

# **Nanonaut**

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## **Warning**

This book contains adult language, violence, and sexual acts, which may not be suitable for teenagers below the age of 16; or for anyone who does not wish to read stories containing written descriptions of explicit, erotic sexual behavior or graphic violence. It does not contain any explicit sexual or nude images. It does contain stories of contemporary literature and fictional accounts of both erotica and adventure; and it is intended for adult readers.

## **Author Notes**

I wanted to write a sci-fi novel and sat down with full intent to create a comic book character. But stories tend to write themselves and this one twisted and turned into a sci-fi novel spiced with a dash of erotica and a pinch of humor. It captivated my kink of science and fantasy to the end. Some parts require a tissue, for one purpose or, you know, the other. Please read on about a geek turned god, reluctantly accepting the responsibilities of his abilities while using them for his own benefit.

**P.S.** My apologies to the savvy that know more about the art of science than I do. It was written for entertainment and not intended to be used as a reference. However, it is as accurate in possibility as science allows. What excites me is that some of the abilities are completely plausible even at the date of its publication.

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## Acknowledgements

Hats off to an online alias, B4lurker, for reviewing this work and making corrections to the astoundingly simplistic mistakes. Any common man would strain his sanity on such ignorant disregard of the King's language. He does excellent work... an amazing feat for a Buckeye.

The book cover was designed by the author but I had help by using graphic software to develop a convincing image of fantasy. Often is the case where an artist is unable to depict the mental image of the author's concept and the final cover lacks a relationship with the tale that is told. On this cover is a portrayal of a dramatic scene the reader will discover in the storyline. The author does not profess to be a graphic artist as technology does most of the work. So, acknowledgement goes to the developers of such amazing software.

It is said that behind every successful man is a good woman. That is probably true; but even a mediocre man needs a good women to be somewhat successful and that is definitely true as the author bears witness. Her support given can only be mentioned and yet it is worthy of so much more. For that, his deepest respect and gratitude goes to his significant other who already possesses his heart, mind, soul, and body.

Science is advancing at an astronomical rate. To many with a religious belief, it appears blasphemous and insults their idealism. To the author, science confirms the belief that Man was made in God's image. What else could physically prove that Man is becoming god-like other than science? If one fancied the idea of a creator making a pair of beings fashioned after its likeness, it is completely logical that those beings would strive to become like their creator. In all honesty, if a supreme being, as powerful as they claim, did not want Man to have knowledge on the scale of an omnipotent deity then, Man simply would not have the capacity for it. So, the author acknowledges science and its influence in writing this novel along with any deity that may be masterminding its intellectual advancement.

To the fans, who have encouraged and supported my writing, I owe a great many for their ideas and critiques. To the ones that simply read my work and go on about their lives, I can only thank each of you for taking the time to climb into my fantasies and ride the waves of emotions and events I put forth. And then, there are the ones who steer me towards surprising ends with their plots and storyline suggestions. Some are lofty and aloof while others make me question their sanity, and even those with a kink in their nature that make me question my own conformity. But all have been an influence, either by tangible or intangible means. To each of you, I give you my gratitude and a heartfelt appreciation for your invaluable support.

## Prologue

The florescent lighting illuminated the workbench in the garage of Jerold Dodd. His experiments were scattered in pieces on shelves that lined the walls. In fact, it was a miracle he was able to open the garage door from the circuitry and wiring he had accumulated over the years. Many were in boxes, but some were just too large to be stowed away in such a fashion.

He had an idea early in life and kept it in mind when choosing his field in science. If anyone would ask, his collection of gizmos was the result of the medical technology his career was set in. In fact, he sought something a little more different. Something that could alter standard health systems and improve the lives of humanity.

Sure, medicine was important... now. But what if you didn't need it? A broken limb or severed skin may need medical attention; but again, what if it didn't need it? Wouldn't it be something if disease and physical trauma were plagues of the past?

He was out to solve the puzzle that perplexed him his whole life. With technology doubling every eighteen months, he was getting close to his realization that an ultimate cure can be had by all. It was in his grasp, if only he could just keep it stable. Many failures precede success and he was in the midst of this progression.

But fate intervened when his teenage son entered the garage to grab a rake for the yard work he was tasked to do. Pulling it off of the metal hangers, the weight on the one end brought the handle up and tipped over the sealed beaker resting on the corner of the work table.

It rolled in a half circle but ran out of space on the counter. Gravity took over and it crashed to the concrete floor, shattering the glass and splattering its contents in a fanned out pattern.

Jeremy was surprised to hear it and jerked his head to see the results of his clumsiness. Rolling his eyes at the blasted luck, he snatched up an oil stained cloth and attempted to stop the gray ooze from spreading.

The substance smoldered on the oil rag and became warm to the touch. He was baffled by the reaction and lifted the rag to eye level. Fumes from the oil and goo soaked cloth entered his eyes, ears, nose, and throat. He held the cloth out at arm's length to lessen the odorous attack on his senses, coughing from the fumes he'd inhaled.

Soaked in the muddy mixture, Jeremy threw the soiled cloth into the garbage bin and opened the garage door to air out the place. Grabbing a broom, he swept the shattered remains in a pile and then corralled it into a dustpan. The shards were dumped in the garbage with the now dormant substance-soaked oil cloth. Grabbing the hose outside, he turned it on and rinsed what was left of his father's life-long work out of the garage.

## Chapter 1

Jeremy's life was like many that struggled with the label of 'geek'. Teased for wearing thick glasses and having a thin build; fellow students nicknamed him Urkel, after some silly sitcom in the past. His interests in books and the lack of social interactions didn't help his reputation either.

But all of that was on the outside, commonly referred to as reality. Inside, Jeremy dreamed of solving great mysteries that not only grabbed his attention but begged him to resolve their elusive mystery. UFOs, time travel, and worm holes compelled his imagination, often times leaving him to sit in thought for hours.

He was thinking that worm holes could be the solution to one such problem and wondered how you could possibly build a ship that could withstand such a force when his dad entered the kitchen. But the thought he had gripped him and he was unwilling to let it go.

"You going to eat that or stare at it all day?" his dad asked, grabbing a cup from the shelf.

Shaken from his daydream, Jeremy responded, "Oh, yeah." and looked at the sandwich in his hand.

"Get the yard done?" Jerold asked, pouring juice into his favorite cup.

Pushing his glasses back on his nose, Jeremy focused on the bread in his hands. "Yeah." he mumbled, wondering why his food was blurry. He held it further away and then brought it closer. No adjustments gave him the clarity he was used to. The thought that a new prescription might be necessary crossed his mind and another thought of thicker glasses made him grimace.

"Ok, I'm going to the garage until your mother gets home." Jerold relayed, picking up his drink.

"Ok." Jeremy replied, wrapped in a new found mystery before his eyes.

Jerold shrugged and headed out, knowing his son was an adamant dreamer. Maybe it was a good thing overall but he was seventeen. Months from now, he would be contemplating some serious decisions and wouldn't have time to philosophize so much over insignificant matters.

Jeremy heard the door shut and only half remembered what his dad just said. Taking his glasses off to look at them, he looked for the smudges that must have been on them since they had no issues earlier in the day.

What he saw instead was vivid clarity. It was exhilarating and scary at the same time. He looked around the kitchen and found the same clarity without the eyewear. *'Had his eyesight been corrected somehow?'* he wondered, baffled at the revelation.

He tested his theory in several ways; glasses on and off, looking near and far, and finally came to the conclusion that he had perfect vision. Fear kicked in as he had no idea what had caused the dramatic change. Something had altered his vision but there was nothing he could think of that could possibly do such a miraculous deed.

"Jeremy..." Jerold called from the garage, jarring him out of his thoughts.

He stood up and answered the call, "Yeah?"

"Come here." Jerold replied.

Jeremy entered the garage a bit perturbed at the interruption. He had a mystery to solve after all. "What is it?" he asked, stopping inside the door.

"Do you know where the beaker is I had sitting on the table?" he asked. "I know I left it there yesterday."

Jeremy had no clue how important it was to his father and said, "I knocked off a jar with the rake when I was getting it off of the wall." and quickly added, "But I cleaned it up." nodding to the drying concrete floor.

Grabbing two fistfuls of his own hair Jerold exclaimed, "You what?" unable to believe the disastrous event. His son was always a klutz, bumping into things mindlessly, but this beat all.

"Yeah, it smelled pretty bad. What was it?" he asked, wondering why his dad was being so dramatic.

"You smelled it?" Jerold asked, now concerned for his son.

"Yeah, it got warm and started smoking." he explained.

That made no sense to Jerold, "It was smoking on the floor?" he asked, trying to make sense of it all.

"No, it was smoking on the oil rag I used to clean it up." Jeremy explained.

"Where is it?" Jerold asked, staring at his son in anxious anticipation.

"I threw it in the trash bin." he replied, and walked over to it.

"Ok, get back." Jerold directed, snatching up rubber gloves from the workbench.

"Why; what is it?" he asked, now concerned about his dad's behavior.

"Nanobots." he replied, opening the lid to the trash. His son was old enough to know what that meant and keeping it from him would be the wrong thing to do.

A term Jeremy was fascinated with; he had to ask, "What were they for?"

"Well..." Jerold started, lifting the cloth out, "They're supposed to repair the body." he explained. That made a world of sense to Jeremy and it solved his recent mystery.

"But they're unstable." Jerold continued, "They break down in the body." he admitted, holding his hand underneath the cloth to catch anything dripping from it.

Jeremy fidgeted where he stood and mumbled, "I don't know about that."

"What's that?" Jerold asked, trying to fit the cloth in a zip lock baggy.

"I think they fixed my eyesight." he confessed, looking for his dad's reaction.

"Really?" Jerold replied, now curious. Laying the useless product on the table, he walked to his son. "Why do you say that?" taking his child's head in his hands and looking him over.

"I can see without my glasses." Jeremy explained, letting his dad take control of his head.

"Well, you aren't squinting." Jerold observed, thinking the signs were good. But if his son did take a dose of his nanobots, they'd probably die off soon enough. "It might be permanent but it could be temporary." and let his head go, "They'll die in your system for sure."

"That won't cause a problem, will it?" Jeremy asked, a little concerned about something dying inside him and becoming malignant or something.

Jerold smiled, guessing his son's concern, "No, you'll pass them in your urine and fecal matter."

"Ok, so they go into your system, fix whatever needs fixed and then you pass them." Jeremy surmised.

"Well, if they worked right, they would stay inside you and keep on repairing whatever needs fixed." Jerold confessed, "But I haven't gotten that far yet."

Jeremy went back to the kitchen to finish his sandwich. Picking it up, he took another bite of his peanut butter and jelly and sat it down. It tasted different for some reason. He could taste the peanuts but it was masked by a heavy dose of sugar.

The taste was so strong; he picked up the sandwich and separated the bread to see if it had been tampered with. Nothing indicated any malicious alterations so he closed the bread back together. Sitting it back down on his paper plate, he studied it again.

He could almost tell exactly what it consisted of. Starch and sugar mainly; he was sure. He kept coming up with other ingredients like glucose and sodium. Although he was a little hungry, none of the elements that made up the sandwich appealed to him.

He picked up the plate, walked it to the trash, and let the bread slide off of the plate and land with a thud in the bottom of the plastic bag. Keeping his plate, he walked to the fridge to look for more appealing food.

Apples and oranges were in the crisper and he opted for one of the apples. Baby carrots and lettuce looked appetizing so he took a little of each. A tomato rolled off of the shelf, no longer supported by the lettuce, and fell out of the fridge.

Jeremy, hands full of his plundering, caught it with the top of his foot, balancing it right behind his toes. Since it looked appetizing as well, he kicked it in the air and caught it on his plate. Setting his meal on the counter, he thought there was something missing. Looking it over, he smiled thinking of it.

“Protein.” he exclaimed out loud, and made another trek to the fridge.

Juniper Dodd was a psychiatrist and spent her day listening to every intense drama one could imagine in her field of work. When she hit the door of her home, the last thing she wanted was more drama. Kicking off her heels and dumping her workload on the credenza, she headed for the kitchen for a refreshing drink. It was just a routine process of her day to help her unwind.

But today was different. Coming through the kitchen, she was struck by the vision of her son, cheeks full of food, surrounded by remnants of the refrigerator. “What in the world, Jerry!” and huffed, “Jeremy Timothy Dodd, you are going to clean this mess up right now!” she chastised.

Jeremy, unable to say anything with his mouth full, could only look at his mother in surprise. He fully intended to clean the kitchen; it was just going to be after he ate.

“Where are your glasses?” his mother asked, “No wonder this place is a mess, you can’t even see what you’re doing.” she noted, grabbing a glass off of the shelf.

Jeremy swallowed and wiped his mouth. Apologizing, he offered, “Sorry mom. I’ll clean up.” and belched.

“Disgusting.” Juniper snapped, snarling her nose. She opened the fridge for her drink. “Did you leave anything for supper?” she asked rhetorically, seeing the pilfered shelves.

“I didn’t eat everything!” Jeremy argued; a bit offended.

“No...” she replied, “You left desert.” she smirked, pulling the pitcher of tea out and filling her glass.

“Too much sugar.” Jeremy complained. “It doesn’t taste good.”

“Never thought I would hear that from you.” she mused, ruffling his hair. “Now clean this up,” reminding him, “and homework before dinner.” as she headed back to her own homework she’d laid down.

He took a shower before bed and concentrated on his manhood. It was aching, but not in its usual way. Tugging seemed to help and he stretched it out. After a minute, he released it and let it spring back to normal. He finished by washing his hair and climbed out. Looking himself over

in the mirror, the thought that he was twenty pounds under weight occurred to him and it would be interesting to see what adding the weight, in the right places of course, would do for him.

Lying in bed, it finally occurred to him the changes he was experiencing. Corrected vision, eating healthy, aware of his flaws and the steps needed to correct them... *'Dad's nanobots are working.'* he thought.

He didn't know how long they would last and decided to write down the affects they had on him and the recommendations that he was acutely aware of at the time. Grabbing an unused tablet, he scribbled down what he could remember.

Going to bed, he went to sleep right away. For the first time in his life, he slept on his back. Dreams filtered in and dotted his memory with the day's events. Images of tiny robots working diligently over his body, building tissue and repairing damaged cells, flooded his mind's eye.

The dream turned nightmarish as the robots worked on his brain and extended neural pathways and connected them to his central nervous system.

Augmentation of his perceptive sensory and motor skill enhancement gave way to a new sensation of another presence. A foreign entity embedded itself into his consciousness and tapped into his cerebral cortex.

The nightmare faded as if a curtain was drawn and nothing remained in the blackness. Jeremy was comatose at this point in time and unaware of his surroundings. The rest of the night was spent in blissful slumber while his body gathered strength for the coming day.

He awoke the next morning stiff as a board, as if he had slept in a poor position. Sitting up, he turned in his bed and put his feet on the floor.

*'Rejuvenation is complete. Six hours of energy remaining.'* he thought to himself. Why he would think it baffled him, as it wasn't normal to think in such a way. Even more, why would he care about how much energy he had?

He stood up to yawn and felt his tendons and muscles stretch. *'School today.'* he thought, reaching for his phone. Scrolling through posts on social media, he found nothing interesting was added. Sometimes, the science pages would post something awesome; but not today it seemed.

Tossing the phone on the bed, he scratched his butt and headed for the bathroom. Taking a leak, he thought, *'Math test, reading assignment, and periodical table of elements today. Should be a pretty good day.'* and shook his manhood.

*'Discharge: point three five liter of urine. Thirty two cc toxins discharged.'* he thought, and wondered why he cared.

That was the second time he had thought of something that should have never crossed his mind since waking up. Something was going on and he tried to make sense of it.

He couldn't be thinking these thoughts on his own. Something had changed. He remembered the incident yesterday and thought, *'Nanobots!'*

He immediately recited, *'Currently, there are three thousand five hundred and sixty two active in the host's system.'*

That put him in a state of urgency. Grabbing clothes and shoes, he threw them on and was dressed in record time. Snatching phone and wallet, he headed out of the bedroom. Stairs, two at a time, flew under his feet and he hit the landing yelling, "Dad!" thinking, *'Heart rate one hundred and two, blood pressure one twenty seven over eighty nine.'*

He ran to the den where his dad usually prepped for work thinking about, *'Adjusting cardio pulmonary rate.'*

Jerold was donning a tie in preparation for the lab. "What is it son?" and paused to look at him.

Believing his dad would think he was a little crazy, he considered his next words carefully, “Um, how long do the nanobots usually last?”

Jerold sighed and tightened his tie, “Nothing to worry about son. Depending on the subject, they’re flushed out within twenty four hours.”

“Ok...” Jeremy conceded; it hadn’t been that long yet. “But do the subjects mention anything about thought processes while they have the nanobots?”

He hadn’t been quite honest with his son and he was old enough to keep a secret. “I have to tell you, the only thing I’ve tested them on are mice.” and put a hand on his shoulder. “Son, this research is off the books. Nobody knows anything about it just yet.”

‘*So I’m the first human guinea pig.*’ he thought, and corrected himself, ‘*Homo sapient test subject.*’ and said, “So you don’t know what happens if they start working?”

He picked up his coat, “Well sort of.” he started, putting his coat on, “They repair tissue and maintain the health of the subject.” and smiled, “It would be interesting if they cured the common cold.” picking up his briefcase.

“So they won’t control anything but body health?” he asked, concerned that the little voice in his head might make demands.

He studied his son to determine how much he was interested and said, “I’m glad you’re taking an interest in my work.” He sighed, “Imagine having a bunch of little guys running around in your body fixing things when something breaks. Mending broken bones, cuts, bruises, and eye sight, for instance.” and smiled again, “But I wouldn’t expect them to take control and make you dance naked in the street.” and laughed.

His dad left him there to ponder what he said. Jeremy headed for the kitchen and smelled eggs cooking. Cholesterol, calories, sodium... all food made for consumption calculated in his head. He was smart but he didn’t think he was that smart.

He headed off to school and calculated the amount of steps it would take to get there and a solid estimate on his time of arrival. Too much information flooded his senses as carbon emissions, pheromones, cologne, perfume, and wet paint struck him in the school parking lot.

His ears detected a million conversations and his newly enhanced eyes picked up detail in vivid colors. It was like the world had stepped inside of him.

“Where’s your glasses Urkel?” Bobby Frank asked, “Somebody knock them off of ya?”

“Yeah, I did.” Steve Otto quipped, taking a swipe at Jeremy’s head.

Jeremy could assess the distance easily and moved accordingly. Ducking the attempt, he continued on to his homeroom class. Taking his seat in the front, because being in the back meant being harassed, he dropped his backpack to the side.

Geeks and goofs lined the first two rows and it was natural that the goofs would try to leech answers from the geeks. One such leech plopped in his seat beside him.

“Hey Urkel.” Terry hissed, “Did you study for the math test today?”

Jeremy knew why he was asking. He would be sitting next to him when the test started up. “Nope, I sure didn’t.” he responded, finding his phone to browse the web.

“Liar.” Terry huffed, “I’ll be needing help on it.” and shook his arm to gain his attention.

“Hey, you don’t want me to sic Steve O on you, do you?”

Jeremy was bound and determined to find a way out of helping him. The last time, Steve Otto dunked him head first in the trash; one of the many disadvantages to being a skinny runt.

He thought to wait until the class filled up and maybe taking a seat somewhere else away from Terry. It would work if the teacher allowed it. Or, he could write down the wrong answers and, if he had the time, correct them before turning the work in.

Consent forms and daily announcements were taken care of in homeroom. Roll call and assignments were given out. Before long, the bell rang, signaling his first class: science.

It was the reason he came to school in the first place. Nothing intrigued him more than a science book. Where others were forced to study chapter after chapter, Jeremy had read the entire book and the chapter assignments were merely a refresher course to him.

“Gravity and centrifugal force.” Mr. Bradshaw started. “It keeps you on this planet and slings the earth around in space.”

But Jeremy was distracted by an odor coming from his right. *‘Menstrual cycle.’* he thought, for no apparent reason, and looked at Kathy Ferguson.

“What are you looking at creep?” she asked, frustrated at his unwanted attention.

Saying nothing, he changed to another scent. *‘Artificial strawberry.’* he thought, and looked to his left. Julie Chiders was listening intently to Mr. Bradshaw’s lesson.

Glasses as thick as his own, curly brown hair and a pug nose; her appearance reminded him of one of the Peanut gang members. Under weight and under developed, Julie was teased as much as he was. He could relate to her plight and felt empathy for her. It had been like that since third grade and she was a kindred spirit in the world of misery.

She noticed his attention and smiled. He smiled back. A wave of sexual pheromones emitted from her and found their way into his nostrils. He looked away and contemplated the aroma. She had been pleasant with him in the past but her scent indicated a potential mating partner.

He looked back at her to see if he was given the wrong signal. She smiled again and whispered, “You look good without your glasses.”

“Thank you.” he whispered back, sure this time that he was reading her right, and gave her another smile.

“Jerry, have you been listening?” Mr. Bradshaw asked, stepping up to his desk.

“Yes sir.” Jeremy replied, focusing on the teacher.

“Ok, what was I saying.” he prodded, crossing his arms.

“A body undergoing curved motion, such as circular motion, constantly accelerates toward the axis of rotation.” he quoted, recalling the portion of his brain that was listening.

He huffed and said, “I should know better than to ask. You’ve probably got this memorized already.” receiving laughter from the classroom in reply.

“Geek!” someone called; and Jeremy knew it was Dan Flanders.

“Alright!” Mr. Bradshaw barked, “Everybody get your books out. Chapter nine folks.” he instructed, walking back to his desk. “You have thirty minutes to read.” and sat down, “A quick test afterwards so make sure you do just that.”

Jeremy perused through the chapter and remembered its contents.

The next class was math. Jeremy waited behind and watched Terry enter. He approached the door and watched the classroom fill up. Anyone wanting to sit on the left side of Terry was told that it was reserved. After watching everyone take a seat, all that was left was the one beside Terry.

Noticing Urkel was missing; Terry turned towards the door and saw Jeremy enter the room. A smile crossed his lips while a grimace crossed Jeremy’s.

He took the seat reserved for him and pulled out his textbook. “Glad you could make it buddy.” Terry quipped.

Roll call was held and Mrs. Perkins started in on the assignment that was given. “Absolute values should be easy if you studied. Make sure you read the problem correctly.” she advised, passing out the test.

Terry snatched his up and scribbled his name on it. Jeremy took his and laid it down reluctantly.

Terry glanced at Jeremy, "Make sure I can see it." Terry whispered, and went back to watching the teacher.

"Alright class; you may begin." Mrs. Perkins announced.

Jeremy looked at the problems and hesitated. The equations seemed to float in the air above the paper. Each one solved itself in his mind and the test was indeed easy. An idea occurred to him to keep Terry happy and not give him any help either.

He wrote his name on it and set to work. Line by line, he wrote the answers and sped through the test. Not even a minute later, he was flipping the first sheet over and solving the next batch of problems.

"Hey!" Terry called, but Jeremy pretended not to hear him and focused on his work instead.

"I need the first page stupid." Terry whispered, frustrated at Urkel's speed.

*'Funny calling me that, considering I'm the one with the answers and you are the one needing my help.'* Jeremy thought. He just kept ignoring Terry's pleas, running down the list of problems.

A kick at his leg made Jeremy move out of the way and Terry's foot struck the metallic desk leg. That brought the attention of Mrs. Perkins. "Terry!"

Jeremy looked up along with the rest of the classroom and then he looked at Terry. The guilty look on his face was almost funny. What wasn't funny was Mrs. Perkins.

"Up here, now." she instructed, pointing to the chair beside her desk that was reserved for troublemakers only.

Terry snatched his test off of the desk and walked begrudgingly up to Mrs. Perkins. Plopping down beside her, he tossed his paper on the desk facing the class.

If looks could kill, Jeremy would be pushing up daisies. He shrugged at his tormenter and went back to his test, making an effort not to look at Terry again.

He completed his test first and remembered to recheck his answers. He hated being a show off so he rechecked them a second time, waiting on someone else to finish theirs.

He waited longer than he thought he should and checked the time on the wall. Eleven minutes had passed on a twenty minute test. He estimated that two minutes had passed since he completed the work.

Five minutes under par was his usual rate on tests like these. Maybe the nanobots were helping him out. *'It's going to suck when they all die out.'* he thought. *'There are four thousand and seven hundred remaining.'* How he knew that baffled him.

## Chapter 2

Gym class was the worst part of his day. Besides being uncoordinated, he was relentlessly teased by student and coach alike. Even more, another class shared the same time frame and the court was divided between the two.

It was bad enough to be shunned and ridiculed in front of his classmates, but should he draw attention from the opposing class, they would join in on their jeers.

Today would be another miserable time in gym class as Coach Garrard bounced a dodge ball while walking onto the court. "Alright maggots, you know the routine." he started. "Up against the wall." and caught the ball he was dribbling under his arm.

The students lined up and the coach called Kathy over, "Ferguson!"

Jeremy thought that if she was on her period, now would be a bad time to get struck by her; and chuckled a little at his thought.

"Ok." Coach began; tossing her the ball. "Take it easy on the girls... and Jerry." then blew his whistle.

Kathy bounced it a couple of times and studied her targets. She had to have thought she had better luck getting a girl out and threw her best at Kimberly.

She squealed and dodged the attack; leaving Kathy with two more tries. Using her poker face, she tried to convince the group she was throwing one way and ended up throwing at Jeremy.

He saw it coming but Terry jumped in front of him and caught it. That put Kathy in the lineup and Terry wielding the weapon.

"You know what's coming Urkel." he warned, stepping over the line.

"Where's your glasses Jerry?" Coach asked, noticing they were missing.

"I didn't bring them today." Jeremy replied, keeping his eyes on Terry.

"Clumsy and absent-minded." Coach mused, shaking his head. "Hope you can see that ball coming."

