.

She heard Mr. Arnold say, distinctly, "Okay, okay, we'll have to pick this back up," and then, "Okay, bye. Bye now."

A cabinet door shut. A chair squeaked. The shape of a man cast a shadow across the frosted glass of Mr. Arnold's door.

And then the door opened, Mr. Arnold looking away from Gabrielle before turning toward her, squinting, shutting his door and stepping toward her.

Gabrielle remained silent. She would let him do all the talking.

He reached her, turned toward the wall opposite her, put his back against it and crossed his arms, the light here too dim for Gabrielle to see his expression.

She wasn't sure she wanted to read his face. He was hard to read, even in full light. But if he were angry, she didn't want to see it.

Instinctively, she dropped one hand to cover her mound, raising the other to her breasts, her forearm across her nipples.

"So," Mr. Arnold said, coughing to clear his throat. "So, what is it exactly that you seem to know?"

Gabrielle looked at him. This was her chance to back out, to deny any knowledge, to say she'd been joking with Doria, to apologize and never mention it again. But to do that would be to betray the Group A girls, several of whom she'd made love to, one of whom she was planning to live with.

If they let her stay.

So, Gabrielle forged ahead.

“I know,” she began haltingly. “Or I, I think . . . from what I read . . . that you’re using pain to make more milk . . . because . . . certain girls, when you, um, swat them, that . . . that triggers more milk production.”

“How long?”

“It peaks at thirty-six hours,” Gabrielle said. “But for some girls, it’s twelve hours. Or it can be up to forty.”

“No,” Mr. Arnold said, waving his hand impatiently. “How long have you known?”

“A few weeks.”

“Who have you told?”

“No one.”

“Why not?”

“I wanted to talk to you first.”

“You mean, to make sure you were right?”

“I don’t know,” Gabrielle said. “It just seemed . . . like something . . . something you should be, um, called out on.”

Mr. Arnold laughed.

“So you’re calling me out?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“And you want us to stop swatting you girls? Is that it?”

“I didn’t say that.”

“Every dairy does it. There are whole books on it. It’s approved by all the accreditors. The government. I’ve had—”

“I didn’t say stop,” Gabrielle interrupted. She stepped back, her leash clinking as it rapped the wall.

Mr. Arnold just stood there, staring at her.

“Isn’t that what this is about?” he demanded. “You want us to stop popping you?”

“No,” Gabrielle said. “I just want it to be fair.”

“What’s not fair about it?”

“Every girl should have the choice. If she wants the stocks, or isolation, she should be able to choose that.”

“Corporal punishment works. I’m not giving that up.”

“Maybe so, but it’s not fair the way it is,” Gabrielle said, and she put her hands on her hips, no longer modest, no longer fearful, certain she

was right. She hobbled away from the wall, stopping only when she felt the tug of the leash in her anus.

“Why do you care?” he demanded.

“Anyone would care,” she replied. “If they knew. Any girl here would care. I’m sure of it.”

“Why?” Mr. Arnold asked. “You haven’t told anyone. You don’t want us to stop spanking you. What do you want me to do then?”

Gabrielle swallowed. She hadn’t expected the conversation to go this way. Was Mr. Arnold just toying with her, or was he truly willing to listen to her suggestions? Was he asking her to propose a new policy, right here, on the spot?

“Just make it fair,” Gabrielle said at last. “When a girl comes to punishment, assign her what she gets at random. Or let everyone choose sometimes, and not choose sometime. At the same, um, rate, for everyone. You’ll still get to swat the girls in Group A often enough.”

“Production’s gonna go down,” Mr. Arnold said.

“It will be fair,” Gabrielle said. “I think that’s more important.”

Mr. Arnold turned, stepped back into his office, shut the door.

Gabrielle stared at the light shining through his window, as uncertain of her fate now as she was at the start.

But within five minutes, Arwen showed up, released Gabrielle’s leash from the wall and brought her back to the elevator.

“What did Mr. Arnold want?” she asked.

“Oh,” Gabrielle stammered, searching her mind for a convincing lie. “Mrs. Arnold is going to recommend me for college, but Mr. Arnold wanted to make sure it was okay, and he had a few questions for me.”