But Jeremy could, in perfect clarity. He swayed left and right; trying to anticipate Terry's throw.

Eyeing Urkel, Terry reared back and threw the ball as hard as he could. He hit his target on the hip but it wasn't Jeremy he was aiming for.

"Dang Terry!" Justin exclaimed, rubbing the point of impact, "That hurt!" and hobbled out of line.

"Yeah, cry me a river." Terry called, looking for his next target.

Jeremy had studied Terry's throw and could distinguish speed and destination. He stood in awe at the mathematics involved and the realization that he could evaluate and know the outcome of its trajectory.

Terry reared back again and threw the ball at a blistering speed. Jeremy saw it coming but it was going to his right. Seeing the final outcome, he jumped after it, and caught it before it hit Kathy dead on the nose. Unable to stop gravity, he landed forcefully on the hard gym floor.

Several things happened at once. *'Phalange, index, displaced, currently irreparable; contusion on right palm; fractured right knee cap; overextended ligaments left wrist and right ankle. Diagnosis completed; antibiotics deployed, freezing nerve receptacles, bone structure repair in progress, edema suppression is in progress. Ligament reparations are in progress. Estimated time of repair four minutes.'* he thought, as he skidded on the hardwood floor, ball still in hand.

A shout of "Holy shit!" followed by Coach's, "What the hell!" followed by Kathy exclaiming, "Fuck me!"

Coach stepped over to Jeremy and asked, "Anything broken?" seeming concerned for once.

"I..." Jeremy started, and rethought his words, "I think I'm going to need a couple of minutes." he moaned; cupping his displaced finger over his fractured knee.

Coach bent down and took the ball from under his arm. Standing up, he walked to Terry. "I told you no head shots."

"I swear, I wasn't aiming at her." he defended, "I just lost control of it."

Instinctively, Jeremy popped his index finger back in place and thought, *'Phalange, index, reset; beginning repairs.'* He moved around on the floor feeling no pain but the numbing of his nerves gave him stinging sensations in his hands and knee.

He listened to the coach chew Terry out and making him park on the bench. Justin made fun of him, telling him he got out by Urkel. Kathy stepped over and looked down on him.

Jeremy stared at her, wondering what she wanted with a creep like him. He almost said it too but she spoke instead.

"Thanks." she sighed, turned and walked away.

That was the first kind word he had ever gotten from her. Being Steve Otto's girlfriend, she seemed to prefer jerks and jocks and liked watching him torment the geeks and freaks. It was a mystery to him what she saw in the Neanderthal other than going to football games and cheering him on.

But then he thought, *'Estimated repair time remaining; one minute.'* and started focusing on his own problems.

His knee looked so much better and his finger and hands weren't sore. He risked standing up and pretended to savor his leg. If this was what his dad was working on, he was extremely impressed. In fact, his dad deserved a pat on the back for this!

"Jerry..." Coach called, "You good?"

He thought, *'Repairs completed successfully; vital signs normal.'* and said, "Yep, all good."

Coach shoved the ball at him. Normally, it would have bounced off of a body part but he caught it easily this time; seemingly on instinct. "I think you can see better without those coke bottles you have for glasses son." he noted aloud.

The students were preoccupied, talking among themselves. Hardly anyone paid attention to him as he dribbled the ball a couple of times. He'd never had possession of the ball before but they didn't take him as a serious threat either.

Justin took notice of Jeremy's turn and yelled, "Don't break your arm throwing it!" which got the attention of some of the classmates talking.

Jeremy didn't know what held him back from busting Justin's nose with the ball other than blemishing his spotless criminal record. He'd never been in trouble with the principal and didn't want to be. But sometimes, he dreamed about it.

"Here we go!" he warned; ready to throw at one of his classmates.

"Don't hit yourself!" Terry called back from the sidelines.

Assessing his intended target, Jeremy thought, '*Range: eleven feet; speed: thirty miles an hour; twenty two degree arc.*' and threw it.

Accurate as he was, the target dodged his attempt and the ball struck the folded up bleachers.

"You suck, Urkel!" Tim Hawkins, his intended target, exclaimed.

Jeers started from the students, making fun of his attempt, and the coach calmed them down, "Shut up, he's got two more tries." and kicked the ball back to him.

He calculated his next target and threw in anticipation of him moving right. The ball struck Frankie Burrows on the hip.

"Out." Coach called; motioning with his thumb.

A whiff of pain hormones entered his nostrils as the ball bounced back. It occurred to him that he might have hurt Frankie and checked in on his target.

Frankie sat down; rubbing the spot the ball had struck but seemed to survive the impact ok.

The remaining students were paying full attention now after seeing one of their own get called out at the hands of a geek. Not wanting to be counted out themselves, they concentrated on Jeremy.

Jeremy concentrated and evaluated his targets and for the next two throws, eliminated two more. Each time, a whiff of pain pheromones could be detected from his victims. '*Whoever invented the game of dodgeball was a cruel son of a gun.*' he thought.

Tony Whitman was another nobody in school. Jeremy decided to let him have a go. Intentionally, he threw the ball at him, fully expecting the guy to catch it.

Instead, Tony treated it like a mouse and moved out of the way. With two strikes against him, his last throw was more like a toss and Kathy caught it.

The rest of his day was filled with knowledge, beginning in study hall where he researched nanobots and related theories. Science and the study of known elements; biology and the study of cells; and social studies with an interesting thesis on migration concluded his day.

The dreaded locker would be his last stop on the way home. There, students hustled along the hallway and held 'end of the day' conversations. It was a custom to pick on the geeks and other lesser life forms before calling it a day.

Unfortunately, Jeremy was one of them. His life at the ping pong table of the hallway as he passed beasts and bullies was quite an adventure. One would force him into another and another would shove him into another... an almost comical scene at times except, Jeremy was the ping pong ball.

Jeremy started down the stretch that he'd bounced down so many times before. Already ahead of him was Tony Harold, in the playing field, careening off of a wall and into another abuser that forcefully aided him along.

Try as he might in the past, he couldn't get past the first push without the second pusher helping the other out. But this was a different day under different circumstances.

The first one missed Jeremy and he was able to dodge the second one too. He walked a little further and the third one tried to push him into the wall and failed as well. Two more; one on each side; attempted to push Jeremy into the other. But he saw them coming and jumped ahead, leaving the two practically hugging each other.

His final obstacle could not be overcome with slick moves because it was leaning up against his locker door. Steve O glared back at him with a grimace while Terry stood behind him with a devilish grin.

“What’s this I hear about you leaving Terry hanging in math class?” he asked, standing up straight.

“I didn’t leave him hanging.” Jeremy retorted, attempting to open his locker.

“He said you got him in trouble with the teacher too.” Steve accused, stepping in front of his hand and the lock he needed to open.

“I didn’t do that either.” Jeremy denied, attempting to work around Steve.

“He’s a fucking liar Steve O.” Terry spat, “Ask anybody in the classroom.”

“Terry wants me to pound your face.” Steve relayed, and looked around the hallway for teachers.

“Yeah, and I want you to pound his face.” Jeremy countered.

Steve faked a lunge at him to watch Jeremy cower. But this time was different. Instead, Jeremy kept his eyes glued to his. The face was different, probably due to the lack of the magnifying lens he usually wore for glasses.

Jeremy thought, *‘Testosterone level surge; adrenaline level surge; spike in the amygdala.’* and said, “Get out of my way.”

“Leave him alone Steve.” Kathy called, standing on the other side by her locker.

“You’re defending this string bean?” Steve asked, curiously.

“He saved me from a smashed face in gym today.” Kathy informed him.

“What?” Steve asked, now seeming concerned about Kathy. “What happened?”

She explained the incident and Steve asked, “Who was the dick wad that threw the ball?”

Kathy smiled facetiously, “That would be Terry, the dirt bag behind you.” she quipped, and turned to her open locker.

“I just might pound his face for you after all.” Steve said to Jeremy, and spun around and snatched Terry’s shirt in his hand.

“Now wait a minute boss...” Terry begged, now fearful of Steve’s wrath.

While Terry backed away and drug Steve with him, Jeremy opened his locker. Exchanging books for homework assignments, he finished quickly. Shutting the door and locking it, he looked over at Kathy, now watching intently as her boyfriend man-handled Terry closer to the exit.

He gained her attention with a smile and stepped over to her. “Thanks.” he said, and walked away.

## Chapter 3

Since Steve went out the front exit, Jeremy changed course and headed for the side exit. His mind distracted from the boring task of walking and dwelled instead on pheromones and thoughts that humans produce them as well.

He wondered if increasing sexual pheromones in the male would attract females, scientifically speaking, of course. But then he thought, '*Neurogenesis now active; increasing pheromone production; increasing testosterone levels.*' and wondered why he kept thinking of things like that.

Sure, they mended his finger, hands, and knee. But why do they inform you that they're doing it? They just can't work in the background, fixing this and that and keep their mouth shut?

Besides, weren't they supposed to have died already? His twenty four hours are up. But then he thought, '*There are five thousand four hundred and twenty two remaining.*'

That raised more questions like, why aren't they dying and why is the count increasing? If they can communicate information to him, is he able to communicate with them? How else could you explain the increase in pheromones? He had to have activated it somehow.

But an obstacle appeared in his way and he bumped into Julie, who was focused on the contents of her locker. The science book tumbled out of her hand and Jeremy caught it on instinct.

"Sorry." he apologized, "Here." and handed her the book.

A laugh in the form of short snorts emitted from her, "Wow, hero. It didn't even touch the ground." and snorted her laugh again.

He had to laugh himself, "I'm no hero." he assured her, stepping to her side.

"I saw you in the gym." she purred, "Saved Kathy from a bloody nose." and snorted another laugh.

"Oh, you were in the other class?" he asked, leaning against a locker.

"Yeah." she confessed, "The haters were speechless." and smiled.

"Yeah." he reminisced, "That was pretty cool." he admitted, taking in a heavy dose of sexual pheromones from her.

"Did you get the homework in biology?" she asked, changing the subject.

"Yeah, shouldn't be a problem." he said, nonchalantly. "What worries me is the finals." he admitted.

"Yeah, next week..." Julie reminded him, "and I'm going to flunk it if I don't study." she confessed. "I think it's the bugs and worms. Who can like that stuff?" she asked, with a snort.

"I have to go over it too." Jeremy replied, "Feel like having a study buddy?" he asked.

"I don't know about that." she cooed, "Won't your girlfriend be jealous?" she asked, shutting her locker door.

"Girlfriend; I don't have a girlfriend." he huffed.

"Oh, I thought you were moving in on Kathy." she quipped, spinning the combination on her lock.

Jeremy looked around to see if anyone heard her, “Are you crazy!” he exclaimed in a whisper. “You’re going to get me killed!” he accused.

“Oh, you’re afraid of Captain Cave Man!” she teased, pushing her thick glasses up her nose.

Girls were so mysterious. Why they play their games baffled him. She was clearly in an aroused state physically but maintained a point of distance instead of opening up to him.

“Yeah, he wants to, what did he say, ‘*pound my face*’.” Jeremy remembered.

She snorted a laugh and turned to leave. He followed her to the door and opened it for her.

“Listen, if you want to study, just give me a call.” he reminded her, and recited his cell phone number.

He turned to go, wishing he knew what she was thinking. “See you later.” he added, and walked away.

A few steps away, he looked back and noticed her scribbling on her tablet. It added pep in his step, thinking she was writing his number down, but he really didn’t know why.

She wasn’t a beautiful girl on the outside, but she had a gorgeous mind. With acne, homely features, and underdeveloped breasts, the heartless heathens in school called her Cheddar; derived from her last name and the potholes of acne on her face. But the teachers knew she was smart and didn’t hold her appearance against her.

In truth, he worked to outperform her and she kept him focused. She was his competition and gave him a good reason to excel in his grades. He probably wouldn’t be doing so well if it weren’t for her keeping him motivated. Maybe that was the reason she didn’t want to study with him. He was *her* competition.

Getting ready for bed that evening he debated the questions he had. A bunch of ‘*what ifs*’ and unknowns ran through his mind. He wondered if the nanobots had finally gone and thought, ‘*There are seven thousand forty nanobots remaining.*’ and wondered again why the number was increasing.

He sat at the desk in his room and contemplated his situation. From what he had read about the little buggers, they were microscopic robots designed for different purposes, like killing cancer cells. But nothing suggested they could self-replicate. His dad might have some answers so, he headed downstairs to the study.

“What is it, son?” Jerold asked, looking up from his research.

“I don’t think those nanobots have left yet.” he confessed, taking the seat in front of the desk.

“Really; why do you say that?” his dad asked, now interested.

Jeremy reached up and grabbed the scissors from the tray and cut his palm before his dad could stop him.

‘*Laceration left palm; antibiotics deployed; nerve receptors frozen; repair in progress.*’ he thought, and showed his dad the cut as it was being repaired. “It’s like zipping up a zipper.” he explained, grabbing a tissue to catch a trickle of blood.

Jerold grabbed his fingertips and watched the repair. “I’ll be a monkey’s uncle. Does it hurt?” he asked, amazed.

“They tell me that the nerve receptacles are frozen.” Jeremy replied.

“They? They who?” he asked, letting go of his son’s fingers.

“The nanobots.” Jeremy confessed. “I somehow know the steps they are taking.” and repeated what he had thought when the cut was made. “So, the first thing I know is the damage and then the list of stuff their doing to fix it.”

“Stay right there.” Jerold commanded, “I’ll be right back.” and left the den.

Jeremy grew concerned, watching his dad's hasty retreat, and wondered if he was calling a psychologist. The longer he waited, the more worried he got.

Finally, Jerold came back into the den with items in his hand, "I want to get a blood sample." he explained, pulling the cap off of a needle. "I took the soiled rag to the hospital to get it analyzed but I won't have any results until Monday." motioning for Jeremy's arm.

Jeremy let him take his arm and asked, "Are they supposed to multiply?" watching the tourniquet being tied around his arm.

"Replicate?" he asked, "I don't think so." concentrating on his son's vein. "I mean, you have everything they need in your body to do so, and they have the capability, but..." he paused, inserting the needle, "I don't think they're activated for replication." and drew blood from his arm.

Jeremy thought, *'Puncture wound; right arm; antibiotics deployed, clotting activated; currently irreparable.'* and repeated what he was thinking out loud.

His dad looked up from his work and said, "Son, you're freaking me out." and withdrew the needle.

Jeremy repeated his thoughts, "Puncture wound; right arm; repair in progress." and watched with his dad as the wound healed before them.

Jerold wiped his chin in thought, amazed at the miracle in front of him and whispered, "That is incredible." and asked, "You say you know what they're doing?"

"Yeah." Jeremy exclaimed, excited about the turn in conversation, "It's like a thought but it isn't your thought." he described, wiping the dab of blood from his now-healed skin.

"That isn't possible." his dad replied. "It would have to alter your consciousness and actually know the language..." putting the cap back on the needle. "Bah, too many complications." he sighed, placing the syringe on his desk.

"I don't know dad." Jeremy started, "I think the nanobot count is getting higher and they somehow tell me that too."

"Well, in a perfect world, you would want them to replicate because they are machines and they do break down." and sat on the corner of his desk. "You see, as they die, you excrete them out with sweat or dump them out with your body waste." His dad pondered a thought, "But I can't see how you are somehow able to know what they're doing or how many there are." and ventured to say, "I think it might be just your imagination working overtime." knowing his son spent half of the time in the clouds.

Jeremy decided to drop it before his dad accused him of being crazy. "Ok, dad; I'm going to bed." and rose to leave.

His dad grabbed his arm and said, "Listen, I told you this was under the table, so keep this to yourself for me please." and let go of his arm.

"Sure dad; no problem. But you don't see it causing me any harm do you?" he asked, studying his dad intently.

"Are you kidding?" Jerold asked, shocked at the question, "There's no harm in healing you son." he answered with a smile and patted his son on the arm.

Jeremy said good night and headed for his bed. He tossed and turned a while, considering the long day he'd had at school. Eventually, he faded off to sleep.

He dreamt of math problems floating off of the paper and forming the face of Julie, only to be waved away by Steve. He dreamt of Steve turning into a spider and crawling into his ear. He dreamt of the spider splitting into pieces and turning into nanobots and then feasting on his brain. The image faded and total blackness engulfed him.

The next morning, he awoke and sat up. He thought, *'Rejuvenation complete; six hours of energy remaining.'* and quickly seethed his best Spock impersonation, "Deactivate transponder!" between clenched teeth.

His mind replied with, *'Command launched by host; neuro-transponder deactivated.'* which caused Jeremy's eyes to widen and mouth to drop open.

He stood straight up and said, "You can hear me." and realized the implications, "You can hear me!" he exclaimed.

## Chapter 4

He paraded around the room a bit and finally snapped out of his jubilee. “Ok, alright.” and thought, *‘Now we are getting somewhere.’* He continued his thoughts with, *‘Commands; what kind does it take? I have to figure them out.’* and paused, *‘Right after I use the bathroom.’* and skipped out of the room.

It actually felt nice relieving himself without hearing how many liters he peed or how many toxins were dispensed. He liked science as much as the next guy, but too much is way too much.

Finishing up, he went back to his room to get dressed. His shirt was first and he forced his head through the collar. Pants went on and fastened. Socks, both left and right were stretched over his feet and shoes... shoes. Somehow, he always kicked them under his bed.

He scrambled underneath the mattress and retrieved the pair. Sitting on the bed, he forced his right foot in. Somehow, he had more foot than footwear. He curled his toes and forced the heel in and felt the tip of the shoe press against his toes. The good news was; the left foot fit the same way. *‘It would have been weird not having matching feet.’* he thought.

So either he grew overnight or his shoes shrunk overnight. *‘What is going on here?’* he wondered, and remembered the nanobots.

“Um, nanobots on.” he said, and received no message. He tried other commands including abracadabra. None worked the magic he was looking for.

He thought back to the message he received when turning it off and thought, *‘Host command, on.’* and waited.

He didn’t hear any hamster in the wheel of his mind turning and tried again, *‘Activate neuro-transponder.’* and instantly thought, *‘Neuro-transponder now activated.’*

It almost surprised him to think it, “Amazing!” he whispered in awe. He could definitely distinguish between the two thoughts.

He scrambled to his desk and took a seat. He had to think on this new information. He tried the one command that he knew already, *‘How many nanobots remaining?’* and received, *‘There are one million two hundred and seventy five remaining.’*

“Holy mackerel!” he exclaimed out loud, and thought, *‘Why so many nanobots?’* and received *‘Expediential growth increases reaction time and speeds repair.’*

That was all the proof he needed; he was certainly crazy. There he was sitting in a chair talking to a voice in his head; clearly a sign of brain damage. But thought instead, *‘Neurological disorder: not present.’*

“Ok...” he said out loud and thought, *‘I’m talking to a non-existent person in my head and that is crazy by anyone’s definition.’*

*‘Existing parasitic presence: confirmed; host count: one; neurological disorder: not present.’* he thought back.

“Alright...” he said out loud, quite by accident, frustrated at the stupid argument, and thought, *‘I am talking to a parasite.’* nodding his head in agreement; but thought, *‘Neuro-transponder state active.’*

*'Ok, I'm talking to a parasite through a neural transmitter.'* he mused to himself and answered, *'Communication status confirmed.'* which caused him to roll his eyes in frustration.

Some would be skittish of the word parasite but Jeremy knew that babies are technically one. Germs, needed to digest food, were parasites. In fact, some parasites were necessary for the body to survive. But still, the word implied that a leech inhabited his mind.

Pondering the presence in his mind, he thought of a tiny space man exploring a new world. That fit the analogy he was dealing with. Perhaps the parasite was like an astronaut, inhabiting his mind. A smile crept on his lips as he thought of a good name for it... *'Nanonaut.'*

Just for fun, he thought, *'Rename parasitic presence to Nanonaut.'* and then thought, *'Host command received: parasitic presence now Nanonaut.'* in his mind.

Something definitely happened over night. Either the Nanonaut gained intelligence or learned to communicate better. It was something he wanted to explore further but he was interrupted.

"Jeremy; breakfast!" his mother called.

He bolted out of the bedroom thinking, *'Nourishment required.'* and bounded down the steps to the landing.

"What on earth are you doing in that shirt?" his mother asked, giving him a disapproving look.

"What?" he asked; not seeing anything wrong with it.

"It's too small for you. Your belly button is showing." she observed.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, noticing his navel. "Yeah... my shoes are too tight too." he admitted, trying to wiggle his toes.

"I must say, I expected a growing spurt out of you sooner." she confessed. "I was starting to worry." ushering him down the hallway. "Now go eat and we'll go shopping for some clothes for you."

"Great, spending a perfectly good Saturday at the store." he grumbled, knowing one store led to another with his mother.

After breakfast, he headed to his room until it was time to go shopping. Turning to the dresser mirror, he noticed his navel on full display below his shirt. Unhappy with his appearance, he pulled the tight shirt over his head.

Twisting side to side, he noted his gangly features and thought, *'Nanonaut, increase muscle size.'* and got nothing in return.

Thinking on the scientific knowledge he had on muscles, once torn, the body repairs muscles with more muscles, thereby making them bigger. He would have to gain muscle the old fashion way and dropped to the floor.

He heard nothing from Nanonaut on his first few pushups but on number eleven, Nanonaut alerted, *'Torn tissue left and right triceps region; repair in progress.'* and by number fifteen, he thought, *'Torn tissue pectoral major region; repair in progress.'* and stopped at twenty five, unable to do anymore.

*'Nanonaut, estimated time of repair?'* he thought, and received, *'Estimated time of repair; one minute, twenty two seconds.'*

He waited until Nanonaut announced that the repairs had completed and rolled over to do another twenty five. No muscles tore and he had to do twenty nine before Nanonaut alerted; *'Torn tissue pectoral major region; repair in progress.'* and another five pushups to hear, *'Torn tissue left and right triceps region; repair in progress.'*

This time, while waiting on the repairs, he did sit ups until he heard, *'Torn tissue; external oblique, internal oblique; repair in progress.'*

Thinking he might as well work on his arms while getting repaired, he stood up and headed to the door. Jumping up, he grabbed the door frame. Giving it his best, he tried to do some chin ups.

He could barely get halfway up when Nanonaut sounded out, *'Torn tissue, left and right bicep region; repair in progress.'*

Giving up, he dropped to the floor. Obviously, there was serious room for improvement. He started a routine of tearing one group of muscles before switching to another; losing count of how many it took since numbers didn't matter.

He went from pushups, to sit ups, to chin ups. He was tickled pink on his third try of actually completing a chin up and starting another one before getting warned about something torn somewhere.

He kept it up until his mother called up the stairs, "Get ready Jeremy. We're leaving soon!" "Ok mom!" he replied, continuing his chin up.

He tore his biceps one more time before dropping down. Walking over to his dresser mirror, he studied the results.

His chest, arms, and stomach were tight from the workout but not much difference in mass. Thinking he had some ways to go, he went to the bathroom to wipe the sweat off and dressed to go.

Heading down the stairs, his phone rang. *'Tony must be stuck on one of his experiments.'* he thought, pulling out the phone. He was the only one that ever called him.

But an unknown number triggered his memory. *'Julie.'* he thought and answered the call, "Hello?"

"Jeremy?" Julie asked.

"Julie?" he asked, realizing she was the only one to get his name right.

"Yeah." she replied, "I was thinking that maybe we should study for the finals together."

He smiled at her voice and asked, "Is this some evil plot to beat me on the test scores?"

She snorted her laugh and said, "I don't need an evil plot to do that!" and snorted some more.

Whatever." he retorted and changed subjects, "What time do you want to study?" and explained, "Mom is taking me to the mall."

"Oh, we're going there too." she exclaimed, "Maybe we can meet up."

He met his mother gathering keys and purse and moved the phone away from his ear, "Mom, Julie and I want to study for finals this coming week. She's going to the mall. Can we meet her there?" he asked.

She considered it for a moment and said, "Well, I wanted to eat at the food court after Dillard's. Maybe she can be there around noon?" she offered, turning her son in the direction of the front door.

"Meet you at the food court at noon?" he conveyed.

Plans were made and they headed out. If you want to slow down one of your days away from school, just go shopping with your mother. The morning drug by, while trying on new clothes and fighting to gain his mother's approval on current fashion.

She wouldn't settle for anything that actually fit, claiming, "You'll grow into them." and so bigger shirts, longer pants, and shoes, a half size larger than needed, were bought.

Then, the embarrassing part of the trip; hanging around the lingerie section while his mother flipped through panties and bras on a rack. *'Can you not just pick one and go?'* he wanted to ask, hiding in the racks. *'Nobody's going to see you in it.'*

Seriously, how do you keep from looking like some kind of pervert in an underwear aisle? You can't browse the items as if you're checking out the craftsmanship of them. Instead, you try not to be seen by as many people as possible, including the store clerk.

Finally, after checking out the novelty shop, Jeremy found Julie in the food court, sitting at a table next to the taco restaurant.

"My goodness, I hardly recognized you without your glasses!" Mrs. Chiders exclaimed, upon seeing him.

"It's Margie, isn't it?" Juniper asked, offering her a hand.

"Oh, June." she replied, "It's been a while." and shook her hand.

There was some debate about who was going where but ultimately, Jeremy would be studying at Julie's house. So, he went with Julie and her mother to finish their shopping.

Ironically, he found himself in the same lingerie section as before, browsing the same aisle.

This time, he detected estrogen for some reason, and looked at its source, Julie. Maybe he had no interest in others, but Julie seemed to be on his mind lately. He didn't know why either, because she was no work of art. But she did have a beautiful brain.

She placed the bra she was looking at back on the rack and looked at him. Snorting a laugh, she said, "You act like a fish out of water."

"That's because I am a fish out of water." he admitted; carefully maneuvering around the rack towards her.

She shook her head at him, "I'm still not used to you not wearing glasses." she confessed.

"I go to grab them every now and then out of habit." he admitted.

"Well, anyway, girls want to feel alluring so they look for things they think make them that way." Julie continued. "But the number one reason is for the guy that's going to see them."

"Seems like dressing up a lid to cover up the candy to me." Jeremy shrugged.

"So where did you get your prescription?" she asked, grabbing another pair off of the rack.

"Prescription?" he asked; a little perplexed at the question.

"You know; your contacts?" she asked, looking over the polka dots on the unmentionable in her hand.

"My..." he started; *'Tricky question'*, he thought. But he came up with a plausible answer, "My dad works in medicine and I'm a guinea pig for a trial study he's conducting."

"Side effects?" she asked, swapping panties on the rack.

He sighed, trying to think of any, "Bad dreams, mainly." he replied vaguely.

"That doesn't sound too bad." she replied, focusing on the candy stripe pattern on the panties. "They just can't make contacts any stronger so I'm kind of stuck." she informed him, and added a snorting laugh.

"Who knows, maybe dad will be able to help you and everyone else." he replied, offering her hope.

"Oh, there goes mom." she exclaimed, putting the panties back, "Let's get you out of here." she suggested, "You're turning red." and snorted another laugh.

Jeremy diverted his eyes while purchases were made. *'Do they really have to hold the items up for inspection before they scan them through?'* and followed the two out to their car.

"Now Jeremy, you're a book worm too." Margie started, breaking the awkward silence in the car. "Do you have plans for college?"

"I haven't decided what field I could make the most impact in, but I have a few universities in mind." he replied, sitting in the back behind the girls.

"Well Julie is interested in robotics." she quipped. "She could build one to explore Mars with."

He thought that was a good endeavor and said, "Good choice Julie. I think she would probably be making robots to terraform Mars and making habitats for visitations."

"Wow, that sounds more interesting than exploring, doesn't it Julie?" Margie exclaimed.

"3D printers; mom." she explained, "They'll have to be huge but they could make modules out of the ground there."

"Well I don't know anything about it." Margie retorted, "That's what we have you for." she laughed.

"Oh, and build a star gate to wormhole through." Jeremy offered, letting his imagination run wild.

"Ok..." Margie grimaced, as his imagination left her behind.

They entered the house with Jeremy helping to carry in their haul. Margie said they could study in Julie's room but had to keep the door open. Jeremy could only guess that she didn't trust him with her daughter.

"You think she's worried about me?" he whispered, following her to the room.

"I don't know; she could be." and snorted a chuckle, "But you're safe, I won't rape you." opening her door.

She tossed her purchases on the bed, consisting of deodorant, shampoo, and body wash. Stepping to her desk, she pointed out the textbooks needed for their finals.

"Ok, biology first." she demanded, "Maybe you can figure out what the test will be on." and handed him the book.

"Ok." he started, turning the first few pages, "The title of the chapters says it all." he explained.

They started with the book, sharing while sitting on the bed, reviewing spontaneous mutations and traits. By the time they got to the endoplasmic reticulum in plants, Julie was lying across the bed, supporting her head in her hands.

Jeremy had a hard time twisting to the side to share the book with her and complained, "I'm getting cramped sitting like this."

"Park it beside me then." she offered, patting the bed.

He shrugged and positioned himself beside her. Now, the book could be shared evenly between them and relieved the ache he'd developed for staying turned so long.

"Better?" she asked, chin in hand.

"Much." he replied, settling in.

"Hey." Margie called from the hallway in passing, "Leave Julie alone and just study Jeremy." she insisted.

"Mom!" Julie protested, "We're not even dating!"

"Exactly." Margie quipped, continuing down the hallway.

Julie retorted, "And Jeremy wouldn't want anything to do with me anyway!"

"Whatever!" she called back.

A moment passed and Jeremy had to ask, "Why wouldn't I want anything to do with you?" letting curiosity get the best of him.

"You know..." she huffed, "I'm not pretty." she admitted, diverting her eyes away from him.

"Oh, guys only touch the pretty ones." he teased.

She glanced at him and snipped, "You know what I mean." and looked back at her book. He could tell she was sensitive about it and suggested, "Maybe a guy should like you for more than you're looks."

She sighed and said, "Let's just come right out and say it; guys like T and A, and I don't have either."

"You probably have a growing spurt left in you." Jeremy offered, "I know I did."

"Serious?" she asked, "Look, I have nasal problems, acne like a plague, and boobs smaller than yours." and poked the book in front of her, "That is all I have to work with; trying to be better than everyone else so I can be at least equal to them."

"Look, you might not be gorgeous on the outside but you have a gorgeous mind." Jeremy consoled, "Some guys love smart girls, you know?"

"Says you; with no more glasses, acne all cleared up, and getting all muscular." she fumed, "So stop trying to make me feel better about being ugly." and huffed, "I know it isn't true." She then snorted a sob, "Guys don't date ugly."

A moment passed while she composed herself and Jeremy replied, "Fine; I guess I'll have to like a different girl for her gorgeous mind." and nudged his shoulder into hers.

She nudged him back and retorted, "Whatever!" taking a page from her mother.

With a firm grasp on what the test in biology would be on, they moved on to other subjects. Time passed fluidly and it was a surprise to have Margie come to the door to ask, "Jeremy, do you want to stay for dinner?"

"Wow, I didn't know it was getting so late." he confessed. "I don't want to intrude." and stood up. "It's been awesome studying with you Julie." and turned to Margie, "We covered a lot of ground," he assured her, "and made good progress."

"Are you leaving?" Julie asked, seeming concerned.

"Well yeah," he replied, "I'd just be in the way." and stepped to the bedroom door.

"Wait." she called, "We haven't gotten to math yet." she pointed out, getting up herself.

"It's ok." Margie intervened, "You still have an hour or so." stopping Jeremy with a hand. "I'll call when supper is ready and you can decide then."

"Alright, equations win." Jeremy relented suspiciously.

If there was one subject both knew by heart, it was math. He was curious to see what she had problems with and, if she needed it, give her the help freely.

Margie headed to the kitchen while Jeremy took a seat on the bed. Julie grabbed the math book and sat down with it beside him.

"So..." Jeremy started, "What do you need help with?" he asked curiously.

It was quiet enough to hear Margie in the kitchen running water and placing pans on the stove when Julie replied.

"I need help understanding you." she sighed.

With a perplexed look he asked, "Understanding what?"

"Well, I've known you since third grade." she started, and he agreed. "Probably earlier but I remember third grade."

"Better than me." he confessed. "I don't remember third grade so much." he recalled.

"Well I do." she replied, "You recited the alphabet."

He smiled at that, "Yeah, I bet everyone did." he said, shyly.

"No, you did '*A is for astronaut.*' she frowned, "and rattled off the rest of the letters with animals and things while everyone else just sung them in order." She huffed, "I didn't even know what a xylophone was."

“Oh hey,” he mused, “I remember that. I looked the word up in dad’s dictionary.” He laughed, “He had to tell me what it meant.”

She waved him off, not caring about the details. “The point is...” she started, “Ever since that day; you were the guy I had to beat.”

He nodded his head, knowing what she meant, “And... you were the one I had to beat. It made me want to do better.”

“Exactly!” she exclaimed, “That’s what I mean.”

“So what?” he asked, “It’s helped us both out.”

“So why now?” she asked. “Why do you want to study with me all of a sudden?”

He froze, thinking, *‘I can’t say I detected your pheromones.’* and came up with something more. “I thought I told you; I love your gorgeous mind.”

“No; no you didn’t.” she argued, “Are you saying you like me for my mind?”

“Think about it.” he replied, placing his hand on hers, “I like somebody that likes what I like. Could you see some cheerleader getting excited about equations?”

“No, and I don’t like cheerleaders either.” she grimaced.

“Probably like them as much as I like football players.” he said in understanding. “So, I can’t help being attracted to you because of how smart you are.”

Forget Santa being a conspiracy or a Nanonaut hijacking your brain. The biggest surprise of his life happened in a blink of an eye. She leaned over and struck him like lightning with a kiss on his lips. Instantly, he thought, *‘Link unsuccessful’* and then thought, *‘Deactivate neurotransponder.’* and asked, “What was that?” noting the redness crossing her face.

She clasped her hands together and shrugged, “A kiss silly.” and looked away from him.

“Hmm.” he mused, “I couldn’t tell.” causing her to look back at him.

He raised his hands and removed the thick oval glasses that had slipped down the bridge of her nose. Cupping the acne-clad cheeks of a gorgeous mind, he leaned in and kissed her back.

This time, he had control and lingered there. Her hands came up and grabbed his wrists. He had no way of telling the expression on her face as his tongue slipped in between her lips. But the sudden jerk in surprise said it all.

Her hands left his wrists and traveled to the back of his neck while he explored her mouth. Returning his intrusion, she invaded his mouth and he sucked on her tongue while caressing the underside of hers with his own.

Finally, he released her head and backed away claiming, “Now that was a kiss for sure.” and sighed, picking up her glasses and placing them back on her.

“Yep.” she replied, and snorted a couple of giggles, moving her hair behind an ear with a finger, “I’m for sure on it.” and adjusted her glasses.

“Well, I’d like to call you my girlfriend,” he asked, perspiring from his nervousness, “if you don’t mind having a geek like me.”

“I don’t know...” she quipped, “any boyfriend of mine has to go to comic con with me.”

“Heck yeah!” he exclaimed, “I’ll even pay for the tickets.”

“Let me finish...” she interrupted, “And he has to dress up for it.”

“What a coincidence.” he mused, “My girlfriend has to dress up for it too.”

She slapped his arm and retorted, “I don’t look good in costumes.”

“Wow, another coincidence!” he retorted, “I don’t look good in one of them either.”

“No, you’ll look good.” she assured him, “What would you go as?” she asked.

“Not a clue.” he admitted, shaking his head. “But, I’m going to get out of here before your mom catches me trying to kiss you again.” and stood up.

She stood up with him and said, “I don’t care if she does.” and kissed him on the lips, leaving his arms flaying at his sides.

Much to their surprise, Margie screamed, “What the... Julie!” from behind them and stepped into the room.

“It doesn’t do any good for me to tell him to leave you alone,” she chastised, “when you won’t leave him alone!” swiping a dishcloth at her.

She let go of Jeremy at the impact of the dishcloth, “Hey, we didn’t break any rules!” suddenly caring about her mother.

“What happened here?” she asked, “You told me Jeremy was... How did you put it?” and thought for a second, “Oh yeah, your arch nemesis.”

“Oh, he still is.” Julie defended, “In grades, that is.”

“And then your little speech today about ‘If you can’t beat them, join them.’ malarkey.” she mused.

“Now wait, mom,” Julie argued, “I do need help in biology!”

But Margie kept going, undeterred. “I just didn’t know your joining was going to be joining lips!” popping Julie on her hip with the dishcloth.

“Mrs. Chiders,” Jeremy chimed in, “it wasn’t my intent to...” and received a pop of the cloth on his arm for his effort.

“And you!” she snipped, “Covered a lot of ground, did you?” backing him up to the bed.

“Hey!” he retorted, “That hurts!”

“And made good progress, did you?” she chided, forcing him to sit on the bed.

He held his hands up in defense, expecting more punishment from the dishcloth, “I was talking about studying!”

She put her fists on her hips and looked at each of them. “I knew something like this was going on.” she sighed. “Now what made you two get serious?”

They talked a bit about compatibility and all the reasons why they thought they should be together. Jeremy left their home a bit shaken, but relieved that Margie wasn’t as angry as she let on.

He called Julie that night to make sure everything was ok. And then, with the Nanonaut disabled, he slept without dreams.

His next step was to inform his parents that he was dating Julie. Juniper Dodd was not the least bit surprised and Jerold seemed happy for him to finally find someone in his life.

He turned the neuro-transponder back on and found out his nanobot count had nearly doubled. When asked why, he was given, *‘Expediential growth increases reaction time and speeds repair.’*

His Sunday was spent studying and exercising, both with the aid of Nanonaut. He went to bed after talking to Julie. She claimed to not feel like herself and wanted to get some rest, vowing to be at school the next day.

Monday came and he entered home room and found Julie already at her desk. Oddly enough, she didn’t have her glasses on.

“What’s up with your glasses?” he asked, studying her improved appearance and complexion.

“I don’t know?” she confessed, “I just don’t need them.”

His face flushed in concern, “Are you serious?” he asked, worried that he was to blame.

“Yeah, I went to bed Saturday and had a God-awful dream and the next day, I couldn’t wear them.” and looked at him in worry, “Do you think I picked up something from you when we...” she paused to lean closer, and then whispered, “Kissed?”

## Chapter 5

His mind raced, trying to comprehend the developing situation and the complications of his actions. His first concern was Julie and the look of fear on her face.

“I can see where that might have happened but there’s nothing to worry about.” he soothed.

“I don’t know; it’s kind of weird.” she admitted, “It’s like I’m thinking somebody else’s thoughts.”

“It’s ok, don’t freak out about that.” he cautioned, “The things I have to tell you are good things.”

“Jeremy...” she confessed pitifully, “I know how much I pee.”

He tried to draw her focus away from the negative and focus on the positive, “Look at you though. You’re eyes are better; your acne is clearing up. Are you breathing better?”

She thought for a second and said, “Yeah; seems to be.”

“See?” Jeremy quipped, and repeated his father’s words, “What harm is there in healing you?”

“Ok, but why can I smell people now?” she pondered aloud. “I mean, you smell good; it’s just that I can smell you in a different way.”

“Pheromones” he replied, “You’re detecting my pheromones.”

“Like, a dog can pick up scents?” she asked with a quizzical look on her face.

She did have a problem with biology, after all. “No, you won’t be sniffing butts.” he assured her, seeing where she was going.

The teacher settled the class down and roll call was taken. Jeremy spent the time studying Julie and giving her reassuring smiles. He could only wish he knew what she was thinking.

He thought to activate the transponder and communicate with the Nanonaut. *‘Nanonaut, did we transfer nanobots to Julie?’* he asked. Surprisingly, his robotic parasite answered with, “One thousand four hundred and eighty two nanobots were uploaded to the host Julie.”

He stared at the chalkboard on hearing this and asked, *‘Why were they uploaded?’* and immediately received, *‘Abnormalities were detected in host Julie.’*

He closed his eyes and dropped his head upon hearing it. With a shake of his head, he looked back up and asked himself, *‘Can I stop uploads to other hosts?’* and received, *‘Host can restrict uploads on request.’*

He sighed with relief on that good news. *‘Ok, Nanonaut cannot upload nanobots without my permission.’* and received, *‘Command received from host; uploads restricted to host consent.’* which brought a smile to his face.

Out of curiosity, he asked, *‘Do you know how many nanobots are in host Julie?’* and didn’t receive an immediate response. He started to ask another question but received, *‘Parasitic presence in host Julie reports five thousand and twenty nine nanobots inhabit host Julie.’*

His eyes grew wide as he realized the potential. *‘Nanonaut, instruct parasitic presence in host Julie to rename to Nanonaut,’* afraid the word parasite might cause her to panic.

The same wait passed and Nanonaut replied, *'Message received from Julie Nanonaut, parasitic presence renamed to Nanonaut.'*

He let out the air he was holding in relief and then thought of something else. *'Nanonaut, inform host Julie that I love her.'* and waited, peering at Julie at the corner of his eye.

A few seconds passed and Julie's mouth dropped open and she turned her head in his direction. The look of shock was priceless.

*'Message sent and received by host Julie.'* Nanonaut confirmed.

Jeremy grinned and winked at her. All she could do was shake her head.

With that, he went back to focusing on the classroom, feeling better about the situation they both were in.

*'Message from host Julie.'* Nanonaut relayed, *'You aren't funny. But I love you too.'*

It was all he could do to keep from busting out in laughter and covered his mouth. Forcing himself to be serious, he considered the fact that Julie, every bit as smart as he, was dealing with the presence in her mind. He looked at her and rolled his eyes.

"Do you two know a secret?" the teacher asked, wagging her finger at Jeremy and Julie. But then she asked, "Julie, where are your glasses?"

"I didn't bring them today Mrs. Brown." she replied, "But I can see without them."

"Really..." she smirked, "So tell me what we are discussing."

Julie recited her last sentence, "Each grade level will have the top five test score results posted on the bulletin board by the principal's office."

Mrs. Brown raised an eyebrow and said, "Exactly." followed by the ringing of the school bell. "Class dismissed." she huffed.

"Tell me why I don't kill you." Julie demanded, entering the hallway with Jeremy.

"Why?" he asked, "If anything, you should be thanking me." he retorted, wondering why the resentment.

"You put a knot in my head, that's why!" she hissed, picking up her pace.

"A knot?" he asked, dumbfounded, "No, not that kind of knot." he explained. "My dad is experimenting with nanobots." stepping up his pace, "You've heard of them, right?"

"Are you serious?" she huffed, "You infected me with robots?"

"Medical nanobots." he corrected, "They repair and maintain your health."

"Whatever." she retorted, "It doesn't mean I want to hear them dumping toxins."

"Ok, listen." he said, grabbing her arm and pulling her between the lockers, "You can turn them off and on."

"Ok, fine, tell me how." she demanded, leaning against the wall.

"Ok, but if I tell you, you might not be able to communicate with me while they're off." he cautioned.

"So?" she spat, "What's wrong with that?"

He shrugged for an answer, hating to see her like this, and relented. "Ok, just say to yourself *'Nanonaut, deactivate neuro-transponder.'* and listen."

Her ears perked, as if hearing something, and seemed satisfied. "Ok, I think that did it," standing straight, "but you had me thinking I was crazy."

"I'm sorry, I didn't know they were being uploaded to you because I had my transponders off at the time we... you know." he apologized. "But I fixed it so they won't upload anymore without my permission."

"That's nice... after you infected me with them." she scorned, pushing him to the side.

"I know, and I'm sorry." he pleaded, "You have to forgive me Julie. I didn't mean to."

She dropped her shoulders and sighed, “At least it wasn’t herpes.” and then bumped him and the locker at the same time, trying to get past him.

“Ouch!” she exclaimed; more out of shock than pain, grabbing her arm to look at it.

A scratch appeared along with dead skin that was peeled away, leaving a short trail near her shoulder. Jeremy looked at it and shrugged.

“Activate your transponder and listen.” and then nodded at the wound, “Then watch them work.” he instructed.

Both watched the wound disappear, leaving a few dead pieces of skin behind. Jeremy wiped them away with his thumb.

“Ok, now that was cool.” she admitted, looking up at him.

“Yeah, it fixed all kinds of things when I caught that dodgeball in gym class.” he admitted. “You have to like them numbing the pain too.”

“Yeah...” she mused, “But hey; we have to get to class.”

“Woo-hoo; Urkel got him some Cheddar cheese!” Terry taunted, practically skipping passed them.

“I saw you hugging it out with Steve O Friday!” Jeremy called back.

“Hey, screw you Urkel!” he jeered, and went into the classroom.

*Message from host Julia; don’t get that clown started.*’ Nanonaut conveyed.

*Message to host Julia; What’s he going to do; hurt me?*’ he thought, walking with her to the classroom.

*Message from host Julia; not worth your time super boy.*’ he received; and had to agree with her.

The next period was spent conveying everything he knew about the Nanonaut and why he called it that to Julie. She was smart and soaked up the information for her, *‘Own personal use.’* she claimed.

But things turned south when he mentioned his latest idea.

*‘Nanonaut, send message to host Julie; I want to program your Nanonaut to act more like a radio instead of the message from and to crap every time.’* he conveyed.

He received, *‘Message from host Julie; you can program my Nanonaut?’*

That struck him as odd; since he was the one that gave it to her. But he messaged back, *‘Sort of; I can program mine and it can send the instructions to yours.’*

Her response was not expected or pleasant, *‘You need to leave my Nanonaut alone!’* followed with *‘If there’s any programming that needs done, I’ll do it myself!’* and then the kicker, *‘Just stay out of my head!’*

He looked behind him and received the most hateful stare he had ever seen on her. *‘I wasn’t brainwashing you, dang!’* he sent, and received, *‘Message rejected by host Julie.’*

He looked to the ceiling and shook his head. *‘That’s crazy.’* he thought. *‘What is wrong with her?’* and received, *‘Nanonaut in host Julie reports; no neurological or physical disorder detected.’* for his thoughts.

*‘Of course not; that’s because girls are born crazy.’* he thought.

While the teacher rambled on about orbits and the cause and effect of gravity, he contemplated the complexity of females and the irrational emotions attributed to them.

But then, an alert from Nanonaut interrupted his thoughts, *‘Message from host Julie; I still love you though.’*

'See.' he thought, *'Girls are crazy.'* and addressed the Nanonaut, *'Send message to host Julie; I won't mess with your Nanonaut.'* and received in reply; *'I know; I programmed it not to accept anyone's changes but mine.'*

A little resentful, but still impressed, he replied, *'Aren't you a smart-aleck.'* hiding his depressive state.

He wanted to know how the Nanonaut was transmitting his thoughts to her and it replied; *'Pheromones.'*

With that, he asked the Nanonaut if it were possible to convey messages from Julie in her voice instead of his. Once that was established, he asked it to disregard the message from and message to part and simply relay the message in her voice unless it was instructed differently.

Next was replies and that became a challenge as the Nanonaut couldn't distinguish a reply from an individual thought. So, he added a clause, stipulating that each reply must contain a trigger and made it *'To Julie'*.

Finally, he vindictively added a restriction. Only he was allowed to alter the Nanonaut. Feeling that things were even between him and Julie, his animosity faded away.

His thoughts were interrupted by Julie's, *'Hey, this Nanonaut is a pervert!'* she exclaimed. *'To Julie: What, why is that?'* he asked, confused.

*'I'm calling mine nano naughty.'* she continued. *'It wants to make my boobs bigger!'*

He raised his eyebrows at that, *'So?'*

*'So!'* she replied, *'It says they're not capable of nourishing offspring. Can it really fix that?'*

He shrugged and thought, *'They fix whatever is wrong with you, so I guess it can.'* and remembered, *'It made me grow a couple of inches in the right places.'*

*'Yours sounds perverted too.'* she replied, *'Bet you would like them bigger, huh?'*

*'Uh... Ok,'* he replied, *'how did you find out about it?'* he asked, dodging her question.

*'I asked it why they were itching.'* she explained.

*'Why would you even ask it... wait, boobs itch when they grow?'* he replied, and thought better of it, *'Know what; never mind.'* and sighed out loud, *'If it wants to fix something, I'd let it fix it, but it's up to you I guess.'*

A moment passed before she replied. *'So do you want them bigger or what?'* she asked.

He ran his fingers through his hair and rubbed his forehead. Giving in to her question, he replied, *'Sure, why not.'*

*'Ha!'* she replied, *'I knew it!'*

Rubbing the back of his neck, he argued back, *'Look, you told me Saturday that you didn't have any but that didn't matter to me. I still love you with or without them, so go ahead and do what you want.'*

He received her message stating, *'That is the right answer.'* and a moment later, *'I'm getting boobies!'*

*'Ok then.'* he thought to himself, feeling like he dodged some imaginary bullet. Amazed at their conversation now; his mind seemed to automatically place her dialect in the words. *'Boobies!'* he almost said out loud, imagining how she would say it.

They met again outside the classroom and headed to the next class. Jeremy was glad to see she was feeling better about the situation he'd inadvertently placed her in.

Her mind was all over the place, sounding off her opinions and ideas as they walked. *'Jodi is dating that Herold guy. You think they'll be together by next year?'* she asked. But he couldn't answer her quick enough before getting, *'And that Mark, what a douche. You'd think he would break up with one before dating another, right?'*

On and on she went, wondering if the Nanonaut could change her hair color or lift her cheek bones a little; maybe stop unwanted hair from growing or at the least, keep her finger and toe nails at a certain length so she wouldn't have to trim them.

He couldn't help but think, *'That poor Nanonaut is going to be used and abused.'* and replied, *'I don't know what its limitations are but you might want to take it easy on it at first. You know, give it a chance to get used to one thing at a time.'* he suggested.

She kept on going though, as if she didn't hear him. *'How about a perfect tan or maybe even blush so you don't have to wear makeup.'* she thought to him.

Finally, she got around to his suggestion, *'But you're right, I don't want to break anything. Maybe start out with fixing my chipped tooth... oh, can it remove plaque?'*

*'I don't know any of that Julie.'* he admitted. *'I just let it do whatever makes me healthy.'* he pointed out. *'You know, like keeping me from being so clumsy or watching my weight and build muscles.'*

*'What, you don't want a bigger... you know what?'* she asked.

He was shocked at the suggestion and to be honest, it had been itching a little. Maybe it was making him healthy down there too but she didn't need to know that. *'Julie!'* he chastised, *'I don't think that's necessary.'* and added, *'Besides, it isn't like I'm using it for anything just yet.'*

*'Well I want bigger boobs, so I thought you'd want your thing bigger too.'* and defended, *'At least; I thought all guys wanted that.'*

*'Sounds to me like you're the one wanting that.'* he pointed out, taking his seat in class.

*'Jeremy Dodd, are you saying I'm the pervert?'* she asked.

*'If the shoe fits.'* he replied, and got hit by a paper wad for his thoughts.

Class began and the lessons were underway when he heard from Julie again.

*'Hey, Terry is getting ready to shoot you with a paperclip.'* she informed him. *'He's putting it in the rubber band now.'*

One of the biggest disadvantages from sitting up front was, not knowing what was going on behind you. He'd been the target of pencils, paper, candy, and erasers in the past. But getting shot with a paperclip sounded like it would hurt; a lot.

*'Let me know when he's aiming at me, ok?'* he replied.

*'Yeah, he's ducking behind Bobby right now.'* she replied.

He listened with his improved hearing, diminishing the teacher's introduction to lunar gravity and the effects on water, for the impending launch.