So Arwen didn’t know what was going on. Most likely, no one knew, except Mr. Arnold, and Doria. And maybe Mrs. Arnold. Maybe that’s why she’d stepped back from the milking operations and let Doria take over. Because she didn’t approve. But did Doria?

Gabrielle told the lie several more times that night, to Roxanne, and to Austen and Penelope. It wasn’t unheard of for a girl to be brought downstairs for a meeting with someone there, but it meant bad news often enough – that there were problems, or she was being let go – so they had all been worried.

At the company meeting the following Sunday, Mr. Arnold held up his part of the bargain. Speaking without emotion, he said there’d been

some issues with their discipline software, where it kept denying certain options to certain girls, and he was sorry about that, but they'd updated it and things would be fairer from now on.

He used that word. "Fairer."

Gabrielle looked at Beverly, who did a quick silent clap. Austen was sitting behind Gabrielle, and Gabrielle decided not look at her, but she heard her sigh and guessed she was grateful as well.

The next day, in the commons, Doria took her aside briefly.

"Thanks," she said.

"For what?" Gabrielle asked, already trying to put the whole episode out of her mind.

"For making this a better place," Doria said.

"Oh, sure," Gabrielle said, understanding her meaning.

"Are you mad at me?"

"For what?" Gabrielle asked again. She wasn't mad at Doria. It was more complicated than that. She was disappointed, though. There are orders one shouldn't follow. Even if they're given by your dad.

Time passed, summer to fall, fall to early winter. Gabrielle moved in with Beverly, forming a strong friendship punctuated one or two nights a week with pleasant lovemaking, long sessions of kissing and licking, with a focus on climaxing together.

Gabrielle continued her point quest, contributed on the council, traded tags and went to punishment often enough to make sure Mr. Arnold was abiding by his promises, and she and Cameron settled into an easy, discreet rhythm, meeting for an intense, hourlong tryst every week or so, talking about everything.

She continued to ponder her future, but she looked increasingly upon her liberation in January with mixed feelings. Desperate as she was to get to Brown, she would be losing this community, and Cameron, and go by herself to a place she'd never been before, meeting people she didn't know, most of whom would never understand what she had done, where she had been.

So on December 5, when she received the letter her mother passed on to her from Brown, she moved to her bed and sat on her pillow, her hands shaking. She wasn't sure what she wanted the letter to say, but she couldn't imagine any message that wouldn't be earth-shaking.

“Dear Miss DeBeers,” the letter began. “We are pleased to inform you that you have been accepted for fall admission. Congratulations! You have, further, been awarded the Tameka Robinson scholarship, which will cover the cost of tuition and include a \$500 stipend per semester for expenses. This scholarship is awarded to one incoming freshman female per year who has distinguished herself professionally after graduation from high school. You should be very proud of this achievement.”

Gabrielle expected tears. Or joy. Or ecstasy.

Instead, she set the letter down on her bed and went to her toilet.

There was no need for emotion. This is, she realized, was what she’d been expecting all along. She would extend her production contract another eight months. She would tell Cameron. She would tell Beverly. And she would tell her mother, who hadn’t opened the letter she’d forwarded before she’d passed it on to Arnold Farms.

Epilogue

The weather was horrible, cold and rainy, the wind blowing so hard it turned Gabrielle's umbrella inside out twice.

She dashed from her car to the door of her apartment building, almost falling on the front landing, jabbing a key into the lock and bursting into the hall, panting as she fumbled at the mailbox, then tromping upstairs to apartment 2-E, tiny, but close to campus and with more space than she'd been accustomed to.

She shook out her umbrella, tossed it into the corner by the door, dumped her bookbag and the mail on the kitchen table in front of the window, hung up her coat.

Across the street, the trees of Brown University's Northern Quadrangle were shedding leaves by the bucketful now, orange and red and yellow, and she tried to remind herself that they were beautiful, even as they appeared now, plastered by rain against the sidewalk and the street and the empty bench at the bus stop.

Work had gone late – it was almost 6 – and October mid-terms were next week.

She picked up her phone and texted: “yogurt, two oranges, coffee, rice, tofu please.”

“Yes, home by 7” came the immediate reply.