*'He's aiming at your head.'* she warned. *'Get ready...'*

Before she could message him, he heard the snap of the band and dropped his head. Mr. Bradshaw, pacing in front of the class holding his reading material, was the unintended victim.

The impact of the paperclip made a loud pop and the teacher turned his papers around.

The paperclip had torn a hole through the first page and embedded itself into the others. Immediately, the teacher followed the path it came from and caught a surprised Terry, evidence in hand, gawking back at him.

"Well Terry, do you assault all of your teachers with manufactured weapons or is it just me?" he asked, crossing his arms in front of him.

"I didn't mean to." he argued, "Honest!"

"Oh, I'm sure you meant to." he retorted, holding up the wounded paper with the paperclip still in it. "I'm just glad the papers stopped it. You could've left a mark."

"I swear teach," he babbled, "I didn't mean to hit you!"

“Ok, since we are in science class, perhaps we can work this out mathematically.” he jeered. “I’m sure we have some in here that can calculate trajectory and speed.” and looked to the classmates. “Anyone know how fast a paperclip would have to travel to cause this result?”

Jeremy, being the intended target, wanted to stay out of it. But Julie was more than happy to help Mr. Bradshaw out and raised her hand.

“Go ahead Julie.” he called, “Enlighten us.”

“Forty five to fifty miles per hour.” she guessed.

“That’s on impact.” he pointed out. “Now, trajectory...” he started, “I was standing here and the papers where here...” and then looked at Terry. “Anyone see a problem with the trajectory path?” addressing the class.

“Yeah.” Dan Flanders called, “It should have beaned Urkel in the head.” raising a laugh from the students.

“So I’ve been scientifically proven wrong.” Mr. Bradshaw quipped. “Terry did not mean to shoot me with a paperclip.” and stepped to Jeremy’s desk, “He meant to shoot Jerry, uh Jeremy with it.”

The class agreed that it was most probable and Terry was sent to the principal’s office.

“Lucky you moved your head when you did son.” Mr. Bradshaw noted, and resumed his lesson.

Julie asked, *‘How did you do that? I didn’t even get a chance to warn you.’*

*‘I heard it coming.’* he replied.

*‘Oh.’* she quipped. *‘I figured that. It’s like everything is enhanced now; especially smells.’*

*‘Yep, it’s how we are communicating right now.’* he pointed out.

*‘Really; I thought the Nanonaut had telepathy or maybe some radio frequency.’* she mused.

*‘Nope, pheromones.’* he explained.

*‘Great, more biology.’* she grumbled, dismayed.

Lunchtime was always exciting to Jeremy. He had to sit with the rest of the outcasts and Julie was one of them. Steve O and his gang members never failed tossing crumbs at their table either.

It was no shock to be treated like animals but what did shock him was the blatant disregard of people caring how they act. Students, at least, had an excuse. They didn’t want to be bullied. But teachers should make an effort to intervene.

Each time he got his food tray, he wouldn’t see food. Instead, he looked at ammo for the bullies. All manner of vegetables were in that category. The worst was potatoes, the mashed ones.

Today, corn would be the ammo of choice. Grabbing his tray, he headed over to the *‘Nobody’* section and sat down across from Julie. “Looks like rain.” he greeted.

“Every time we have lunch here.” she replied.

He hovered over his food in anticipation of the rainfall and picked up his fork. He stuck it in the make-believe steak and heard a projectile headed his way. He swatted it away with one hand while cutting a piece to eat.

Julie was eating her food and swatted another one away while chewing. *‘Nice.’* she commented.

*‘Yeah, I might get to eat today.’* he replied.

Spoken too soon, three more came at him and that was one more than he had hands. The third plopped in his drink.

Reaching in with two fingers, he grabbed the corn and stood up. Stepping over the bench seat, he headed towards the culprit that threw it.

*'Where are you going?'* Julie asked, getting no response.

Stepping behind Steve O, Jeremy said, "Excuse me."

Glancing over his shoulder, Steve barked, "Get your scummy ass away from me Urkel."

"I think you dropped this." he replied, and tossed it on his plate. Turning around he started back to his seat.

"What the..." Steve exclaimed, followed by his bully buddies gasping.

"Dude, that's just wrong!" Bobby exclaimed.

"I'll get you, twat!" Steve swore, and stood up.

"Man, you going to take that?" another asked.

Noticing the attention he was getting Steve backed down. "I'll catch you later twerp!" he called, taking his seat.

Jeremy could hear him swearing and his fist pounding the table. Plans were being formed while he took back his seat and could hear them discussing the lockers.

*'What is wrong with you?'* she asked, staring at him in amazement.

*'I'm sick of the abuse and I'll deal with the consequences.'* he replied, listening to their plans changing and what they could do to make him suffer.

*'They're going to jump you after school.'* Julie sent.

*'Yeah, the hallway is too risky.'* he agreed, hearing the same plan as Julie.

## Chapter 6

That afternoon brought out all of the haters and instigators, as many of them informed the bullies where he was and where he was headed. It seemed his plans of avoiding the confrontation wasn't going to work and it was proven by the presence of Steve O, surrounded by his followers, just outside the west exit doors.

Other students, probably smelling blood, were also gathering to witness the demise of Jeremy Dodd. Some had looks of concern, while others had gleeful anticipation of the slaughter that was inevitably due to occur.

After seeing the frenzy before him, he was certainly glad he could convince Julie to keep her distance from him. However this was going to turn out, it was best she didn't witness it.

Several alerted Steve O about his presence and Steve O greeted him with a snarl. "There you are piss ant. Ready for a pounding?" he asked, emphasizing his words by pounding a fist into an open palm.

"What; I just brought your lunch back to you." he quipped with a shrug, sliding his backpack off of his shoulders. "You should be thanking me." he thought aloud, sitting his bag down.

Steve shook his head in retaliation, "Oh, I'm going to thank you with my fist to your face." and lunged at him, trying to grab hold of his shirt.

Jeremy side-stepped the bully's attempt and said, "Hold on man, you don't want to fight on school property." and avoided another grab at him.

"I don't give a shit!" Steve spat, aggravated at his opponent's elusiveness.

"I do." Jeremy argued, dodging a wildly thrown fist. "It's an automatic suspension." and dodged a straight punch to his head.

"Hold still." he demanded, and added, "Somebody grab this jerk!" and lunged at him again.

"Have to have help now?" Jeremy asked, dodging him in time to see Terry Collins approach. Recovering from his failed attempt, Steve barked, "Only because you're a coward!"

"What; I'm supposed to let you hit me?" Jeremy retorted, glancing back and forth between the two bullies.

"Pretty much." Terry sneered, and made a grab for him.

Jeremy had nowhere to go but up as Steve flanked his other side. So, with a leap, he bounded up on top of the retaining wall that followed the walkway. "That's not fair man." he chastised, squatting on top of the wall.

"Stop being a wussy then!" Steve retorted, pacing below him.

Jeremy had a choice. He could easily climb down the other side of the wall and leave his adversary fuming. But, that would mean leaving his backpack to the demise of the hoodlums. He just couldn't do without his homework. It was just too important to him.

"I'll make a deal with you." Jeremy offered, jerking his foot away from a grabbing Terry.

"Oh, this ought to be good." Steve replied suspiciously. "What kind of deal?"

“I’ll let you hit me just once.” Jeremy explained, “But then you’ll have to leave me alone the rest of the school year.”

Steve, thinking Jeremy was a fool to believe that was going to happen, replied, “Ok, come on down here then.” and motioned him down.

“Alright.” he replied, and shooed off Terry to give him room.

The small crowd backed up and Terry stepped back with a smirk on his face. Satisfied with the space he was given, Jeremy hopped down to the concrete walkway.

“Remember, just one hit.” Jeremy reminded him, straightening up from his jump.

Steve seemed concerned and said, “Ok, but Terry gets to hold you. Otherwise, you’ll just keep moving on me.”

Jeremy gave it some thought and agreed, “Ok, but I’m not letting you hit me more than once.” and relaxed submissively.

“Get him man.” Steve ordered, and Terry stepped up behind the target.

Grabbing his arms, he held them behind his back while Steve stepped forward.

“Now, where do I punch you?” Steve quipped, cracking his knuckles. “Kidney, crotch, gut...” he taunted.

“Doesn’t matter.” Jeremy retorted, “It’ll heal.”

Steve mocked him saying, “Yeah; then I better break your face.” He verbally reasoned, “That way everybody knows what happens when you mess with Steve O.” and pounded his fist in his hand.

“You messed with me first.” Jeremy pointed out, unintimidated by the bully.

“Come on, leave him alone.” a student yelled, concerned over the impending violence.

Steve blew them off, stating, “You heard him; I get one punch.” and prepared to do just that.

Several things happened at once when Steve threw his punch towards the face of the defiant nerd. Gasps from the crowd followed the balled-up fist on its path towards Jeremy’s nose. But Jeremy couldn’t fight his instincts and he dodged the threat by jerking to the left, leaving him disappointed with his lack of self-control.

Steve hit an unintended mark as the sudden movement caused Terry’s head to enter the targeted zone. Time slowed for the student witnesses as the unsuspecting victim’s eyes grew wide with the approach of knuckles.

A punch thrown with the sole purpose of breaking a peon’s face now inflicted that damage onto an ally. Steve watched the force throw Terry’s head back and smack on the retaining wall.

“Hey!” a voice called out, as Terry felt the effect similar to being caught between an irresistible force and an immovable object.

Mrs. Brown snatched up the back collar of Steve, seething, “What is wrong with you?” maneuvering the bully around to face her.

Steve’s attention went from watching his accomplice drop to the ground to the voice of authority now chastising him.

“What; I didn’t...” he mumbled, trying to think of something fast to explain his actions.

“Both of you!” the teacher started, shaking the collar of her captive, “Principal’s office right now!” she ordered, turning her attention towards the other boy shaking cob webs from his head while slumped on the ground.

“Wait; he was supposed to let me hit him!” Steve argued, struggling in her grip.

The teacher rolled her eyes. “The smartest boy in the school was just going to stand there and let you hit him?” she mocked, “Then, why was Terry holding him for you!” she demanded, shaking her head at his lie.

“So he wouldn’t move.” Steve blurted out, and tried to take those words back, “I mean...”

She didn’t seem to hear him as her attention went back to Terry, noting out loud, “Good lord, you’re bleeding bad. Come on, let’s get you to the nurse.” She stated, looking away from the now gushing, busted nose and gashed lip.

Mrs. Brown herded the two away in front of a now awe struck crowd, leaving drops of blood to trace their path. Jeremy watched them disappear behind the double doors, wondering what made him jerk away like that. He didn’t know it at the time, but it would be the last time he would ever see Steve Otto.

Several in the crowd started patting him on the back, offering their praise of his efforts. He nodded his acknowledgements and mumbled a few thank you phrases.

His backpack appeared before him, being offered by the hands of Julie. “Sorry, I couldn’t keep from being worried.” she explained.

Putting an arm through a strap, he tossed it over his shoulder. “Nothing to worry about.” he soothed, and offered to take her hand.

They walked down the pathway, passing students gawking at them while some whispered to each other. Any concerns he had faded with the comfort of Julie’s hand in his.

After spending hours in conversation with Julie, he went to bed that night with the question still on his mind. *‘What made him dodge that punch?’*

Nanonaut answered it with, *‘Reflex reaction.’*

He kept thinking that but he fully intended on taking that punch. But Nanonaut saw it a different way, *‘You dodged the other attacks in self-preservation.’*

He now had a frightening realization and asked, *‘Nanonaut, did you make me dodge that punch?’*

*‘Irrational thought process over ruled by self-preservation.’* it informed him.

That was close enough to the answer he wanted to know. *‘You are not allowed to overrule my judgment.’* he ordered, now concerned that the foreign entity had the ability to use his body at will.

*‘Irreparable damage can occur if left to flawed decisions.’* it warned.

He shook his head in defiance, demanding, *‘It is my decision to make and nothing else; got it?’*

*‘Neuro-transmitter epinephrine overwritten by host self-regulation.’* it replied, consenting to his demands.

On second thought, he added, *‘Unless I say otherwise.’*

Confirming the orders, Jeremy was satisfied that he had nipped a growing problem in the bud. He didn’t need to be controlled by a micro-robot. But still, that ability could be useful when necessary.

He made a mental note to warn Julie of the nanobot’s capability and fell asleep. His thoughts became murky and filled with images of Julie. Reality turned fantasy and wishful thinking led to an erotic dream of his revealing Julie’s assets.

But that changed to one of curiosity as the images developed a green hue. Then, the glow of her breasts of the same color made the surreal vision seem ghost-like. Added to the mystery was the appearance of a meadow with water running through a brook at the edge. Tiny pin points of green sparkled behind his vision of Julie as light reflected from the flowing water.

His crotch tightened from a sound he could not hear as the stream of water trickled down its path. It was enough to jar him awake, if only his body for the moment. Blinking the dream away,

he sat up to adjust to reality once more. The sensation to urinate drew his attention and he opened his eyes to a shocking sight.

The glow had invaded his reality and he could see his room in eerie detail. Blinking wasn't enough and he rubbed his eyes, hoping the dream would disappear.

But his efforts were futile and he resorted to his co-inhabitant for information. *'Nanonaut, what is wrong with my vision?'* he asked, now a bit concerned.

*'Currently, your optical receptors lack the ultra violet spectrum.'* it started. *'Estimated completion of pigmentation may occur within twenty-four hours.'*

*'No, I'm talking about my vision right now. Everything has a glow.'* he explained, *'And, ultra violet what?'*

*'Currently, you are experiencing night vision. Chlorin e6 and dimethyl sulfoxide has been developed and added to insulin to maximize vision during nocturnal periods.'* it explained, *'The ultra violet spectrum enables heat signatures to be visible.'*

*'But I didn't ask for any of that.'* Jeremy argued, standing up to go use the restroom.

*'It is a biological flaw that is being corrected.'* Nanonaut pointed out.

*'But why?'* he asked, *'I don't need it, do I?'* and headed out of the room.

*'Need is irrelevant.'* Nanonaut claimed, *'It is a biological flaw and nanobots are programmed to repair flaws.'*

*'Great.'* he thought, *'What other flaws have you repaired?'* he asked, maneuvering an erection through the slit in his pajamas.

*'Nasal sensory glands, protein molecules for increased extracellular, cytoplasmic, and nuclear receptors...'* it rattled off.

*'Ok,'* he interrupted, *'I just want to know before you make a change in something I am going to take notice of.'* and shook his manhood to finish his deposit. *'Like, you know, seeing in the dark.'* and put his goods away.

*'Parameter set.'* it agreed, *'Altered skin tone will be a noticeable change.'* it offered.

*'What does that mean?'* he asked, heading back to the bedroom.

*'The epidermis absorbs radiation from the sun,'* it tutored, *'altered tone pigmentation with melanin decreases risk of skin cancer.'*

*'Yeah.'* he smirked, *'But what color will I be?'* he asked, climbing back into bed.

*'Melanin will darken pigmentation.'* it claimed, *'It would be the same effect as what you call a tan.'*

*'Alright,'* he agreed, *'I can live with that.'* and pulled the covers over him. *'Are you going to give me a six pack?'*

*'Nanobots repair damage.'* it stated, *'Body building causes tears to muscles intentionally,'* and summarized, *'only you can build muscles.'*

*'I get it,'* he mumbled, *'I tear them and you repair them.'* and rolled over on his side, *'Wake me up in time to do some pushups.'* not expecting a response.

*'Biological clock re-adjusted.'* it acknowledged.

*'Whatever.'* he replied; and closed his eyes, succumbing to the onset of sleep.

The next morning, he had some difficulty working muscles that weren't used to being worked. Awkward in keeping himself even, his coordination improved the more pushups he did. Eventually, he gained his rhythm and was pumping at a good pace.

As his muscles tightened and started aching, the nanobots repaired the damage. He could work out through the short time of discomfort he experienced while the repairs were made. He quit at a hundred and twenty, not from being tired, but just from being bored.

So, he switched to sit ups. The same occurred as the nanobots repaired his abdominal muscles while he tore them. After completing a hundred and twenty, he gave up attempting to defeat the nanobots and readied for school. After all, he didn't know anything about working out and made a note to learn more about it.

Stepping onto school property gave him a quick reminder of yesterday. People were still looking at him and whispering. Frankie Burrows looked up from his mobile device when he approached.

"Did you hear what happened to Steve O?" he asked, stepping up to match his pace.

Jeremy shrugged, "Nope; haven't heard anything yet." he admitted, "I just got here."

"They kicked him out man." he excitedly proclaimed.

"Expelled?" he asked, struck by such a harsh penalty.

"Yep; no more Steve O." Frankie assured him, "Terry is down for the count too." he confessed, struggling to keep up with Jeremy.

He stopped in his tracks, causing Frankie to run into him. Jeremy was quick enough to catch the phone he had knocked out of Frankie's hands, "Wow, I was hoping he would be o.k." he admitted, handing the phone back to him.

"Uh, thanks." he replied, puzzled at Jeremy's quickness. "Terry got suspended." he explained, "Good thing too because he's going to need that time to fix a broken nose." and couldn't hold back a laugh.

Turning around to continue his path to his locker, Jeremy confessed, "I really didn't mean for that to happen."

Frankie gasped at that, "Are you crazy?" he exclaimed, "They both got what they deserved man." he argued, stepping ahead to open one of the double doors.

"I guess you're right." he relented, adding, "It wasn't my fault; they started it."

"Exactly." Frankie agreed, "And, good riddance to rotten garbage." he growled.

Jeremy guessed Frankie was one of Steve's many victims. At least he made someone happy about it. Nodding his head, he said, "He sure was a pain in my side."

"Back, arms, sides, rear..." Freddie mused, "He was a pain everywhere."

Julie messaged him with, *'Are you here yet?'*

*'Yeah, almost at the lockers.'* he replied.

*'There's been a change in attitudes around here.'* she noted.

*'Is that for the good or the bad?'* he asked, arriving at his locker. There were going to be consequences, he was sure.

*'The good I think.'* she began, *'I haven't been teased once since I got here.'*

*'Come to think of it, neither have I.'* he realized, preparing for his first three classes. *'I have seen a lot of them gawking and whispering though.'* he noted.

*'Ha!'* she retorted, *'They're all wondering how you managed to dodge all of those punches and then, climbed that wall so fast.'*

*'Fight or flight; self-preservation.'* he explained, *'Or at least, that's what Nanonaut said. It actually made me dodge that last one. I had to stop it from doing that again. Overriding my decisions is not good.'* That quickly reminded him, *'By the way, don't freak out but, you might start seeing in the dark tonight.'*

She responded with, *'Seriously?'*

*'Yeah,'* he assured her, *'and I think seeing UV light is next.'* he advised, and gathered his next three classes' work.

*'No, I mean about turning off your survival instinct!' she corrected, 'You're an idiot for turning off that,' and added, 'but seeing in the dark would be cool.'*

*'But he was able to control me,' he defended, 'doesn't that scare you a little?'* and closed his locker door.

*'Uh, not really.'* she replied, *'Say, my Nanonaut is a she. I renamed her Lucy; you know, after the first human woman.'*

*'You named it?'* he asked, incredulously.

*'It's not an 'it', it's a she.'* she asserted. *'And, you named yours Nanonaut.'* she pointed out.

The argument was a losing one for him. Never mind that the entity was an object and he named it as such. If she wanted to name it like a pet, he guessed he had no say in it.

*'Ok, she.'* he relented, *'But my dad said they are supposed to die off so you're naming something you might not get to keep.'* he added, hoping she would understand that she could lose something she was growing attached to.

*'That's not nice.'* she retaliated, *'She can hear you; take that back.'*

He literally rolled his eyes. *'It doesn't have intelligence; it's using yours.'* he explained, taking his seat in home room.

*'Then it isn't nice to me.'* she argued.

He rubbed his temple and let out a sigh, *'Ok, then I'm sorry I said that. She will probably live as long as you do.'* he soothed; not believing his own words.

A wad of paper headed for his head and he was just alert enough to dodge it.

Dan Flanders, sitting behind him, said, "You better not touch him. He's the teacher's pet."

Bobby Frank replied, "Oh, you're right; don't want to get kicked out of school." and directed his comments at Jeremy, "Sorry about that buddy. Please don't rat me out."

And so, the consequences started. He didn't reply to them but addressed Nanonaut instead, *'Tell those two clowns behind me to slap each other.'* and let out a frustrated sigh.

*'I cannot make them.'* it replied.

*'Didn't think so.'* he thought with a frown.

*'But I can make a suggestion.'* the nanobot admitted.

Before he could think of what that might mean, a slap sounded out behind him. He turned around to see Dan return the slap to Bobby. Both were standing up in defensive stances.

Chaos ensued after that as Dan asked, "Why did you do that?"

Bobby, shocked at the baffling situation, replied, "I don't know. I just got an urge to do it."

Dan, with the look like he could kill, retaliated with, "Well so did I; but I didn't!"

*'Yes you did!'* Bobby argued, rubbing his cheek in remembrance.

"That's because you hit me first!" Dan countered.

But neither had time to resolve it as Mrs. Brown stepped into the class. "Settle down!" she bellowed, while heading for her desk.

*'What happened?'* Julie wanted to know.

*'I don't know.'* he replied, turning back around to face the teacher, *'I had Nanonaut tell them to slap each other and the next thing I know, they did.'*

*'You did that?'* she asked, *'But how?'*

*'I don't know.'* he repeated, *'I have to talk to Nanonaut about it.'*

*'Well figure it out,'* she demanded, *'and let me know.'*

The conversation he had with the nanobot was straight out of a sci-fi book. Apparently, he was considered a king among men because the nanobots had given him the capability to utilize

pheromones. The rest, except for Julie, were mere drones as they could receive pheromone instructions but could not send pheromone instructions.

In fact, the only thing that stopped the human drones from executing any thought Jeremy could suggest was the level of the human drone's sheer will power. Hence, one resisted the urge to slap his classmate while the other did not.

Jeremy wasn't so sure of possessing such a gift and asked if he was able to turn that off. Nanonaut explained that it was a human flaw, much like his eyesight, and it was just a correction in the human genome. He made a note to be careful about using it, as it would be a trait without a kill switch.

Next was the experimental phase. He thought of some harmless ideas that would not have an impact like the last one. So, he suggested that the teacher scratch her left shoulder.

Unconsciously, she did just that. Thinking it might just be a coincidence, he suggested that her nose itched and needed scratched. Using the back of her hand, she gave it a few brisk rubs. It was enough to convince him that the ability was indeed working as Nanonaut explained.

Looking over at Kathy Ferguson, he had a ping of regret. The incident yesterday had left her with a banished boyfriend. She was probably devastated over the outcome and wondered how she was feeling.

Nanonaut was happy to tell him, *'Drone Kathy is not emitting any emotions at this time.'*

*'Can we not call them drones?'* he asked, a little perturbed at the classification.

*'Acknowledged.'* it replied, *'The human known as Kathy is not emitting any emotional signals.'*

Thinking she would be as good of a test subject as any other, he thought, *'Please let me know when she does.'*

*'So, what did you find out?'* Julie asked, interrupting his train of thought.

*'Apparently, I'm a king and you're a queen and the rest of the mere humans are just drones.'* he replied, facetiously.

*'You mean, like bees or ants?'* she asked.

*'Look at you with your biology skills.'* he teased, *'But seriously, you will be able to detect what mood people are in and you can make suggestions which they can resist through will power.'*

*'Too cool.'* she mused, *'This is going to be fun.'*

He could just imagine the wild suggestions she could come up with, ending with people being carted off to the loony bin. *'Don't do anything crazy that'll cause them to think they are crazy.'* he advised.

*'Oh, right'* she agreed, *'that could be bad.'*

He felt better now that she understood the impact of using the capability. But, he was unsure of how to use it with minimal side effects himself. He decided more practice was needed to master this new ability.

*'So how do you make them do things?'* she asked.

*'I don't know if you're able to yet.'* he replied, *'I'm a day ahead of you,'* and conceded, *'but just ask Nanonaut to make a suggestion to them.'*

*'Lucy.'* she corrected.

He spent the rest of the class practicing on his fellow students until Kathy was given the instruction to scratch her breast. She started to but stopped herself.

Thinking he'd reached the limit of his ability, he tried one more time to make the suggestion. This time she leaned over, her arm across the desk, and he suspected she actually had

accepted the suggestion. Perhaps it was a social barrier that held her back, not wanting to do such an act out in the open, afraid of getting caught.

Perhaps he should leave his demented fantasies out of the suggestion box. His fear was the consequences. If he made everyone strip, it would be him they'd suspect since he was the only one left clothed, he reasoned.

*'Nanonaut, please suggest to everyone in the room to smile.'* he asked, chasing his guilt away.

As students unconsciously smiled, the bell rang. Several of the males got up and flocked to Julie, asking the most unusual questions like, *'How's it going?'* and *'You doing alright?'* One even held the door open for her, letting her be the first one to leave. Even the teacher wished her a good day.

*'What's going on?'* he asked, baffled at the change in the homeroom class.

*'What? Oh, they're making sure their queen is doing ok.'* she explained, walking in the middle of a protective circle of students.

So, while he was goofing off, making people scratch their butts and boobs, she was creating a shield of protection with her abilities. He didn't know if he should be mad at her for taking advantage of the others or kicking himself for not thinking of it himself. The revelation of her manipulations left him speechless.

He walked beside Kathy who seemed content to be in solitude. Normally, she would be surrounded by other cheerleaders with Steve accompanying her to the next class. Remembering the drama he was part of, he offered her his condolences with, "Hey Kathy, sorry about Steve."

Startled from her thoughts, she barked, "Go away dweeb." and marched at a rapid pace ahead of him.

*'She should apologize to me,'* he thought, *'that's no way to treat somebody.'*

Shortly, she turned around and confronted him. "Look, that wasn't nice." she confessed, "Sorry about that." she relented.

"It's ok, I'm used to it by now." he replied, letting her off the hook.

"Well," she suggested, "maybe you shouldn't be." and left him standing in the hallway.

He watched her disappear in the crowd of students migrating to their next class. Seeing the amount of people gave him an idea. With a suggestion, the sea of people parted, giving him room to walk to his next class without having to dodge and maneuver around self-absorbed people interested in their own social activity or destinations.

They seemed to take it quite well; as if the subconscious suggestion was quite natural. They just stepped to the side without even breaking their conversations. Even Dan and Bobby, still arguing over the mysterious events from home room, stepped aside, and let him pass without harassing him.

He met up with Julie in science class, guarded by Sam and Greg it seemed, as they had changed seats and now flanked her on either side.

*'Am I supposed to be jealous?'* he asked, taking his seat.

*'Of what?'* she asked, innocently.

*'Of your groupies.'* he pointed out.

*'Oh, they're just making sure I'm ok.'* she assured him.

*'Uh huh, looks like a great idea.'* he mused. *'Think I'll get a few girls to hang with me.'* he relayed, adding, *'You know, just to make sure I'm ok.'*

*'Girls,'* she quipped, *'don't you mean guys?'*

*'If guys can protect you, then girls can protect me.'* he rationalized.

*'Ok, fine.'* she answered.

If there was one thing the communication method lacked, it was the transmission of emotion. So, he didn't know if she really meant it was fine or if it was some sort of challenge that would result in those consequences he was leery of. Taking her for her word, he summoned the first two girls he saw glancing his way.

Nanonaut explained that he couldn't ask them for protection on its own merit. The use of maternal instincts was the form factor of communal concern in the female gender. Self-preservation was then overruled by successful continuance of the species. The method was a general transmittal of pheromones.

*'Ok, so use maternal instincts then.'* he thought, not fully understanding the method explained to him. He certainly didn't want girls putting themselves in harm's way to protect him anyway. He was just trying to make Julie jealous.

*'There will be a noticeable difference to the host.'* it warned.

Thinking that it was a nice change to finally get a warning about noticeable alterations, he urged the bionic microbe to, *'Go ahead.'*

## Chapter 7

It became obvious right away that a change had taken place. Tiffany swung around in her seat, looking around for whatever had intrigued her senses. Her eyes locked onto his and a smile crossed her face. Angie also looked at him and licked her lips. Danielle tapped his shoulder from behind him and he turned around to see a shy expression on her face.

“Hey Jeremy.” she asked in a whisper, “Can you help me with the homework in this class?” and batted her eyes at him.

“Uh, umm...” he stuttered, not sure how to answer that. She was no perfect ‘A’ student but she did alright in science.

But Leslie called his attention with, “Ahem.” and blew him a kiss when he looked.

Things were getting weird. By the time the class bell rang, every girl crowded around him as he tried to exit the room with Julie. Between her body guards and his gathering, the group bottlenecked at the door. He used his ability to make a path but it didn’t prevent them from following and catching up with them.

‘*What is going on?*’ Julie asked, getting boxed in from the crowd filing into the hallway.

‘*I think I triggered the wrong thing.*’ he admitted, swatting his hand behind him to keep from being groped. After several gropes, he was starting to get annoyed.

‘*What does that mean; wrong thing?*’ she asked, dodging girls making a bee-line toward Jeremy.

‘*I don’t really know.*’ he confessed, ‘*I turned on some maternal instincts I thought.*’

‘*And you’re the school genius?*’ she snarled, trying to shield Jeremy from the estrogen parade.

‘*I swear, it’s supposed to be like motherly protection.*’ he contended, trying not to look at the cleavage being thrust in his face.

‘*Just how do they get to be mothers?*’ she asked rhetorically, eyeing one of the despised cheerleaders in her life trying to rub up against him.

He didn’t even bother answering that and opted to turn off whatever pheromone signals he was emitting instead. ‘*Nanonaut, please stop whatever that motherly instincts ability is.*’

‘*Unable to comply.*’ it responded.

‘*That’s not going to work; it needs turned off.*’ he argued, swatting a hand way from his rear.

‘*The ability is innate.*’ it explained, ‘*I can suppress emittance but it is an inherent ability.*’

‘*Ok, that beats nothing I guess.*’ he asked, entering his next class.

The teacher looked at him and licked her lips with a lustful gleam in her eyes.

‘*Yeah, go ahead and suppress that right now!*’ he pleaded, hustling to his desk to veer clear of Mrs. Perkins’ gaze.

‘*Radius diminished,*’ Nanonaut informed, ‘*now at one meter.*’

Too many questions regarding the event came to mind. ‘*Ok, how far did it reach before?*’ he asked, slumping in his seat.

*'Your radius of influence was largely contained within the current structure you reside in.'* it replied, *'Some pheromone signals left the enclosure when doors were opened and currently exist externally.'*

*'And a meter is a little over three feet.'* he thought, now regretting his decision to activate the ability in the first place. *'It affects every female, even if they're married?'* he asked.

*'It affects females seeking sexual gratification, females with offspring, and females seeking procreation of healthy offspring.'* it explained.

*'Wait, I do not want it to affect my mother.'* he protested, opening up his math book.

*'Your biological parent is already affected.'* it insisted.

*'Since when?'* he demanded, now concerned that his mother would view him in a sexual manner.

*'Since her embryotic conception of you.'* it replied.

*'You mean since I was born?'* he asked, wondering what it was going on about.

*'Since her impregnation.'* it corrected, *'Biological changes occur in females during pregnancy. These changes alter behavior towards a protective, nourishing role.'*

*'That is exactly what I wanted you to do to just two girls.'* he pointed out, *'Instead, you got the whole school trying to rape me.'*

*'Maternal instincts require motherhood.'* it reaffirmed, *'Activating this hormone encourages mating within the species with a suitable partner to instigate the maternal instincts you requested.'* It further noted, *'Your physical flaws have been corrected and you're highly desirable among the females of your species.'*

*'But I don't want to mate with every girl in the school.'* he retorted, accepting a test being distributed among the students.

*'Acknowledged flaw.'* it replied; *'Search in progress for this flaw; will attempt repairs.'*

The consequences were stacking up. *'No, I wasn't being clear.'* he corrected, *'I mean, I can't help but want to... mate with every girl.'* he explained, shifting in his seat from the awkward conversation in his head. *'But I am not looking for commitment with every girl. I just want to commit to one girl.'*

*'You are a male in your species.'* the nanobot debated, *'It is in your biological programming to mate with any viable female to continue your species' survival.'*

It must have thought he was some kind of an animal, which, technically, he was. But it wasn't considering his intelligence that makes him unique among animals. *'Humans have evolved and do not mate like animals.'* he conveyed. *'We decide if and when to mate.'*

*'It is still a part of your genetic code.'* it argued.

He actually nodded in agreement with the voice in his head. *'Yes, but we choose to ignore the urges to mate.'* he explained, *'The difference between human and animal is choice.'*

*'Choice is futile.'* it claimed, *'Both genders are compelled by nature to reproduce.'*

*'But humans choose to mate with certain humans, not all of them, because it prevents negative emotions.'* he countered, answering the questions on the math quiz.

*'Then the flaw lies in the emotional response to mating.'* the bionic microorganism concluded.

He snapped his head up with that profound statement. *'No, even if it is a flaw, I do not want it corrected, understand?'* he admonished, now worried that the parasite would decide to alter his emotional behavior.

"Jeremy, want to hang out after school?" Valerie asked in a whisper, distracting him from his internal conversation.

He glanced to his left and shrugged, not knowing what to say, but was tapped on the back of his shoulder by Kathy, passing him a note under his arm.

*'Did you get that fixed?'* Julie messaged.

*'I'm working on it.'* he replied, tucking the note under his hip.

*'You better,'* she warned, *'or you'll see the Chippendales carrying me to class.'*

Completing his test, he flipped it over and sat his pencil down. *'Nanonaut, remind Valerie that her boyfriend, Brad, wouldn't like inviting me to hang out with her.'* he thought, knowing he met her at the bike rack every single day.

A few seconds later, Valerie whispered, "I just remembered, not today, maybe later."

He looked at her and nodded that he heard her with a smile. It wasn't her fault she was on the verge of being unfaithful; he was emitting hormone signals at super human levels.

Looking down, he opened the note to find Kathy's phone number on it with the invitation to call her after school. Folding it up, he managed to sneak it into his pocket. Somehow, he needed to get the word out that he was dating Julie.

*'Nanonaut, send a message to anyone within a meter of me that I am dating Julie.'* he thought, thinking that would deter girls since they have a better moral belief that cheating is wrong when some guys do not.

*'Human females have a flaw in their concept of procreation. Advising one of another mate may deter their desire to procreate with the host.'* it warned, *'The pheromone transmittal will greatly reduce your potential to mate with others of your species.'*

*'Perfect.'* he thought, *'We are a monogamous species after all.'* he explained, and smiled when the bot acknowledged his demand.

Julie was glad to hear about his solution. She especially liked the idea of transmitting her claim on him, comparing it to marking her territory. *'Great, another canine reference.'* he conveyed.

The hallway would be the trial test and he stepped out into the crowded corridor. Although he could tell that the girls were eyeing him over, they didn't approach him with lewd remarks or touch him inappropriately. That is, until he got smacked on his rear.

*'Whoa!'* he exclaimed, turning around to see his assailant. *'Excuse me Anita...'* he started, and mentally asked Nanonaut if it had stopped transmitting his message.

The bot replied, *'This female is detecting your message but does not have the flaw most of them have.'*

"Rumor has it that you're dating that walking calculator Julie." she quipped, stepping in front of him.

"Yes I am." he agreed, "I've got to get to class..." he dodged, trying to sidestep around her.

She kept him in place and said, "You need to dump that dweeb." and stepped closer to him, "I've got something she don't have." locking her eyes on his.

Without thinking, he asked, "Yeah; like what?"

"These." she replied, and pulled her top out by the neck and wiggled her breasts at him.

The globes swayed in front of his eyes before he had a chance to look away. "Those are nice but I'm still seeing Julie." he avowed, thrusting a hand in front of her chest.

"You want brains or boobs?" she asked, "And you know boobs are more fun." she claimed, grabbing his hand and placing it on a breast.

He snatched his hand away, surprised at her boldness. "We are in school!" he protested, giving the redhead an angry stare.

"After school, then." she retorted, and walked away before he could answer.

Scratching his head, he wondered what it would take to get her off of him. Heading for his next class, he tried to figure out what to tell Julie since his solution wasn't a perfect one.

Entering gym class, he was greeted by the coach with, "The one student that can make two of my best players, a quarterback and runner, vanish." and added, "You have any ideas on who can replace them?"

"Coach Garrard, you know I didn't mean to get them in trouble." he defended, not in the mood to hear a lecture about yesterday's fiasco.

"I know." he grumbled, "It still leaves the team in a bind." and wiped his forehead from worry.

"I could maybe fill in for Terry." he offered, but admitted, "But I don't know how to throw a football."

The coach rolled his eyes stating, "Yeah right, I don't think you can catch one either."

He shrugged his shoulders and said, "I guess I could try."

The coach smiled and said, "Whelp, you're in luck." and addressed the class. "We're outside today so head on out to the field." grabbing a fishnet bag full of balls.

Jeremy waved at Julie at the end of the basketball court messaging her, '*Hey there, we're heading outside.*'

'*Don't get molested out there.*' she sent, an obvious smirk on her face.

'*Now who's jealous?*' he sent, '*Let's call it like it is, a mistake, and forget it.*'

'*Yeah, we girls forget all the time.*' she replied, shooting a basketball through the hoop.

He didn't answer, more because it was the first time she'd done any activity in gym class than anything else.

The field was at least dry. He'd been out in it after it had rained and had no fondness of mud or poor traction. Of course, it didn't help when his classmates kept pushing him into the mud puddles either. But, with two of the bullies gone, gym class might not be so unpleasant any more.

"Alright, we're going to send and receive." the coach explained, "Girls are with me, boys are down the field." and dropped the bag on the fifty yard line.

Jeremy suspected this new exercise was the direct result of his actions yesterday. The coach was going to run them ragged, chasing the bouncing balls the whole period, just because he lost two of his players. Well, that would be fine with him since he was convinced that the nanobots would help him keep up with whatever was thrown his way.

To his surprise, the girls weren't going to be tossing the ball. Instead, the coach put out a tee and stood a ball on it. Standing up, the coach warned, "Alright guys, get ready." and nodded to the first girl in line.

The boys around Jeremy started heckling the kicker with, "Miss it!" and "Don't kick yourself!"

While they yelled across the field, Jeremy prepared himself, wanting to be the one to catch the punt. Being good in English class didn't mean you'd be good as a kicker because the ball shot off to the right, bouncing off of the fence and then settling on the sideline.

He relaxed his stance and saw the coach direct Lexi to get the ball she'd kicked off of the field and then placed another one on the tee. Next in line was Kathy, the pride of the cheerleader squad. With any luck, she might do better than the last one. But she did have the drama of her boyfriend getting kicked out of school to deal with. With that in mind, he readied himself thinking it was a fifty-fifty shot either way.

But she put any worries to rest when she ran at the ball and gave it a solid kick, making it fly into the air and headed for the awaiting receivers. The small group of boys backed up along with

Jeremy in anticipation of the oncoming missile but it wouldn't be enough. The cheerleader had kicked it over their heads.

Jeremy turned and chased after it, looking over his shoulder for his target's flightpath. The others had apparently given up on it and stood watching Jeremy sprint down the field. But the ball, wobbling in the air, had already peaked at its arc and was rapidly descending towards the ground. He was too far to the left of it and had to dive to the right, twisting in the air to face the pig skinned ball.

Reaching out, Jeremy grabbed the ball and pulled it to his chest just before he hit the ground and skidded to a halt. The impact jarred him and he feared it would knock the prize out of his hands. Looking down, he was thankful to see it was still there. Sitting up, he tossed the ball in the air and caught it.

Now full of confidence, Jeremy walked back to the group of male classmates. The sound of celebration came across the field as the girls were congratulating Kathy on her awesome punt. Frankie congratulated him on his catch while the other guys seemed to be unimpressed.

While he was reminiscing with Frankie over his achievement, the coach interrupted the conversation by yelling, "Throw it back to me!"

Jeremy looked at the ball and then at the coach, seemingly a mile away. With a shrug, he threw the missile the best he could. The best he could wasn't very good as the ball flipped over a few times in the air and bounced on the ground not even ten feet away. While his mind was calculating thrust and velocity, giving him all the information he needed to get the ball to his teacher, his application of that knowledge amounted to a toddler's effort.

That got the group's attention as well as the girl's and brought forth the laughter and taunting he was used to. Agitated over the embarrassment, he responded with, "What do you expect? I've never thrown one before!"

Whatever pheromones his rebuke put out silenced his critics. But surprisingly, Dan Flanders stepped up to him, offering some help with the problem.

"You have to use the threads." he explained, motioning for the ball.

Bobby tossed it to him and he gripped it with his fingers over the leather laces. Letting Jeremy take a close look at how it was to be held, he tossed it back to the coach.

"Now that; I can use." Jeremy said, watching the ball spin gracefully towards the coach.

The rest of the period was spent kicking the ball one way and throwing it back the other. Jeremy improved on his throw while the rest worked on catching the ball. Some balls were sliced one way or another, but many of them bounced or soared in their direction. Jeremy found competition with his group as they attempted to catch the wild balls bombarding them.

Even with his competitors vying for the ball, Jeremy managed to catch his fair share. That was due in part to his ability to control them from pushing him out of the way. His throws improved as well and even Dan was impressed when he finally threw one good enough for the coach to catch it.

Heading into the locker room, he was anxious to get the dirt, sweat, and grime off of him. With the ability to keep his classmates from popping him with a towel or throwing cold water on him, he enjoyed the shower for the first time at school.

Stepping out of the shower, he bumped right into Kyle Bunnings, the only male on the cheerleading squad, causing Jeremy to lose the grip on the towel he had around his waist.

"Oops; excuse me!" Kyle exclaimed, watching the towel slide across the floor.

"That was unexpected." Jeremy replied, bending down and practically duck walking after the makeshift garment.

“Yep, it sure was.” Kyle replied, watching the naked classmate fetch his towel. “Hope I didn’t hurt you.”

“Nope, I’m good.” Jeremy replied, standing up with his towel in hand.

“Yes you are.” Kyle agreed, looking over the naked geek before him.

The look he got made Jeremy uneasy, thinking, ‘*Why is he looking at me like that?*’ and wrapped the towel back around him.

‘*He sees you as a potential mate.*’ Nanonaut replied.

‘*Oh heck no!*’ he rebuked, a look of disgust crossing his face. ‘*Get him to leave me alone.*’

“What’s the matter?” Kyle asked, “I hurt you didn’t I?” stepping up to him.

“No not really.” Jeremy assured him, and held up a hand as Kyle tried to close in to get a better look.

Sensing Jeremy’s uneasiness and the nanobot’s warning of physical conflict, Kyle backed away, stating, “Wow, you look so much better without those glasses.” and left the shower room.

With Kyle’s advances, Jeremy added a new command to his emanations, ‘*Suggest to anyone like Kyle that I do not prefer males.*’

‘*Acknowledged.*’ the bio bot replied, ‘*The transmittal does not deter them from trying to change your mind.*’

‘*And that is not going to happen either.*’ he assured his mental parasite.

The coach called him over on his way out of the gym and told him to go to the tryouts after school, stating, “You at least made an effort to catch the kicks.”

But Jeremy could tell that Coach Garrard was impressed with him. He felt pretty good about his chances and wondered how his parents would feel if he actually made the cut. Maybe with the help of Nanonaut, he could convince them to let him play.

He sat in English class, listening to the instructions of Miss Bordeaux, thinking about being a football star. As she outlined the test they were to take on grammar, he was contemplating his chances of making the football team.

He completed his test in record time and waited for the rest of the class to catch up. In the meantime, his thoughts focused on the youngest teacher in the school and wondered why a citizen of France would change their allegiance to a different country.

As he was thinking of several reasons, something happened with his vision and he had to blink a few times while shaking his head. Looking again at his teacher, his only thought was to ask Nanonaut, ‘*Why am I seeing through Miss Bordeaux’s clothes?*’

‘*Your binocular vision has been improved.*’ it informed him.

After studying the breasts of the college graduate turned teacher for a few seconds, he asked, ‘*How am I looking through her clothes?*’ seeing her blouse and bra as a ghostly image over them.

Once again, Nanonaut stated, ‘*Your binocular vision has improved.*’

Dragging his attention from the breasts in front of him, he concentrated on the parasite. ‘*I heard you, but I don’t know how it works.*’

‘*You are now able to see past insignificant obstacles much better.*’ it explained, ‘*Clothing is not solid; you are seeing through the spaces between the materials.*’

‘*That is incredible!*’ he thought, contemplating its usefulness and its consequences. ‘*Kind of like seeing a thin veil instead of clothes; I can’t see past skin though.*’ he noted, now studying the teacher with his primitive x-ray vision.

‘*You are somewhat limited.*’ the nanobot agreed, ‘*You can only see what light can pass through.*’

*'Light doesn't travel through clothes does it?'* he thought, studying the shape of the areolas before him.

*'It is the same vision you see when material is close to your eyes.'* Nanonaut pointed out, *'The improvement in your vision allows you to have the same results from a greater distance.'*

With that information, he pulled out the collar of his tee shirt and lifted it over his eyes. Not only could he make out everything, but almost every detail, as if seeing through a screen door.

"What are you doing Jeremy?" Miss Bordeaux asked, causing him to release the collar, letting it snap back around his neck.

"Um, an experiment." he answered, trying to focus on her eyes instead of her chest.

"Are you done with your exam?" she asked, now studying him closely.

"Yes Ma'am." he replied, lifting his paperwork to show her.

"Well then, you can help me with some work in the storage room." she decided, standing up.

It was a mess; remnants of projects and forgotten items left behind by students that transferred or otherwise just forgot about them. Holiday items, including a miniature Christmas tree, were crammed into cubby holes and corners.

"The goal is to box up everything that won't be used next year." she explained, eyeing the shelves of clutter. "And, not throw something away I'm going to need." she added, as if it was a memory of a past mistake. Reaching up to a higher shelf, she started rifling through the junk on it.

He couldn't help noticing the thong she wore as it disappeared between her legs. The perfect vee-shaped material seemed to point to a treasure hidden in the crack separating her perfect globes. The effect of her aroma and assault on his eyes affected him and his manhood twitched.

"You've got a busy year." she mused, tossing useless items over her shoulder. "You're graduating soon..." she thought aloud, "College to think about..." holding several pieces of soiled paper between finger and thumb, "Oh, and your birthday is coming up." she finished, dropping her collection of waste into a trash can.

"Yeah." he agreed, concentrating on the path her panties took. Nanonaut was correct about the light because he couldn't see anything in the darkness of her sex.

"Eighteen isn't it?" she asked, handing him some Halloween decorations.

"Eighteen what?" he asked, inches away from her breasts.

"Years old." she replied, giving him a puzzled look.

"Oh, yeah." he said, taking her offering.

She turned back to the shelves and continued the conversation. "A man you are now." she noted, "Ready to see the world." and stepped on the bottom shelf. "Sow your oats." she continued, pulling herself up to reach the top shelf.

She hadn't been blessed with great height but she probably didn't have to rely on it much. With a figure like that, she most likely had people more than willing to lend her a helping hand, he thought. *'Sow my oats?'* he thought, taking him from his assumptions.

"Have you found someone yet?" she asked, pulling at a box with one hand while holding on with the other.

"Someone?" he asked, scanning from knee-high socks to naked skin to nether regions under her skirt.

"To share your seed with darling." she explained, "Box coming!" she warned, letting it slide off of the edge.

Fortunately, he was dexterous enough to grab the box even as her words struck home. He sat it down and said, "I think I've found someone." raising up to meet her buttocks.

“So no intimacy yet?” she asked, busily grouping loose items together.

“Uh, no ma’am.” he admitted, turning red from the question. The close proximity had elevated sexual tensions between them and he was mentally and physically affected.

Handing him notebook paper and folders, she suggested, “You may want to seek the help of an experienced woman.” and shifted closer to him from above. “So you know what to do when the time comes.”

He hadn’t stuttered in ages but that record was broken with, “I... I really... I really don’t know... anyone like that.” and received a butt bump on his nose. His senses was going crazy with the smell of her sex going in his lungs and shooting straight to his crotch.

“Perhaps you know an attractive teacher willing to teach you in the art of love?” she offered, taking a side-step to get to the other side.

Before he could respond, her foot slipped off of the shelf and she lost her grip, causing her to fall towards the hardwood floor. Instincts kicked in and Jeremy caught her with one hand wrapped around her back and clutching a breast, while the other went up her skirt, between her legs with her sex resting on his forearm.

A squeal came out as her arms went flailing around trying to catch her fall on the floor, but left dangling in the air.

“I got you.” he assured her, feeling the heat of her sex as it moistened his arm.

An arm wrapped around his neck for support and she turned her head to look at him in amazement. He lowered her legs to the ground while pulling her body up, letting her get her footing. His arm slid out from between her legs and his hand ran through her sex lips, leaving the cloth wedged between them.

“Thank you.” she sighed, as his other hand released her, scraping a hardened nipple between his fingers.

She turned around to face him saying, “That was a close one!”

“I’m sorry I had to grab you like that.” he apologized, noticing the breast he grabbed her by had slipped out of the thin bra cup. Seeing through clothes was going to take some getting used to and he quickly looked up to her eyes.

“Oh, I don’t mind. It saved me a bruise or two.” she feigned, reaching into her blouse and grabbing the escaped breast.

He looked up to the ceiling, trying to give her some privacy but she wouldn’t let him. “Look at me now, I am out of sort.” causing him to instinctively look down.

She had deliberately pulled the blouse to the side and her nipple was pointing at him. “Oh, god, I’m sorry.” he begged, snapping his head back up to look at the plaster on the ceiling.

“Was it that bad to look at?” she taunted, “Or have you not seen one before?”

“It’s very nice.” he admitted, darting his eyes all over the ceiling, adding, “But I haven’t looked at any.” defending himself against any accusations.

“That is a shame,” she mused, “not having the enjoyment of a girl’s charms.” bringing her hand up to cup his face. “But I can fix that,” she quipped, leaning closer in and grabbing his manhood through his pants, “since you saved me from a nasty fall.” then emphasized it with a squeeze.

In reflex, he clinched his legs together from the invasion on his privates. She let go of him and quipped, “But not today.” and picked up the garbage can, “I’ll teach you all about making love the day you turn eighteen.” and left him standing in the storage room with a hard-on.

At least she wasn’t completely a sexual predator since she did say he had to turn eighteen. Maybe that was the reason she came to this country, having been in a sordid relationship

somewhere else. She was a puzzle to him as she licked her lips and glanced lustfully at him for the rest of the period. She had given him an erection that Nanonaut couldn't make go away. Of, course, seeing through her blouse and translucent bra didn't help any either.

He made an effort to look at the other students when he could, checking out the bubble gum and change in their pockets. One even had an inhaler while another carried a pencil sharpener. He could probably win some bets by guessing what was in their pockets but it wouldn't help much with the majority of purses he couldn't see through. The number one item by far were cell phones. Even in thicker clothes like blue jeans, he could still see the indicator lights blinking.

He'd have better luck describing bras as there were an array of different patterns and colors the females wore. That took him back to the craving his manhood was having and he stopped staring at the chests. If he wasn't careful with this new ability, he'd be the one considered a sexual predator.

Nothing pleased him more than the ringing of the class bell, saving him the vision of Miss Bordeaux's breasts and thongs added to the lusty demeanor she'd treated him with. It left him imagining what she could possibly teach him. Thankfully, his books covered up the visible display of his erection as he entered a hallway full of more breasts sported by girls his age.