Gabrielle's phone buzzed again. “I'm at the door, let me in!”

Gabrielle took the stairs two at a time, threw the door open, finding a bedraggled girl there, no umbrella to protect her from the elements.

“Betsy!” Gabrielle cried, pulling her into the hallway by her hand. “Oh my god!”

The girls, best friends, lost to each other for more than year, shared a hug for the ages, two pairs of eyes wet when they finally pulled away.

“Come up, let me show you our place,” Gabrielle said, skipping back to the stairs.

“Our?” Betsy echoed.

Gabrielle ignored the question, ushered Betsy into her little home, couch and TV crowding the kitchen, bedroom door beyond the refrigerator.

Betsy dropped her purse, hung her coat in the hook on the door and sat down, scanning the room before she stared at Gabrielle.

“You know Roger still asks about you.”

“Okay.”

“He told me to say hi if I ever saw you. And he’s thinking about you. And he’s sorry.”

“Okay.”

“So, do you or do you not have a roommate?” she demanded.

“I do.”

“Male or female?”

“First things first,” Gabrielle said. “How was your drive?”

“Fine, until it started raining an hour ago.”

“Now, tell me about Dortmund.”

Betsy smiled, and although she seemed to know she was being redirected, she launched into an enthusiastic account of all that had befallen her at college in the last fourteen months. Boys, classes, trips, her plan to major in education. And boys again.

Gabrielle heard the door opening downstairs, knew who it was, continued nodding as Betsy talked.

And then there was the sound of a key in the apartment door, the bolt turning, the door opening.

Betsy turned, startled at first by the intrusion, and then doubly so by the person she was looking at, a face she had long known and admired, but always from a distance.

Gabrielle stood, grabbed two bags of groceries from the hands of Cameron Flasche, and kissed him hard on the lips.

“Betsy made it,” she told him unnecessarily. “Betsy, this is Cameron. Cameron Flasche. Don’t you remember him from high school?”

Betsy didn’t swoon. She didn’t dissolve into a puddle of schoolgirl coyness. She didn’t look at Gabrielle and shout, “Oh my god, what is he doing here?”

She simply stood, offered her hand and spoke evenly: “Nice to meet you, Cameron. Or, I guess, nice to see you again.”

“Hello, Betsy,” he said, taking her hand in both of his. “I’ve heard a lot about you. Really glad you could join us tonight.”

Betsy blushed, not just because she had been talked about in front of Cameron Flasche, but because of what might have been said. Gabrielle

knew all Betsy's secrets.

It wasn't until after dinner – stir fry prepared jointly by Gabrielle and Cameron – that Betsy grew tired of talking about herself and returned to the topic she most wanted answers to.

“Okay,” she began, courage growing under the power of her second beer, “enough about my boring life. How did you guys meet?”

“At Arnold Farm,” Gabrielle said immediately.

“So . . . you were both working there?”

“Yes,” Gabrielle said.

“What kind of work?”

“We're not supposed to say,” Cameron replied. “Sorry.”

“You know what I heard?” Betsy said, leaning forward conspiratorially.

“What?” Gabrielle asked.

“Hormones,” Betsy said.

“Hormones?” Gabrielle repeated, stifling a laugh.

“Yes, hormones.”

“Go on,” Cameron urged.

“He was extracting them from people, right? And testing them? There's a lab there. I know that much. I know one of the chemist guys who works there.”

Gabrielle looked at Cameron, the two raising their eyebrows, exchanging a carefully practiced look meant to say “Well, they've finally figured it out!”

“We can't confirm or deny,” Gabrielle said. “But I'd be interested in knowing who told you that.”

“That'll have to be my secret,” Betsy said victoriously. “But some of it I had to figure out myself.”

“Very clever,” Cameron offered. “Gabrielle said you were smart.”

Betsy beamed. “Okay, another personal question.”

“Go ahead.”

“Boyfriend and girlfriend, right? I mean, you guys are together, right?”

“Yeah,” Gabrielle said. “Unofficially since June of last year, kind of more officially since we got here in August. But we haven't told many people. My parents don't even know.”

“How did you meet?”

Gabrielle smiled. “Cameron asked me if I wanted a boost.”

END