But of all the nipples and panties he was fully aware of, one awareness overwhelmed them all. Julie was headed to biology class and her presence made him apprehensive for some reason.

He came up beside her and greeted with, "Surprise beautiful."

"Nope, I can sense you coming." she quipped, smiling back at him. "I guess nobody molested you on the field?" she asked, stopping to face him.

"Crazy, nobody would do that in broad daylight." he retorted, and leaned against the wall.

Julie's smile melted away and a look of concern crossed her face. Leaning closer to him, she smelled the air with two sniffs.

"What?" he asked, leaning back from her, wondering what she was trying to do.

Concern turned to anger as Julie demanded, "Who is she?"

A puzzled look crossed his face in reaction and he asked, "Who's who?"

She raised a hand and covered her nose and mouth, looking at him in shock, "I can smell her on you!" she hissed behind her hand.

## Chapter 8

The memory of Miss Bordeaux falling off of the shelves and his hand raking over her sex caused him to hang his head in despair. “Look, I accidently...” he started.

But Julie didn’t want to hear it. With tears forming in her eyes, she turned and ran away. He followed her but three male students blocked his way. Sending the dominate message to let him pass, they backed away but Julie had disappeared in the crowd. He messaged her explaining the accident but she didn’t respond.

His thoughts ran rampant, thinking she would tell someone of authority what had happened to her. He could wind up in a lab getting dissected. Maybe take revenge on him by dating another guy. But his worst fear was losing the one girl he had to admit that he loved.

It caused such anxiety that Nanonaut warned him of illness, or worse, a nervous breakdown. He headed for the restroom and washed his hands and face, ridding himself of the teacher’s scent. But nothing could wash away the roll coaster of emotions he was experiencing. Everything was his fault and he was to blame. His fault she got infested with nanobots, his fault for being jealous enough of her male entourage to send out mating signals, and his fault the teacher came on to him.

In class, Julie was six feet away but it was more like a thousand miles. He tried to get her attention but she ignored him. For the first time in his education, a teacher told him to quit disturbing the class. A blemish he didn’t welcome, but it would have been worth it had Julie at least acknowledged him.

His despair turned to anger at the thought of her not giving him any benefit of the doubt. Oh, she was just fine with a bunch of males hanging around her but he couldn’t get the scent of one female on him without her tossing him to the curb. Leaving the classroom, he summoned Tiffany and Angie to accompany him, forgetting the fact that summoning two meant summoning them all.

Two could play that game and every guy in the hallway swarmed around Julie. Apparently, the gloves were off because the teen boys were starting to fight over her. An elbow from one led to a push from another. He messaged Julie with the impending danger and no sooner did he send it than the push from one caused another to swing a punch.

All out mayhem ensued and Julie was in the middle of it. Fearing the worse, he sent a dominant signal for everyone to stop. The call from an alpha male caused many of them to stop and he had a chance to muscle his way through to Julie. Matching her pace, he grabbed her elbow.

“Look Julie, these guys are fighting over you.” he pointed out, avoiding the crowd coming from the other direction.

“Why do you care!” she snapped, and then barked, “Don’t you have boobs to look at?”

“What?” he asked, shocked at her question, “Now wait a minute...” he started.

“Just leave me alone!” she demanded, and stepped up her pace.

He slowed to a halt and yelled, “So what? You’re probably looking at dicks!”

There was no fixing it. He couldn't deny it, he couldn't change it, and he couldn't make her understand that he had no choice in his abilities. It wasn't his fault that his father's experiment turned out to be a success. In his case, it was looking like a failure. Whatever super powers it might have given him, it took away even more than it gave, starting with his first love.

After school, he called and left his dad a message that he would be trying out for a sport and wouldn't be home until later that day. What sport exactly he left out intentionally. He didn't want his mother to worry about injuries, but he did want to try as a matter of achievement.

The scent of used protection gear overwhelmed his keen sense of smell and Nanonaut had to help override the odor by suppressing the strong smell. He wasn't alone in the misery of wearing other people's sweat. Frankie Burrows stepped up to him and asked, "Hey, you don't think we could catch something permanent from this gear do you?" while holding a discolored kneepad between his fingers.

He smiled back at him and said, "I'm kind of hoping it washes off when we're done." He then asked, "You here to try out?"

"Yeah, I've tossed a ball a few times." he admitted, "Coach wants to see if I'd make a good second string quarterback."

"I'd be happy just sitting on the bench." Jeremy admitted, "I just want to be able to say I was on the football team."

"That's funny." Frankie replied with a grin, "The number one geek in school is on the football team."

He smiled back knowingly, "It's a letter on a jacket at least." he quipped, throwing on an oversized shoulder pad.

Exercises worked muscles he didn't know he had and his coordination with the others was a little off. But, he needed the workout; so he didn't mind the jabs at his awkwardness from the team. With people tossing the ball and everyone else trying to catch it, it was left up to the quarterback-in-tryout to pick out someone to throw it to.

Jeremy had no luck until Frankie's turn. Before that, he was running the field for nothing as others made attempts at the ball. The first throw from Frankie went over their heads and down the center, causing the receivers to take off after it. It was a more fair chance with his throws and Jeremy caught a few but it went back to the exclusive club that he wasn't a part of after Frankie's turn was over.

At the end of the tryouts, the coach picked the ones he wanted, leaving Jeremy still standing while the rest left the field. He could have urged the coach to pick him but he felt it would be cheating. Instead, he asked why he didn't make the pick.

"You could be good," Coach Garrard acknowledged, "but you're graduating soon." Shrugging his shoulders, "I have to pick the ones that are going to be here next year."

Seeing the disappointment on his face, the coach grabbed him by the shoulders saying, "Try out in college son. You might make the grade there." and turned to grab the bag of footballs.

For a guy that so many girls wanted, he was getting people not wanting him, and the ones that did, they just wanted him physically. He kicked the dirt and left the field, passing the cheerleaders along the way.

Not even the silhouettes of young breasts behind loose-knitted sweaters and pink panties under thin skirts cheered him up as he thought about his recent losses. But he attracted two of them like a magnet and one of them spoke up with, "Why so glum?" and the other followed up with, "Didn't make it, huh?" while following behind him. Shaking his head, he moped on home, wondering what he could do to get Julie back.

The weekend passed and nothing from Julie. He stayed at home and milked his misery with self-pity. The only blessing he could appreciate were the padded bras his mother wore. The following week was more of the same, watching guys follow Julie around like puppy dogs while he was treated like he didn't exist. By the end of the week, his dad made a comment, noticing his son's depression, "You can't make them love you."

With that profound statement, he got over Julie. It still hurt to think of her but the trick was to just not think about her. By the time his birthday arrived, he had pretty much woken from the nightmare state of mind he had been in.

His journal went back to noting biological changes instead of heart-felt grievances over Julie. He opened himself back up to the real world and celebrated his age of adulthood among family and a few friends. Frankie had already turned eighteen and Jeremy made up for his neglecting the major event by getting him a present too.

Adding to his capabilities was seeing heat, or the absence of it, and that gave a glow to both objects and people. He noted the change in that aura in his logs as individual moods caused them to glow in different colors. Whether it was the charger for his cell phone or his dad coming home from work, he could tell if his phone was charged or if his dad was in a bad mood.

He had to program his vision in a way. Red should mean anger not aroused and blue should be sad and not happy. It was confusing at first but, with a little training in the mirror, he was able to adapt to it.

Monday came and it was the week of finals. He over-prepped for it because it took his mind off of Julie. So, that left the classes with no excitement and plenty of boring. Much of the time was spent reading auras emanating from his fellow students. It was interesting to be able to distinguish a difficult question from an easy one they were tackling just by the ghostly colors.

He dreaded English, fearing that he would be in another awkward position and he wasn't in the mood for it. Her blouse was just as revealing as her skirt, again. But Miss Bordeaux only smiled as she greeted him on his entrance and gave her attention to the others coming in. Taking his seat, he was greeted by a new neighbor, Anita.

"Hey stud, the word is out." she gleamed, "Julie dumped you for the football team."

Cringing at the words, he replied, "I don't want to talk about it."

"Oh, touchy subject huh?" she chided, and bit her lower lip. Eyeing him over, she advised, "You need a rebound girl." and blinked her eyes rapidly.

The comment eluded him, "I don't know what that is." he admitted, pulling out his English book.

Rolling her eyes, she explained, "You know, someone to take your mind off of things." She added, "It's plain to see you've crashed pretty hard over her." reaching over and placing her hand on his forearm.

He became instantly aware of another upgrade to his abilities. He could not only see the emotions radiating from her but he could feel it as well. Lust was a strong feeling he detected, probably from the pheromones he was sending out, but there was something else, empathy. She actually had compassion for his circumstances. Maybe she understood what he went through.

Instead of pulling his arm away from her, which was his first instinct, he laid his hand on top of hers. "Thank you Anita, I appreciate your support but I don't know if it would help any." he admitted.

She leaned in closer and whispered, "It'll help, trust me. All you need is more fun and less drama." and sat back up in her seat.

“Jeremy, come up and pass out paperwork.” Miss Bordeaux called, drawing him out of the world of thoughts Anita had put him in.

He stepped up to take the stack from her and she instructed, “See me after class.” and let go of the assignment.

While one part of his mind focused on the testing, another part contemplated his situation. If he had the opportunity of gaining knowledge, even though it was sexual, from a teacher and the companionship of a pretty girl, even though it was only physical, would he be taking advantage of them or the situation? On the same level, aren't they trying to take advantage of him?

He concluded that both were correct and in the end, consent was all that mattered. If he agreed to be taken advantage of as well as they, then there is no reason to not take what he was offered. It wasn't like he was the one initiating the advances anyway.

At the end of the class, the students filed out leaving him sitting in the room facing the chalk board. His palms became sweaty from a mixture of emotions, trying to determine the teacher's intent. The sway in her hips as she approached him, ruler in hand, was almost mesmerizing.

“So, you've had a good weekend I hope.” she greeted, stopping in front of his desk.

“I did.” he mustered, watching her clothes ‘disappear’ altogether, leaving a thin layer of mist swirling around her nipples and pubic mound.

“Tell me, is Anita Greer your intended?” she asked, stepping closer to his side.

Taken aback by the blunt question, he stuttered, “I... I think so.” and breathed in the musky mixture of perfume and sexual secretions from the provocative certified instructor.

Leaning in, she placed a hand on his desk to steady herself and brought her mouth close to his ear. “Have you two copulated yet?” she whispered, running the ruler down his back.

He could read her like a book; a very complicated one at that. Lust was the dominate emotion, with sprinkles and layers of anticipation and caution, all wrapped in a thinly veiled layer of jealousy. He could please her or bring about her ire with the answer he gave.

“No Ma'am, we haven't.” he replied, fixated on her cleavage. For the first time since the last time, she drew out his arousal, causing his manhood to twitch in his pants, once again.

“Good,” she replied, emitting pleasure from his answer, “we have time then to prepare you for the occasion.” she asserted, raising back up and grazing a nipple over his cheek. “So, after school today...” she purred, “A special tutoring session...” and turned to face the front, “meet me here.” and sashayed back to her desk.

He waited until her thong came back into focus with the increasing distance, picked up his bag, and left the class, smiling at her on the way out. The last bit of care he had for Julie Chiders was crushed between Miss Bordeaux's teeth as she bit her bottom lip watching him leave.

Once again, the hallway gave him no relief as young women sported thin clothes to stave off the summer heat. Only the heavily endowed wore padded bras, leaving a sea of breasts for him to see. Even blue jeans couldn't hide the flesh, especially if they were tight-fitting. He found it strange that the pockets seemed to help cover more, leaving a layer of white in square patches over their glutes.

But the presence of Julie, standing by her locker, hit him in three different senses at once. Her glow was blue in hue and her hair was so fine, he could see right through it all. She had changed for the better in the physical sense as a curvy figure carried perky breasts and a bubble butt shaped to perfection. He fought the emotion of regret in losing her and refused to succumb to her pheromones of seduction. He pretended to ignore her as she passed.

*'You stopped.'* she messaged, as he walked past.

Surprised to hear her voice in his head, he did indeed stop walking. ‘*Stopped?*’ he thought, a curious look crossing his face, ‘*Stopped what?*’ he sent, now turning his head as if she were talking aloud behind him.

‘*You stopped loving me.*’ she explained.

The words struck him in the head and burned a path to his stomach, causing a thud of a heavy impact. His head bowed down and his shoulders sagged in remembrance of the love he lost. Fighting back a tear from the stinging pain, he said, ‘*I had to Julie; it hurt too much.*’

‘*You hurt me just as much.*’ she pointed out.

He nodded agreement and started walking again, knowing her words were true. But he had a point that he wanted to make, and struck her with his own words of truth, ‘*You hurt me on purpose, when I didn’t mean to hurt you.*’

He stepped up his pace as if walking with purpose, trying to get away from the painful conversation. Enough time had passed from not hearing from her that he’d thought the discussion was over. But as he took his seat, he heard again the voice he had once loved so much.

‘*I’m sorry.*’ was all she sent and he sent back, ‘*Yeah, me too.*’

## Chapter 9

The rest of the day crept by for him as he anticipated the lessons from his teacher. Fantasies ran wild with the only conclusion, he wouldn't be a virgin at the end of it. But the last class went by way too fast as nerves set in to question his courage. Even Nanonaut assured him that procreation was natural and it should be done without thought. Yet thoughts he had of being ill-suited for the tests she would most certainly put him through.

Shaking the doubt from his mind, he stowed his books in the locker. With resolve, he turned for Miss Bordeaux's classroom. His steps echoed in the hall and he heard them bounce closer and closer off of the closed door. He came to a stop in front of it and took a deep breath, prepping himself for the expected.

Raising his hand, he formed a fist, and rapped on the solid oak wood. The muffled sound of his tutor called back, "Enter." in a pleasant voice that caused him to tense up.

A nervous chill raced down his back as he opened the classroom door. The sun had abandoned the room and given it a darker setting than he was used to. Behind the teacher's desk, Miss Bordeaux was gathering her items in her arms.

"Need some help?" he asked, seeing her items were more than she could handle.

"Yes please." she smiled, nodding towards a box of papers. "I want to donate these."

He walked behind her to her car, loaded with unclaimed gloves and clothing as she carried the papers to grade. He was feeling several emotions from her, such as anticipation. But his was much stronger as guilt set in with the ability to see through her clothes. The physical effects were battling the emotional ones as he contemplated telling her about his ability, thinking that he could mention the butterfly tattoo on her thigh as proof. Just as he was about to give in and warn her of his vision, she spoke up while getting in the car.

"I am excited to be tutoring you Jeremy." she confessed, punctuating her words with a smile, and then hit the power lock.

He climbed in and answered, "Me too; but I'm a little nervous about it all." putting the seatbelt on.

"It's quite alright." she quipped, reaching over and patting his inner thigh, "We are just going to make a man out of you." and squeezed his erection, "It's a natural progression."

The drive to her apartment building seemed to take forever, even though it was a few blocks further past his home. He thought about the abuse he had suffered all the way through school and the uninterested girls that cruelly denied him any positive attention. To end up in the care of a teacher seemed almost appropriate, given the neglect from girls his age. Losing Julie didn't help his perspective either.

He followed her with box in hand to her apartment door. The second floor flat was not what he expected for an English teacher. Setting the box on the coffee table, he had to ask, "Were you in the military?" looking at a miniature flag and medals on the mantle.

"Goodness no," she replied from behind the kitchen counter, "I haven't the stomach for it." She admitted, "Those are my boyfriend's." and came into the living room, "He's deployed right now." and handed him a glass of tea.

That stunned him into silence as he contemplated the consequences. Seeing the look on his face, she assured him, “Nothing to worry about, honey.” taking a seat on the sofa, “He’s gone for months at a time. Do you honestly think he is going without?”

“Maybe.” he thought out loud, watching her place her glass on the table.

“Then I must know him better than you.” she countered, patting the seat beside her.

Taking the offer, he sat his glass on the table. “How long have you lived here?” he asked, trying to change the awkward subject.

“Moved in last summer.” she replied, placing her hand on his inner thigh again. “Bruce deployed in July and I started teaching in August.” and let out a sigh, “Let’s just say, it has been a bit lonely around here.” and squeezed his crotch.

“But enough about me,” she sighed, “let’s talk about you.” Turning to face him, “What do you know about women?”

He gave her a shrug and said, “I know they scare the crap out of me sometimes.” and admitted, “But I know next to nothing really.”

She smiled and said, “The first thing you need to know is, we like to take it slow at first.” She leaned closer to him, “And we like to start with this.” and started kissing him.

Things heated up in the make out session as she removed his shirt and he, her blouse. She tongued his nipple while he removed his pants and watched a previously restrained nipple stiffen to a point after removing her bra. With some instruction, he placed the bud in his mouth while kneading the perky breast.

She stood up and seductively danced her way out of her skirt, leaving her panties to remove later. Motioning him to stand, she teased him out of his underwear, slowly pulling them down to the floor. Standing back up, she licked his erection from the base to the tip.

“Let’s take this somewhere else.” she suggested, gathering her clothes.

Following in suit, he gathered his clothes and laid them beside the box of lost articles. Grabbing his hand, she led the way, skipping a little along the way. Her butterfly tattoo gave the illusion of flight with each step.

They stopped in the bathroom and she pointed out the walk-in shower. Both entered the tile covered cubicle and the glass door was pulled closed. She bent over to turn on the water, showing off her thong-covered backside. He kept his manhood covered from the embarrassing erection and gave it a squeeze to relieve the ache it was having. Animal instinct was taking him over and it was all he could do to hold back from taking her right there. Taking it slow at this point was more aggravation than it was erotic.

To fight the powerful urges, he asked, “Aren’t you going to finish getting undressed?”

“No, I’m saving that for you to take off.” she quipped, flipping the shower lever.

The water soaked her panties as it cascaded down her body. Facing him, she started again by kissing him, holding his head with one hand and massaging his chest with the other. The teasing was excruciating as she pressed up against his manhood while shoving her tongue down his throat.

She guided his head down to her breasts and let his tongue play with her nipples. But her patience waned and she urged him lower, towards her pelvic center. He rolled the thong’s strings down on each side, watching pubic hairs spring out. The shape of a strip of dark brown grass pointed to her slit. Water beaded on her mound and trickled over both of her lips. But he didn’t get the chance to study it much more as she pulled his hair and buried his face in her crotch.

She encouraged him between bated breaths and educated him on her preferences. With one leg hiked over his shoulder, she orgasmed from his efforts. Ending her spasms with a giggle, she

tugged his hair to make him stand up. In a whisper, she claimed, “Now it’s my turn.” and lowered herself to her knees. With a hand on each of his glutes, she fed herself his manhood. No feeling had ever gone through his nerves as the one she was giving him. With such procrastination, his climax was fast approaching. Instinctively, he warned her of the impending orgasm and she took all he had to give. But just as she was standing up, the front door opened from a key. He knew that someone had entered as his hearing picked up the sound over the shower.

“Someone’s here.” he announced, as she rose to stand with him.

“What?” she asked, confused.

“Somebody came through the front door.” he explained. They then heard a voice call out, “Where’s my girl?” followed by a thud on the floor, perhaps a satchel or bag.

Fear and shock emanated from her as her eyes grew wide. “Oh my god!” she exclaimed, and turned to head out of the shower.

His own fear took over as she grabbed a towel to wrap herself in. ‘*What if he found him here?*’ he thought, now concerned for his wellbeing. He could only stand there and listen as the conversation took place.

“What are you doing here?” she asked, and he heard her give him a kiss.

“Reassigned.” he replied, adding, “I see you’re all dressed up for me.”

“I was taking a shower.” she explained.

“What’s this stuff?” he asked.

“Lost and found at school.” she replied, “I’m donating them to charity.”

“Huh, ok then.” he acknowledged.

“Where are you going?” she asked.

“I got to pee.” he replied, as footsteps came closer.

Jeremy panicked and looked for a place to hide. But even the linen closet had nothing but shelves, and the door wouldn’t close with him in it. Out of time, he dove back into the shower and cowered in the corner.

“Now?” she asked, “You just got here.” she retorted.

“Long ride from the airport.” he explained, stepping closer to the bathroom door.

By the time the doorknob was turned, Jeremy was having a panic attack. So poor was his condition over the fear he had, Nanonaut spoke up. ‘*Entering stealth mode. Host will see a noticeable difference.*’

The door opened as a pattern appeared on Jeremy. A bulky man in fatigues entered and stood over the toilet but all Jeremy could do was watch as his skin obtained the tiles and ledges that matched the wall behind him. ‘*What in the...*’ he started, ‘*Noticeable difference my ass!*’ he chastised, fearing the odd coloration covering his entire body would be permanent.

‘*Host is experiencing a defensive mechanism;*’ the bot replied, ‘*this effect can be altered through willful manipulation.*’

“I can explain everything.” Miss Bordeaux exclaimed, following her boyfriend into the restroom.

“Jesus, Des, I’m trying to wiz here!” he chastised, “Going to make me miss my mark.”

Looking into the shower, she couldn’t see Jeremy as he was camouflaged in the corner. Looking around, a perplexed look crossed her face.

“What are you explaining?” he asked, finishing his deposit.

*'Closing your eyes will give optimal results,' Nanobot tutored, 'while relying on other senses for proximity and prey.'* It was continuing with, *'Standing or lying flat against surfaces will also decrease detection.'*

*'Great, an instruction manual.'* he thought, closing his eyes.

"Why the floor is wet." she feigned.

"I know why it's wet, you were taking a shower." he replied, "What's wrong with you?" he asked, shaking his manhood.

"Nothing really." she chirped, "I just wasn't expecting you home." and scolded him, "Why didn't you call me? I would have cleaned up a little."

"Then it wouldn't have been a surprise." he jeered, turning to face her. "Now let's look at those goods." and yanked the towel off of her.

Taking a chance, he suggested to the soldier to take his girlfriend to the bedroom, since it seemed that was where they were going to wind up anyway. At least he had had oral sex for the first time, but the mood was lost for losing his virginity.

He followed, amazed as the patterns changed on his body to the surroundings he was moving through. Watching as the two made love, making mental notes, he left as they were climaxing. Grabbing his clothes, he headed downstairs, finding it humorous that his clothes appeared to be floating in air. He cupped his manhood to keep it from flapping, causing a blur of the scenery displayed on it. Turning into an empty laundry room on the first floor, he dressed.

*'Ok Nanonaut.'* he thought, *'Tell me how to stop doing this stealth thing.'*

He arrived home and found his father in the garage. Busily scribbling on his notepad, Jeremy stepped in to the open bay and interrupted him with, "Hey dad, what's up?" and looked at his writing.

"Oh, hey son." Jerold replied, flipping his notepad closed. "Just calculations." and turned to face him. "Listen, are you sure you're alright?"

Wondering why he would ask since he had told him he was, he reassured him again with, "Yeah dad, never better." which was the absolute truth.

With a grin Jerold said, "I think you might have solved my dilemma."

"Really?" he responded, "How's that?" now cautious of his dad's revelations.

"Hydrocarbons." he proclaimed, lifting up a beaker. "It allows them to last long enough to..." he paused, trying to determine the correct terminology but settled for, "create new nanobots." and shook his head in affirmation to his definition.

"You mean, reproduce." Jeremy corrected.

"In a way," he explained, "but they aren't birthing but building their next generation from unused resources." and then turned thoughtful, "I wonder if they evolve like everything else."

With more issues to ponder than he wanted, Jeremy just admitted, "That, I don't know."

Seeing the conversation had died with no response from his father, as he went back to studying his notes, he turned to leave.

"Jeremy..." Jerold called after him, causing him to return his attention back to his father, "Nobody can know what I'm doing here." and looked over top of his notebook,

"Pharmaceuticals would kill to stop something as great as this from ever taking hold."

"Mum's the word dad." he assured him, and headed into the house.

He couldn't help feeling a little guilty about keeping back his condition. With his father seeming concerned all of the time asking about it, he had assured him that everything was fine. There were all kinds of reasons to keep his abilities to himself; keeping his father from worrying was just one of them. Besides, his mother would probably kill dad if she knew that her son had

been infected with his father's experiment. Another compelling reason would be the industries that reaped billions of profits from the ill.

The last reason he had was his own fear that his father would try to find a way to take the nanobots from him. If there was anything he didn't want, it was to go back to being the pimply-faced string bean of a geek he used to be. It simply wasn't an option for him.

That night, he laid in bed, testing his new ability. With some concentration, he was able to alter his skin pigmentation to choose random paintings. Mona Lisa certainly looked strange over his chest. But the one of the night sky, displaying the stars and galaxies he had as a poster on his wall, made him look demonic. If he wanted a cool outfit for Halloween, the splash of stars twinkling over the pitch black background on his skin would certainly make him look like a sci-fi monster.

*'Julie, you won't believe what I can do now.'* he messaged, making the image rotate around him, thinking, *'You probably aren't listening to me though.'*

His thoughts turned to Miss Bordeaux and the pleasure she'd given him earlier. *'It should have been me in her bedroom instead of her boyfriend.'* he thought, feeling the twinge of an erection. As he remembered the sex in her bedroom, he fantasized about it being him administering the pleasure while masturbating over it.

But as the scene progressed in his mind, the image of his teacher was replaced by Julie. The erotic thoughts turned to instant regret and he gave up on his self-pleasure. Cursing at his altered fantasy, he rolled over and went to sleep.

The last day of school placed him in the awkward position of being with a teacher that he had known intimately. But she carried on as if nothing had happened. Thinking he was safe after the bell rang, he headed for the door. But Miss Bordeaux called him back with, "Mr. Dodd, a moment please."

Dropping his shoulders, he turned around and stepped back to her desk. She skimmed over paperwork until the last student left. She dropped the papers she had on the desk and looked at him curiously.

"Where the hell did you go yesterday?" she asked, tilting her head to the side.

"I hid for a while," he lied, being as vague as possible, "and left when I could."

Dropping an eyebrow, she asked, "Did you watch us?"

Letting out a sigh, he admitted, "I had to, you know, to see when it was safe to leave."

She smiled and confessed, "I thought you might." and shrugged, "It was kind of exciting to think you were." and then turned thoughtful, "I still don't know how you did it," noting, "since there's no place in my bathroom to hide." But then dismissed it, "But I'm glad we got by with it!" and let out a little laugh.

He nodded his head in agreement and replied, "Me too." and offered her his smile while transmitting the idea that having sex with him was a bad idea with her boyfriend at home.

"Well, you have a nice summer Jeremy." she cooed, and went back to her paperwork.

"Ok, and you too Miss Bordeaux." he replied, and left the room.

Thinking he'd dodged a bullet, he had little regret in missing out on her tutoring. From what he saw, there wasn't much else she could teach him anyway. In fact, it looked a little rushed with the aggression her military man had.

"Hey..." Anita called, stepping up to him, "You trying to ignore me?" she jested.

"Uh, nope." he replied, remembering her advances on him, "You're just too pretty to ignore." he teased, and nudged her arm.

Her breasts jiggled with her effort to maintain balance. He could clearly see through her tie-dyed tee shirt and unpadded bra. He intentionally dodged her attempt to nudge him back so that one of her breasts would rake over his arm. His keen senses recognized the nipple when it blazed a path. She was obviously aroused, although he couldn't tell if it was natural or if it was his pheromones causing it.

"So, graduation..." she started, "Who are you planning on partying with that night?"

He gave a shrug and said, "I was thinking of maybe seducing you into going with me."

Her eyes brightened and she exclaimed, "Oh... seduction." and batted her eyes, "I like being seduced." and quipped, "It leads to sex." and smiled.

"You're teasing." he feigned. "Tell me, if I tried to rape you, would you scream for help?" he asked, a conniving grin crossing his face.

"Only if you need it." she punned, and added, "Besides, you can't rape the willing." and sped up her pace ahead of him.

'*Bold.*' he thought, slowing his pace and watching her walk away. He might not be a virgin much longer. But he had to admit it, he was more about lust than love with Anita. It made sense really, since love crapped out on him.

Speaking of the Devil, Julie was trying to make her way down the hallway but there was a crowd of boys surrounding her. '*Just how much protection do you really need?*' he thought, watching the frustrated boys vie for her attention.

Remembering the ramifications of his abilities, he thought to talk to her about what to expect and warn her of the threats she faced should her abilities be found out. Sending out a signal to make room for him, he passed through the widening crowd with ease and found his target in the middle of them.

"What's the use of having protection if you can just move them out of your way?" she asked, aware of his actions.

He rolled his eyes and got to the point, "I need to talk to you privately." he said, taking her elbow.

'*What is it?*' she messaged, seeming annoyed by his forcefulness.

'First...' he started, leading her to an empty class room, 'These guys hovering over you is dangerous.'

'*Says you,*' she countered, turning around to face him, '*with all the girls climbing on you.*'

'I'm serious Julie.' he argued, 'Guys want one thing besides food and water and they've killed to get it.'

'*I get it,*' she fumed, '*if Jeremy can't have me, nobody will.*' placing her hands on her hips.

He shook his head, '*I don't care if you screw them all.*' he messaged, '*Just don't get them fighting over you.*'

'*So now I'm a slut?*' she retaliated, crossing her arms.

'*No, you're a human,*' he explained, '*and that's what humans do.*' and begged, '*Please understand, guys don't think like you do. Guys think like animals.*'

'*So you're an animal. I'll agree with that.*' she smirked, and asked, '*So, what's second?*'

'*My dad is worried that if our abilities gets out, some powerful people will come after us.*' he advised.

'*Well duh.*' she frowned, '*Thought you were going to tell me something I didn't know.*'

Placing his hands on her shoulders, he moved her away from the door, stating, '*That would be the third thing I have to tell you.*' and turned on his defense mechanism.

## Chapter 10

Her mouth dropped open as she saw through his head and arms, leaving a shirt, pants, and shoes standing there. Even his short hair seemed to fade and blend into the background. But her excellent vision focused and wouldn't allow the illusion to complete, enabling her to see the sheen on his skin. She instinctively reached out and cupped his cheek to see if it felt different.

"Oh my god!" she whispered aloud, "What the hell did you do?" and lifted up his shirt.

"It's like a chameleon," he explained, "with human intelligence thrown in."

She could see the darkness from the back of the shirt through him with the room behind him at his waist. "How do you know what's behind you?"

"Memory." he replied, "Your conscience doesn't realize what you've seen because it filters out the non-important stuff." He finished with, "But your subconscious still has the memory stored until you sleep. That's when it starts removing the short-term memories and stores the important ones into long term memory."

"Ok, forget the science lesson." she quipped, letting go of his shirt, "How do I do that?" she asked, a look of awe staring in the eyes.

After giving her some instructions, her nanobot took over. She did really well her first time trying it and he applauded her. "Ok, that's good. But we've got to get to class."

"Right..." she countered, "They would suspend us on our last day!" she gasped, feigning terror.

"Alright, just for that, I'm not going to teach you this." and displayed the universe across his body.

"What!" she exclaimed, "You can change what it shows?" she asked, astounded.

"Well yeah, like I said, anything from memory." he repeated, "You see, just fix on something..."

In one motion, she removed her shirt.

"Whoa, I can see through that, you know." he warned, and watched her kick off her shoes.

"Who cares, I can make you see anything I want." she retorted, unsnapping her "B" cupped bra.

He looked away as she lowered the support, "Ok, it's getting awkward in here." he confessed, feeling the redness flush his face.

"What, you don't like my blouse?" she asked, calling attention to her chest.

Looking back he saw the image of a shirt top with a teddy bear on the front seeming to be painted on her skin. "Ok, that looks wild." he admitted, but countered, "There's no wrinkles and it wraps around your boobs."

"Oh yeah, what do you think?" she asked, sashaying her chest back and forth at him, "They're growing nicely I think."

"They're looking great." he complemented, "But it looks unnatural the way it is."

"Oh right, I used a memory of it lying on my bed." she explained, closing her eyes.

In waves, the image across her chest changed with wrinkles and all. “Now that’s better.” he admitted, “How did you do that?”

“Now I’m teaching you!” she laughed, “But seriously, I remembered it from my bathroom mirror.”

“May I?” he asked, lifting a hand.

“No nipples!” she warned, thrusting her chest out.

Keeping to her orders, he rubbed her chest where the space between her breasts, not touching the wrinkles until he touched her skin. “You know what this means don’t you?” he asked, running his hand back up between her breasts.

“What?” she asked, curiously.

“Removable tattoos.” he quipped with a smile, and traced a line down between her breasts.

“Ok, stop that.” she demanded, slapping his hand away, “You’re giving me goose bumps.”

“Fine.” he replied, and removed his shirt. In seconds, the universe was gone and the same shirt he’d removed displayed across his chest.

“It looks a little like... spandex.” she observed, “You’ve put on some muscles too.” and placed her hands on his chest.

“No nipples!” he warned, and received a slap on his chest.

“Not everybody’s a sex fiend like you.” she snapped, and unbuttoned her jeans.

“Great, a girl falls, I catch her between her legs, and that makes me a sex fiend.” he defended, watching her shimmy out of the tight pants. “Now what are you doing?”

“I don’t know about you but it’s the last time I’ll be in this school.” kicking the pants to the sides, “How many can say they went to school naked and got by with it?” she asked, making the same pair of jeans appear on her lower half.

“Bad idea...” he challenged, “What if somebody touches you?” and pointed out, “The gig would be up because they’d know it wasn’t real clothes.”

“Not if I told them it was real.” she argued, “I’ve been perfecting my signals.” and dropped the panties that wrapped over top of the image of her jeans. “They won’t know the difference.”

“Julie, you’re surrounded by guys every day.” he warned, “Somebody is going to notice.”

“You worry too much.” she chastised, picking up her clothes.

“They’re bound to notice your girly parts.” he replied, hoping to appeal to her modesty.

“Do you notice it?” she asked, swiveling the clothes in her hand to the side.

Pondering her question, he squatted down. He could make out the faint pubic hairs and the line where her lips touched. Someone with lesser vision than his probably wouldn’t notice. But still, it was a risk she was taking. He raised a hand to separate the lips, just to see how far in the illusion went but Julie slapped his hand away.

“Look but don’t touch.” she chastised, and posed with her legs together.

He stood back up and consented, “Ok, it might pass.” but advised, “But it doesn’t mean it’s a good idea.”

“Whatever, I just happen to have the guts to try it at least once.” she professed.

He picked up his shirt saying, “It’s your ass on the line.” but she had already opened the door. He watched her leave and followed right afterwards. Watching the blossoming teen strut down the hall left him shaking his head. Still, he couldn’t shake the bad vibes he was feeling.

‘*My Spidey sense is tingling.*’ he thought, but didn’t bother putting his shirt back on.

He felt a little self-conscience at first, sitting at the desk in study hall, feeling the coldness from the back of the chair. But after a while, he seemed to have forgotten about the

awkwardness. He couldn't say he spent a day in school naked but he could say he went without a shirt.

Using his messages for distraction, other students didn't even take a second look at him. He still had the flirtatious approach him in the meter radius of his influence. That kept him on his toes, not wanting any of them to touch him. But overall, his being shirtless didn't seem to be an issue.

He said his goodbyes to Frank and Tony along with a few other acquaintances. After getting his grades, it was time to end his high school education. It wasn't an emotional event for him like it was for many. Some of the students were holding back tears as they said their goodbyes. But he was happier knowing that the harassment over the years he had experienced was behind him.

Walking home shirtless kind of felt nice as the sun shone on his image. He could tell the difference between cloth and skin but nobody else could. He thought that maybe Julie was right after all and going full Monty was completely possible. But then, he was rattled to the bone by a plea for help.

*'Oh god!' Julie messaged, 'I'm being kidnapped!'*

*'What!' he asked, 'Where are you?' and felt a sickening knot in his stomach.*

*'Dugout at the ball field.' she responded.*

Turning around, he bolted back towards the school. *'Can you order them to leave you alone?'* he asked, hurdling over a car.

*'I tried, but these guys want to fight,' she messaged, 'and I'm the winning prize.'*

*'Hang tight, passing the school now.'* he sent, dodging the late stragglers leaving school.

*'Crap, Greg just got knocked out.'* she sent. *'He's one of the nicer ones.'*

*'Nice guys finish last.'* he sent back, rounding the back alley that separated the ball park from the field.

Some boys were just outside of the dugout, watching the sporting event taking place. Jeremy couldn't make out the action with them in the way so he emitted the equivalence to a roar to make them separate. They moved in time for him to hustle down the three steps into the dugout.

Mayhem was all he saw as a guy he recognized but didn't know his name was throwing punches at a determined Jeff Bridges, one of the football players. Julie was behind them, trapped in the cage, doing the only thing she could, sitting on the end bench.

"Ok, fun's over." Jeremy announced, pushing passed Terry Collins. His presence alerted the two fighting and they turned to see what had interrupted them.

Stepping over a shaken up Greg, he held his hands up. "So what's going on guys?" he asked innocently.

"Get in line bitch." Jeff demanded, clinching his fists.

"Ok, what am I getting in line for?" he asked, looking intently at the riled up athlete.

"Which one gets to fuck Julie, dumbass." Terry butted in.

"Wouldn't that be up to Julie?" he asked, looking back at Terry.

"She gets the guy that wins." the unnamed opponent pointed out.

"No, she gets the one she chooses." Jeremy corrected, and stepped closer to the current fighters.

"I don't think so." Greg argued, standing up to block him.

Jeremy stuck his nose close to Greg's, looking at him eye to eye. "Maybe you shouldn't think."

"Maybe you should get in line." Terry countered, grabbing his arm.

"Aren't you suspended or something?" Jeremy asked, yanking his arm back from him.

“Get in line man!” one of the boys at the exit yelled.

Jeremy turned to see who yelled that, but Terry wasn't finished with him.

“Yeah, thanks to you.” he quipped, and punched him on his right ear from behind.

The ringing lessened as the nanobots went to work. Jeremy turned to face the attacker.

“What; you have to hit me from behind?” he asked, annoyed at the unexpected but brief pain.

“Nope.” Terry replied, and punched him in the nose.

His head jerked back from the impact and blood trickled out of a nostril. Leveling his head to look at Terry, a smirk crossed his lips. “Is that all you got?” and pushed him against the chain link fence.

Surprised at the unfazed geek, Terry gave a look of puzzlement before standing up straight.

“I've had little kids hit me harder than that.” Jeremy sneered, wiping the drop of blood off of his lip.

“Screw you Urkel!” Terry jibed, and rushed at him.

Jeremy dodged and Terry caught himself with the wall.

“Quit goofing off.” he barked, “All of you need to leave.”

“No, you do!” Greg retorted, and grabbed him from behind.

Terry leapt on him and both wrestled him to the ground. Greg and his opponent started kicking him and the group of boys cheered them on. Grabbing the heel of one of the feet targeting him, he twisted the toe of the shoe with the other hand, forcing the assailant to the ground. Terry was throwing punches at his ribs while Greg had his arms wrapped around his neck. Greg was the biggest threat and he feared that he would be choked out.

Elbowing the choker in his ribs caused him to loosen his grip, allowing Jeremy to lift the arm over his head. Terry, still punching away, found two fingers in his eyes as his victim poked him. In one swift move, Jeremy was back on his feet.

“What happened guys?” he asked, “Thought we were taking turns here.”

“Shut up!” Terry barked, lunging at him again.

This time, Jeremy helped the boy out when he dodged his attack by shoving him into the wall. Unable to stop the force, Terry hit the wall with his head. Greg, who had already lost his chance at winning Julie, somehow thought that beating Jeremy would put him back in the game. Jeremy proved him wrong with a kick to the stomach. He just didn't have the stomach to fight and wilted to the ground.

Jeff stepped in, followed by his opponent, grabbing Jeremy's attention. “What; now it's you two?”

But they answered in punches, starting with Jeff. Dodging and weaving, he only caught one of them out of the first barrage of fists. Terry, seeing the two miss so often, tried to motivate them with, “Come on guys, he's trying to take Julie!” while shaking off the blow to his head.

Two turned into eight as all of them rushed him. Shouts of, “Fuck him up!” and, “Kill that motherfucker!” were heard over top of the beating they were laying on him. The only thought crossing his mind was, ‘*Hey, at least they didn't notice that I have no shirt on.*’

Although they were hitting each other more than him, he still felt the kicks and punches adding up. The nanobots had to be working overtime with this onslaught. Thankfully, he didn't feel any pain but still, he couldn't just lie there and let them pound him all day.

Thankfully, Julie messaged him a word that would end their bloodlust. ‘*Cops.*’

No sooner did he receive the message did one yell, “Stop!”

Some did but the police officer had to yell it again, "I said stop!" peaking in from outside, "What the hell are you all doing in there?"

Nobody gave him an answer but he didn't need one apparently, asking instead, "What are you fighting over?"

With another question going unanswered, he ordered, "Get out here right now!" and started lining them up in a row.

As the dog pile cleared off of him, Jeremy looked back at Julie. She, however, had faded away, using her ability to be invisible. Taking a tip from her, he did the same as soon as the last kid turned away. As the remaining ones filed out, he was stripping off shoes and pants.

Taking off his socks, he heard one of the boys tell the officer that they were fighting to win over a girl. When asked what girl, several pointed in the dugout. Scrambling, he got his clothes on the bench in time for the officer to see inside the dugout. With a shrug, he turned back to the group he'd lined up.

When the group got the news that there wasn't anyone in there or in the line that looked remotely like a girl, unless they meant the kid with the long hair, they all looked in and around the dugout. They didn't get a chance to look long as the officer told them to get back in line.

While he wrote down the names of the boys, Jeremy and Julie eased out of the bunker. They turned towards the alley at the same time another cruiser arrived. They barely made it into the brick roadway before two more officers used the same entrance as they did. He could smell the cologne from one of them, they were that close.

*'Three cops for a measly fight?'* Julie messaged, watching them disappear.

*'Better safe than sorry, I guess.'* Jeremy replied, *'You had a lot of suiters.'*

*'Whatever.'* she sent, along with a punch in the arm.

They made it to the end of the alley before another cruiser pulled in. Jeremy grabbed Julie and pulled her to the side, narrowly escaping an injury. Watching the cruiser continue on, Julie sent a, *'Thank you.'*

With his clothes abandoned, they both made their way past the rural homes in the neighborhood stark naked; adding a first in Jeremy's journal. From an elderly woman sweeping the sidewalk to a delivery man dropping a package, nobody even looked their way. Feeling the breeze in places that had always been covered, he commented on it to Julie.

*'Does the wind tickle your pubic hairs?'* he asked, rounding the corner to her home.

*'Nipples too.'* she added, seeming to understand his questioning, *'But you get used to it.'*

The heat from the sidewalk on sensitive feet went undetected by the nanobot-infected pair. Watching Julie walk, however, revealed a problem that he hadn't anticipated.

*'I can see the dirt on your feet.'* he pointed out, *'It's like watching footprints taking steps.'*

*'They need washed.'* she agreed, *'I've gone all day without shoes.'*

They passed a toddler in the yard that bounced a ball onto the sidewalk. Jeremy stopped it and rolled it back to the boy. He had to fight back the laughter after watching the expression on the young man go from zero to astonishment. Hugging the ball, he apologized to it, and headed for the house, vowing to never make it leave ever again.

*'Now he will be scarred for life.'* Julie messaged, *'Always believing in magic balls.'*

Jeremy agreed, *'Maybe for a little while.'* but contended, *'But life will kick the magic right out of it.'*

Approaching Julie's house, a boy sat on the stoop. Not recognizing him, he asked, 'Who's that guy?'

*'Shit'* Julie messaged, *'its Stan.'* and explained, *'I just went out with him the other night. He's going to OLC.'* and stopped in her tracks.

*'About that, life kicking the magic out of things.'* he thought to himself, but sent instead, *'I guess you have company.'* and walked past her, *'I'm headed home.'*

He had been hopeful with Julie, hoping she'd get over the misunderstanding she had with him, hoping he had a chance of maybe getting back with her, and even hoped they could have a life together. But she wouldn't even look at him for a while there. So, he mourned the loss and got over it. Today, he'd hoped again that there could be a reconciliation but, once again, Julie shut the door on any of that nonsense.

Once again, his father was in the garage, concentrating on his project. Out of habit, he greeted him with, "Hey dad."

Looking up, Jerold glanced around, asking, "Son; where are you?"

"Just..." he started stepping back out of the garage, "pulling some weeds growing here." and stepped back in with the image of his clothes on.

"Good, I'm glad you're home." he said, and announced, "Introducing Nano-Nurse!" indicating a jet injector in front of him. "The first of its kind." he boasted, "I'm ready to try it on myself."

Jeremy rolled his eyes at the news, "Are you serious?" he asked, arguing, "You can't use that on yourself." and pointed out, "What if it does the opposite; like, make you sick or something?"

"I've worked out all of the bugs." he explained, "No more puffs of smoke, no deteriorating after a day or two, and best of all, it repairs severed skin!"

"Shouldn't you use a mouse or something first?" Jeremy suggested, worried that his dad would develop the same abilities he had.

"Already have." he countered, pulling off a cover over a cage. "This little guy had a hundred cuts with a scalpel." and looked at his son, "You couldn't tell it though." adding, "And no known side-effects either."

"I don't know dad. I had some bad dreams and felt weird from the ones I inhaled." Jeremy confessed.

"Ah, that's because of the composition." Jerold explained, "I've changed it to silicone based instead of carbon, so they don't fuse with the living cells."

"So, what does that mean, exactly?" he asked, confused at his medical terminology.

"Ok, you know that headache?" he asked rhetorically, "That was a result of nanobots fusing with brain cells because both are carbon based." and smiled, "Since my modification from carbon to silicone, that won't happen."

"So, how do they repair the skin if they can't bond with it?" he asked, confused at his explanation.

He laughed at the question and explained, "They zip it up just like a zipper." As his father was assuring him with, "I've watched them work under a microscope." he handed him the hypodermic device.

*'It's going to be weird if he turns invisible.'* he thought, taking the jet injector.

"Alright, anywhere there." Jerold instructed, tapping his upper arm.

Shaking his head, he just couldn't bring himself to do it, "I can't do it, dad." and huffed, "You could have a negative reaction or something." he feigned, not wanting his father to go through what he was dealing with.

Annoyed, Jerold took the medical gun back, "I'll do it. That way, anything happens, I've got myself to blame." he said, and pulled the trigger while pressing it against his shoulder.

Jeremy stopped himself from stopping his father. Besides, it was done before he had a chance to think about it. His initial response even shocked him.

"Mom is going to kill you." he noted out loud.

He tilted his head back and laughed, "If this works, she's going to be rich!"

"Alright dad, I have to get ready." and thought to say, "Don't forget to get a patent on it."

"Oh yes, graduation." Jerold noted, "Have you decided on a college yet?"

"I decided not to go to OLC." he replied, heading for the kitchen.

"Good." Jerold retorted, "They won't get you into any space agencies anyway."

Juniper was working at the kitchen table and looked up as Jeremy entered. "Hey." she called, looking over her glasses.

"Hey." he replied, grabbing a glass from the shelf.

"We really need to get you bigger clothes." she stated, looking him over, "Those look like they're painted on you."

The revelation that he was standing there nude in front of his mother hit him and he almost dropped the glass. Fumbling with it, he remarked, "I think I'm still growing too."

"Well, if anyone needed to get some meat on their bones, it was you." she noted with a smile. "But that outfit needs to go. I can see the dimples on your butt cheeks."

*'Nothing gets past mom.'* he thought, after checking to make sure he was emitting distraction signals. "After graduation, I'll be going out with some friends." he mentioned, hoping to change the subject.

"That's fine." she replied, and added, "But I want to find you for pictures before you go."

Six o'clock would be coming soon and he prepped to receive his rolled up paper. He was looking forward to that shower since roaming around the neighborhood in his birthday suit made him feel dirty. He knew for a fact that his feet were.

*'Scrub a dub.'* he thought, lathering up the soap. For fun, he turned his camouflage ability on and watched the water blur the wall tiles on his chest. Enabling his ultraviolet ability, he watched the heat pummel him from lines of bright color, changing from glowing red to a soft blue as the water cooled while running down his body. He tackled washing his hair and climbed out.

Toweling off, he headed for the sink and looking in the mirror. It reminded him to turn off his defense mechanism. Watching himself just appear out of nowhere was a little creepy. *'Beam me up Scotty.'* came to mind, as he solidified. But something else caught his attention and he immediately blamed the nanobots.

*'Nanonaut...'* he called, *'Where is my hair?'* he asked, staring at what he thought was a partial disappearance of his follicles.

*'Host is shedding remaining coat of hair.'* it replied.

Shocked at the answer, he became emotional. *'What; put it back.'* and huffed thinking, *'I was supposed to be informed when something noticeable occurs.'*

Nanonaut replied, *'Host is informed when noticeable changes occur resulting from nanobot's manipulation.'*

*'Then why wasn't I informed about going bald?'* he asked, frustrated at his appearance.

*'Nanobot's are not responsible for follicle growth loss.'* it replied.

Now the bot was lying, he was sure. If it had the capability to deceive, he was in some serious trouble. This was a serious problem he would have to remedy.

*'So, what is responsible for it?' he asked, trying to catch the parasite in the lie.*  
*'Changes are required to adapt to surroundings, increasing chances of survival;' it replied,*  
leaving him dumbfounded with, *'this transformation is known to the host as human evolution.'*

## Chapter 11

His first thought was Julie and the surprise she was in for. Girls really took pride in their hair and you know who will be responsible for it when hers started falling out. She would never forgive him now. Any hope of reconciliation with her was crushed with the revelation of this evolution.

Hoping there was some way to prevent this evolution, he asked, *'What is causing it and how can I stop it?'*

*'The accumulation of follicles is a liability and has no productive value.'* It pointed out, *'The host is utilizing a stealth defensive action requiring minimal exposure.'* and concluded, *'Removal of liabilities such as follicles is beneficial to the host.'* Then adding, *'Preventing the benefit is not an option.'*

Repercussions; they always happen. Even worse, they were never good. The more he used his abilities, the more his hair would recede. The writing was on the wall, he would probably be bald at a young age. But, for him, it was worth the trade really. If losing hair was the price for invisibility, then invisibility it is.

Resolved in his fate, his mind turned back to Julie. He could break the news at graduation if he had to, but he could warn her ahead of time if she was listening. So, he sent a brief message with the bad news, not expecting to get a response.

*'My what?'* she messaged back, surprising Jeremy with her voice in his head.

Repeating himself, he sent, *'Your hair is going to fall out.'* and cringed in preparation.

*'You can't even sugar coat that?'* she asked, *'Why is my hair going to fall out?'*

After explaining it all, listening to the emotional roller coaster she went through, Julie sent, *'Ha ha, I just thought of something.'*

*'Yeah, I hope its good news.'* he sent back, stressed from the conversation.

*'It is for me.'* she sent, *'I can wear a wig. You have to wear a toupee.'*

*'I'm not wearing a damn toupee.'* he sent back, a little peeved at her humor, *'But your college boy will find out sometime.'* he sent, and immediately regretted the harmful message.

*'My college boy will think what I want him to think.'* she sent back.

Making amends, he sent, *'I hope he thinks you're awesome like I do.'* and headed out the door.

*'Nobody can think like you do.'* she replied, *'I influence them without meaning to.'*

He understood that on many levels. He had blocked any tampering she could do to him but nobody else had the privilege of doing the same. In turn, he influenced the opposite sex just by being in close proximity. True love took on a deeper meaning for him because of that. He would never realize that in anyone else as long as he had his abilities.

*'I made a mistake of trying to make girls protect me'* he sent, *'and I can't stop it from broadcasting either.'* and paused, unsure if he should continue. Taking the risk, he added, *'So now, all they want is to have my babies.'*

*'At least they don't want to own you.'* she sent, *'Wish I could jump, hump, and dump them like that.'* adding, *'All they want to do for me is screw and glue.'*

*'Glue?'* he asked, confused at her terminology.

*'You know, stick around like some lap dog. I can't get rid of them.'* she explained.

He laughed out loud at her dilemma. It seemed easily solved to him. *'You just need to say, thanks for wanting to make me pregnant, and they'll run like scalded dogs.'* he sent.

*'Really?'* she sent back, *'I'll try that right now.'*

A few minutes passed by the time she sent, *'Works like a charm.'*

*'That's good news.'* he replied, arriving at the school.

*'Not really.'* she objected, *'One of them was really cute. I wouldn't mind a roll in the hay with that one.'*

He rolled his eyes at her thoughtlessness, sending, *'Well crazy, you're supposed to screw them first and then hit them with the threat afterwards.'*

She didn't waste a second in her response, *'Oh, is that what you do?'* she asked.

*'Nope,'* he shot back, *'I gave up on women after losing you.'*

*'Then you're the crazy one now.'* she claimed.

The conversation died after that. She had practically broken any intimate ties between them by suggesting he should seek sexual gratification from others. It was now blatantly obvious that he was strictly in the friend zone. It sure made waiting for his diploma a little more miserable.

To add icing to that cake, he had to receive gift cards with Julie as both had aced the finals. And then, both got valedictorian and both got achievement awards for scholarly excellence. The cherry on top was his mom, rounding up Julie to take pictures of the both of them.

And then, things got better. Anita popped up with an older couple.

*"Jeremy, these are my parents."* she started, introducing the couple behind her.

*"Right, and these are mine."* he pointed out, indicating his camera-wielding mother and his scientist for a father.

Julie and her parents were introduced and after the formal greetings, Julie and her parents left. That didn't mean he was done talking to Julie though, who had some words about Anita.

*'So, you got a fish on the hook?'* she sent.

*'I don't want to be the crazy one so I guess I'll give it a shot.'* he replied, talking to Anita about the steamboat restaurant they were going to.

*'She just wants the D you know.'* Julie sent, apparently trying to be spiteful.

*'Then I guess I better give it to her.'* he sent back while telling his parents, "The restaurant is closest to the park," when his dad had thought it was at the opposite end of River Boat Road. He'd lost a ball in the river at that park when he was little. Funny how something like that can break a kid's heart.

*'Yeah, you better wear protection.'* Julie warned, *'Who knows where that cat's been.'*

*'Don't need it,'* he retorted, *'I got Nanonaut.'*

*'Great, you're going to infect her with nanobots and get her pregnant.'* she accused.

That was a possibility he hadn't contemplated so he asked the nanobot if his semen had any in it. The response was, *'Currently, zero count at host request.'* it replied, *'A regiment can be dispatched, however.'*

Smiling at confirming the news that Miss Bordeaux was safe, he led her on, *'At least any sexual diseases will be cured.'*

*'And ruin her life.'* Julie sent back.

Even without the emotion transmitted, he could read between the lines. *'Is that what I did to you, ruined your life?'* he asked, a feeling of regret washing over him.

A moment passed, as his dad told him to gas up the car while handing him the keys and fuel card, before she replied.

*'I'm sorry, I know it isn't your fault,' she sent, 'but I didn't ask for this and sometimes it's a curse as much as it is a blessing.'*

*'I seriously wish I didn't infect you with them.'* he sent, admitting, *'But I like you having them too.'*

*'Valentina tells me I have too many emotional thoughts and it interferes with my deductive reasoning.'* she replied, *'It's like having a rude bitch for a girlfriend in your head.'*

*'Valentina?'* he sent, *'Who's that?'*

*'You know, Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman in space, duh.'* she explained, *'But I don't think I could live without her.'*

*'What happened to calling it Lucy?'* he sent, and quickly sent, *'Never mind, the point I need to get to is, you don't want me and you don't want me being with someone else.'* and asked, *'Who can I be with?'*

*'That's a problem.'* she replied, *'I can love anybody I want but I can't be loved; not really.'* and explained, *'Valentina says males are by nature a procreator and are driven to inseminate. I think you can't help wanting sex but, just don't expect sex to lead to love, ok?'*

*'And what about you?'* he asked, opening the door up for Anita, *'Are you still looking for Mister Right?'*

*'Nope.'* she replied, *'I'm going to be a cat lady.'* Then adding, *'Beats you thinking I'm a slut I guess.'*

Why females had to twist and bend everything into a complicated pretzel was a mystery to him. There were so many things wrong with her statement, he didn't know where to start. Half of his problem was not even knowing what she was talking about. So, he started off trying to understand what she meant.

*'When have I ever thought you were a slut?'* he asked, listening to Anita's plans to have sex under the moonlight and in the ocean and in a barn. She certainly had her fantasies worked out.

*'When you said I had a lot of suitors.'* she replied.

*'That doesn't mean you're a slut; that means a lot of boys want you.'* he corrected, *'And getting a bunch of cats is a whole lot worse than getting a bunch of boys.'* he pointed out, telling Anita that he admired her imagination.

*'Oh, so you're ok with me getting a bunch of boys.'* she sent back.

*'What do I have to do with it?'* he asked, *'It isn't none of my business.'*

*'You acted like it was.'* she shot back.

*'No, you think I acted like it was.'* he explained, *'You can't hear nuances in a message. You were trying to read between lines that weren't there.'* and turned the vehicle onto the riverfront boulevard. "Almost there." he quipped to Anita, sending, *'I don't care what you do or who or how many you do it with.'* to Julie. She left him high and dry. That also left him with a whole lot of not caring burned in him. He wouldn't bat an eye if she was in a gang bang. Her mind games were not going to play with his head. He had too much going on in it already.

But it was second nature by now, carrying on a conversation with one while debating another in his mind. If he wasn't talking to Julie, he was talking to Nanonaut. If it wasn't either of them, it was people he was making suggestions to. He guessed it was his increase in neuro-transponders that helped him keep the conversations straight. Otherwise, he would just be crazy.

Kites flew overhead in the waning light of day. It would be dark by the time they finished eating. Already, families were putting out fires in grills by covered picnic tables and tugging coolers back to their vehicles. The sun skipped across the river, making it sparkle, with a lone

boat heading off between the bridge supports. The barge with a restaurant was already lit up with the expectation of darkness.

*'I guess that's it then.'* Julie messaged, *'I'll have guys instead of cats for pets.'*

He almost rolled his eyes at Anita as she thanked him for opening the restaurant door. Julie was out to drive him crazy. He almost had a mind to block her. *'Did you not learn anything from the incident at the ball field?'* he asked, adding, *'You need a good motto to live by; one swinging dick at a time.'*

*'Oh, that's rich.'* she sent back, as he greeted the host, "Reservation for Dodd." He then sent Julie, *'Dicks don't play well with each other.'*

*'I'll see about that.'* she replied, as he followed the waitress seating them.

*'You do that; I'm going to eat.'* he sent, trying to get her out of his head while he focused on his date.

*'Oh, have a nice meal.'* she replied, *'And don't order anything messy.'*

*'Good tip, thanks.'* he sent, asking Anita, "What would you like to drink?"

The meal was absolutely delicious and the sultry antics of Anita kept him entertained. Nothing said sexy more than a girl with lusty eyes licking desert off of a spoon. Intentional or not, it certainly gave him some lewd thoughts to consider.

"So, you know I'm on the pill, you know some of my fantasies. Tell me something that turns you on." she begged, picking up her napkin.

With a shrug, he admitted, "Right now, it's you." and smiled at her. Although she took the compliment well, she wanted more than that.

"Really, I told you about some of my kinks; you're bound to have one or two." she prodded.

"I'm a guy so..." he started, summing up his thoughts on the matter, "it doesn't take too much to get me going."

"So, you're typical; girl on girl action," she assumed, "tits and ass, lingerie..." she listed, looking up at the ceiling as if pulling them from there.

"Yeah, that's right," he interrupted, "but I haven't discovered anything out of the ordinary yet." and picked up his drink.

"You just need someone to find them for you." she quipped, and took a sip of her drink as well.

He nodded in agreement, stating, "I think I already have."

After paying the bill, he led Anita past the car, directing her to the pathway that ran beside the river. That brought a conniving grin from her as she relented to his bidding.

"A late night stroll." she mused, "To settle the food, of course."

"The park is closed," he explained, "but the path is always open."

"Sounds like a good motto to live by." she giggled, taking his hand.

Her words caught him off guard and he looked at her in puzzlement. He couldn't help but wonder if his message to Julie had somehow bled over onto her. He intentionally refrained from sending any messages to Anita, hoping she would accept him without his provocation.

Lightposts lined the pathway, chasing the night away in iridescent circles. The wind whipped around Anita's legs, trying to lift her dress. When the hem lifted up past her panties, she didn't even try to fight it, relying on gravity to prevail over the gust.

Stopping at a wooden plank that led off towards the river, Jeremy pointed out, "I think that's a quarter moon." nodding at the luminescent orb above them.

"I think you're right." Anita said shyly, a little embarrassed, swaying back and forth.

"I think the veteran's memorial is down this way." Jeremy continued, indicating the turnoff.

Her eyes grew in excitement and she agreed, "I think you're right."

Offering his arm, she took it and both strolled down the plank. A pyramid with the top flattened appeared before the waterway. One lone flag flew at half-staff above it. Inside were restrooms for the park patron's convenience but the top was their destination. The steps were in the dark and he held her arm as they ascended, grasping the railing along the way.

Skyscrapers came into view, boasting flashing lights on top to warn aviators above them. An occasional florescent light dotted the windows of rooms with either late night workers or neglected light switches. Sun rays had been replaced with moon rays as they lit a path to their location. A siren in the distance bounced off of the water, alerting that someone in the city needed assistance.

A barge hauling coal was silently making its trek to whatever its destination, and Anita sighed at the sight of sparkling water of the shoreline lights from the opposite side. "It's so beautiful at night." she observed out loud

"It makes me feel small." Jeremy confessed, grabbing hold of the single chain wrapped around the platform that separated him from the plunge into lapping water. He could make out ant-sized people in one of the buildings which must have been a hotel.

"It makes me feel wet." Anita replied, drawing his attention.

It took a split second to soak in the sight of her standing in her panties with the dress piled up at her feet. He searched for other human life nearby and was glad to detect none in close proximity. Although she stood in the shadows of the flag base, he could see her plainly in the dark. As if he needed any proof at all, she was sending out signals his animalistic instincts couldn't deny.

Stepping up to her, he ran the back of his hand from her cheek to her breasts and then pulled her close to him. In a fevered rush, she pulled at his dress shirt and fought the buttons holding it closed. His hands roamed over her back and buttocks while she nipped and kissed his bared chest. He helped her in the endeavor by kicking off his shoes and unbuckling his dress pants.

She was wanting something to remember the night by and he fully intended to give it to her. Pushing her up against the pebble veneer of the flag base, he ravaged her neck with his lips. Working his way down to a nipple, he sucked it in and tongued it.

Electricity traveled from her nipple to her sex, causing her to claw his back and forcing his face further into her bosom. The harsh surface on her back went without notice as his hand traveled to her mound, forcing a gasp out of her when he clutched it.

Lifting her leg, he ground his manhood over the lips of its target. Snagging her panties on his fingers, he pulled them to the side. His other hand pulled his briefs down and tucked it behind his testicles. With moonlight washing over her breasts, they begged for attention and he raised his hand to knead them.

Her pupils dilated when he entered her sex, causing her eyes to flutter. Mystified at the position they were in, she moaned out, "You're... you're going to fuck me standing up."

Without a word, he proved her right as he thrust himself the rest of the way in. He paused to remember the sensation as it was his first time inside of a woman. The heat was quickly overwhelmed by the pulsing her sex was emitting, as if trying to suck him in further. Her expression would burn a memory in his mind as she melted in his arms.

Another thrust made her head jerk back and she stared at the moon above her. Another made her chest stick out and the tips of her nipples scraped his chest. The third led to a fourth and that led to losing count as he quite literally drove her up the wall.

Pinned by her throat and one of her breasts, he pounded an orgasm out of her. She quaked in his arms as he shot off his load, and that forced another orgasm from her. Grabbing his arm that held her throat, she writhed while awash in her climax.

Sweat beaded on her heaving chest and reflected the moon light with tiny sparkles. He slowed his thrusts to a halt and eased his grip on a now reddened breast. Slowly, he let her slide down the wall where she could find her footing. Gravity was a stranger for a moment and he held her until she learned it over again.

“Damn, that was wild.” she had to admit, and leaned back on the wall for support.

The seed he had saved for Julie Chiders was now imbedded deep in Anita Greer. While semen dripped from his half-swollen cockhead, a wave of regret washed over him. Had she given him any sign of forgiveness, he might not be standing here. But there were things he didn’t understand with the girl he had loved and lost. Just the scent of another woman had such a detrimental effect on their relationship, he probably wouldn’t have lasted long to begin with.

But his thoughts were interrupted while he watched Anita pull her dress up. A boat of partiers was cruising by, leaving a small wake in its path. Music was blaring over top of the chatter with a beat that thumped in the night. But when the engine was revved to pick up speed, another sound filled his senses.

He turned towards the scream of surprise and watched a bikini-clad woman fall overboard. “Help!” she called, upon resurfacing and went back under again. But nobody would be able to hear her plea over the noisy partying happening on that boat.

She bobbed back up and yelled, “I can’t swim!” and went under the water for the second time.

“God Jeremy, that girl’s in...” Anita started, but stopped as she saw his feet leave the platform.

He dove in without a thought but that quickly changed with hitting the frigid water. Not only was it cold but it was murky and seeing under water would be difficult. He turned his ability to see heat on and only then could he make out the flailing body of the drowning victim.

He swam as fast as he could but the undertow kept taking him back down. He needed to resurface and take in more oxygen but his dive had put him too far under. Swimming up was a slow process as he was fighting the flow of the water. As his lungs burned from the deprivation, he tried to stay focused on the girl. But the body wants what it needs and Nanonaut sounded off.

*‘Oxygen level is critical.’* it so wisely pointed out.

*‘I’m trying.’* he thought, kicking his feet and fanning his arms the best he could.

*‘Instigating alternative resources.’* it claimed, *‘The host will see a noticeable difference.’*

Even as the undertow held him under water, it at least helped propel him towards his goal. As the burning subsided in his chest, Nanonaut announced its progress.

*‘Oxygen is being extracted’* it claimed, and instructed, *‘Host needs to exhale carbon dioxide.’*

Unconscientiously, he let some escape. But it wasn’t good enough for the parasite claiming, *‘Insufficient space for oxygen;’* demanding him to, *‘release remaining carbon dioxide.’*

*‘I’ll drown.’* he thought, watching the flailing girl go down for the third time.

*‘Host is incapable of drowning.’* Nanonaut informed him, *‘Water molecules are being converted into hydrogen and oxygen through the host’s ear canals.’* and tutored, *‘By inhaling with your esophagus and nasal pathway closed, extracted oxygen will be pulled into the lungs.’*

Watching the body heat start to dim on the sinking woman's aura, he took a leap of faith. Letting the remaining air out of his lungs, he tried to inhale with his orifices closed. To his surprise, he could feel it travel down the sides of his neck and oxygen filled his lungs.

'Ok,' he thought, *'I get it now.'* and took another breath from his ears.

He finally broke through the undercurrent and latched on to a withering body. Turning her around to breathe into her mouth, he was confronted with a face he recognized. Kathy Ferguson let out the last of her air just as she recognized her rescuer.

Pinching her nose, he blew in her mouth and reluctantly, she took the second-hand offering. Spinning around, he pulled her arms around his neck and started swimming to the surface. She held on with her head buried in his shoulder, contemplating the near death experience. When they finally hit air, she let out his donation and gulped in sacred oxygen.

Swimming back to shore would be a whole lot easier since he was above the undercurrent. All he could think was how lucky he was to have nanobots saving him.

"Damn Jeremy," Kathy said by his ear, "I didn't expect to see you here."

"I didn't expect to see you either," he agreed, eyeing the flag for his marker.

"Well, thank you again," she offered, adding, "for saving me."

"Nothing to it," he lied, remembering the hold the undertow had had on him. Those that died by jumping off of a bridge were usually found at the locks. He thought for sure he would be yet another dead body found at the dam twenty miles away.

Sirens again sounded in the night but this time they were heading toward him. A boat with flashing blue lights shined a spotlight on the two. But they were too late to be any help as his feet touched solid ground.

Stumbling a little, both gained their land legs and Kathy took a seat on the bank. Anita came running with his clothes in hand, yelling, "Oh my god!" over and over.

"Are you ok?" a man called out, using a bullhorn on the police boat.

Jeremy waved and gave them a thumbs up, shielding the spotlight from his night vision. He disabled that ability since they were safe and it was no longer needed.

Anita's last exclamation turned into, "Oh my god it's you!" when she realized it was Kathy that was in peril.

"Hey." was all she could reply as exhaustion washed over her.

Red lights pierced through the foliage in the direction they had entered from. Paramedics made their way to the side of the monument, fighting a stretcher on uneven ground with equipment perched on it.

"Damn Jeremy, I thought I lost you!" Anita swore, "I called 911 when I didn't see you come back up."

"Thanks." was all he could think to say, as a revelation that water made his briefs see-through when the paramedic's flashlights shined on him.

Maybe his superior vision made it seem that way but he covered up his sex with his hands just in case. He was thankful to be able to dry off when a female paramedic wrapped a blanket around him. Another was wrapped around a now shivering Kathy Ferguson.

Several policemen made the trip down the path and one, notebook in hand, approached Jeremy. While he explained the event to the officer, Anita checked on Kathy. She offered her a phone and, between sobs, made a phone call.

More people arrived; worse than the police with guns or paramedics with needles. These people carried microphones. Policemen ushered them back and tripods were set up and cameras were mounted on them. Several kept asking the officers, "Was it a suicide?"

“She fell overboard when the boat she was on sped up.” he explained, as a paramedic took his blood pressure. “I’m fine.” he assured the medic.

“What boat?” the officer asked, pausing the scribbles he was making in his notepad.

Jeremy looked over at the river and said, “That one.” and pointed at the large party boat approaching.

“Ahoy!” someone yelled, as the small yacht slowed and stopped. “Looking for Kathy Fugate!” he claimed, and everyone in hearing distance pointed to the girl lying down on a stretcher.

Jeremy instantly recognized Steve Otto standing by the older man doing the asking.

“Is she all right?” he asked.

The medic strapping her on the gurney turned his head and yelled, “Taking her for observation!”

If he had to guess, it was probably Steve himself that gunned the engine. But that was something he may never know for sure.

“So, you swam out there and brought her back here?” the officer asked, having some doubt over the story.

“Yes he did, I saw him.” Anita piped in.

“You can’t even see your toes in that water at noon time, let alone at night.” the officer thought out loud.

“So he’s a super hero then.” Anita argued.

“Hold up!” the officer called, seeing his second subject getting carted away, “I need a statement!”

“Get it at the hospital.” the medic replied, carrying a medical box in one hand while tugging the stretcher with the other.

“You’re good.” the female medic stated, and packed her gear. After clicking the box shut, she lugged it over to the stretcher and placed it at Kathy’s feet. Both now had the burden of pulling the victim back up the pathway.

“Hope she’s ok.” he thought out loud, watching her disappear behind the memorial.

“Me too.” Anita replied, “They said hyperthermia, shock, or both.”

An uprising of questions were thrown at them as they gathered his clothes to leave. Another first was being naked in front of the whole city across the river. As Anita held the blanket up, he removed the soaked briefs. Putting on pants and shirt, he didn’t want to sit down to put shoes on so he carried them with his tie draped over them.

“What happened?” one reporter asked, as he approached them.

“Accident.” he replied, working down the line of reporters.

“What was her name?” another asked, but Jeremy thought it was best for Kathy if he didn’t answer that. “Everything is fine.” he said instead.

Getting back to the path that led to his parent’s car, he thought about the incident. His vision, cloaking ability, rapid repair, pheromone messaging, and breathing under water did have a comic book ring to it. Maybe he could do some good with his abilities.

“Super hero, huh?” he asked Anita, opening the car door for her.

“You saved a life like one.” she replied with a smile, “And you fuck like one too.” and took her seat in the car.

## Chapter 12

The following day held a few surprises. His parents rushed him outside as a dealership dropped off a car. It was their graduation gift and his means of transportation to college. He actually teared up watching his mom get emotional over him, "Growing up too fast."

While his dad was pointing out some of the features of the car, a van pulled up with the local news channel logo on its side. A bearded man got out and opened the side door while a female exited the passenger side. Her pheromones told of a determined mind, set on a mission.

He'd gotten home late last night and hadn't told his parents of the event. Nudging his dad, he nodded in the reporter's direction.

"They're here because of last night." he warned.

"Why; what happened last night?" he asked, looking up at the oncoming female.

"A girl fell into the river and I pulled her out." he quickly explained.

"Oh, that's not too bad." he quipped, and greeted the lady with, "Hi!"

"Hello, Amy Shaw with channel nine." she replied formally. "I'm looking for Jeremy Dodd."

"That's my son," Jerold admitted, "right here." indicating Jeremy on the opposite side of his car. "What happened?"

She asked the basic softball questions at first but changed her demeanor towards the end,

"How do you feel about the outbreak of deaths on the river?" she asked, pointing the microphone back to him.

"I really don't know anything about it, I don't watch the news." he admitted.

She looked back at the camera and summarized the events with, "Five bodies in a week's time has been pulled out of the river. All female, all died by mysterious means, and all with questionable professions." and pointed the mike back at him.

He scratched his head while that sunk in and stated, "It sounds suspicious to me. If you are in a dangerous profession, you might want to work away from the river and carry some protection." he advised.

"Not everyone is lucky enough to be rescued by a hero like Mr. Dodd. But the big question is..." she continued, stepping away from him, "What do the authorities plan to do about it?"

After posing in silence for a few seconds, she gave the camera guy a cut sign. Handing the microphone to the camera man, she walked back to Jeremy and extended a hand.

"Thanks for taking the time Mr. Dodd." she acknowledged, "You can see yourself on the six o'clock news." and headed for the van.

Watching the swing of her hips, he was convinced that his pheromones had little effect on her. She probably already had children but if that was the case, she recovered nicely from the pregnancy. He could tell that someone probably enjoyed a figure like that as sunlight traveled through her clothes allowing her curvy shape to tease him.

Deciding to take his new compact out for a test drive, he headed over to the hospital to check in on Kathy, hoping the media wouldn't find her like they did him. He probably wasn't

somebody she would normally see, but it would be awkward to save her life and not follow up with a visit. The least he could do was see her.

The healthcare system was bustling in business and parking was scarce. Finding a spot on the fourth level of the garage, he was lucky enough to park his gift by the elevators. His dad was right; nanobots could end the very existence of hospitals and medical centers. Having a specialist inside your body would eliminate a financial and scientific field from doctors to educators to pharmaceuticals. Given the parasite in his brain, he probably wouldn't recommend his dad's remedy anyway, even though he could turn off its communication when he chose.

Still, it was upsetting to know that medical treatment was designed to maintain an illness rather than curing it. It was a method of postponing what would be the inevitable, with the lack of will or want to do otherwise.

The elevator doors parted and a wave of emotional pheromones struck him in the head. The immediate change in atmosphere was almost overwhelming. Worry and pain seemed the most dominant, and the gloom and doom formed into hopelessness. Still, the faint sense of joy and relief, as some found good news in such a dreary place, entered his senses as newborns arrived while mended patients were released. And, all of that was just in the lobby.

He approached the information desk with an elderly woman manning the helm. Two girls were gossiping behind her wearing candy-striped blouses and skirts. Their topic of discussion was focused on a doctor that had inappropriate relations with a nurse they both knew. The elderly receptionist seemed disinterested in the rumors and perked up on his arrival.

"I'm looking for Kathy Ferguson's room." he inquired, causing the girl's conversation to cease.

"One moment please." the woman with a 'Marge Crouton' badge replied, pecking away on a keyboard. A moment later, she announced, "Room 541."

Before he could acknowledge her, one of the candy strippers piped in, "Fifth floor." Stepping to the desk, "The old wing." she asserted, and then studied him intently.

"Well thank you." he replied, and turned to go.

"I can show you, it's a little confusing." the red-headed helper spurted out.

"Ok." he relented, not really knowing his way around and a beautiful escort seemed appealing.

She walked around the desk and guided him down the hallway. "These lines take you to different places." she explained, pointing to the vinyl strips of various colors, "We are going to follow the blue one."

It led to an elevator surrounded by decorative wall paper. The button that summoned the carrier was encircled with leaves of brass instead of the bare stainless steel plate the others had. His guide pushed the one marked with an up arrow and the doors opened to a small elevator.

She leaned past him and pressed number five, giving him a scent of cherry lip gloss and strawberry shampoo. The aromas lingered around him when the doors closed. That reminded him of his pheromones which were probably bouncing off of the walls.

"It's hot in here isn't it?" she asked, unfastening buttons on her blouse.

"No ventilation." he pointed out, as the car lurched upward.

"It's a little rusty," she apologized, "since its old."

He smiled and quipped, "Needs a little grease."

She laughed and agreed, "Yeah, lube." and turned a little red at her assessment.

She was saved by the bell alerting the passengers that the door was opening. She led the way past the nurse's station down a corridor with carts, wheelchairs, and medical equipment against

its walls. Whether she did it by accident or just used the obstacles for an excuse, she bumped into him several times on the way to 541, emitting an “oops” or “excuse me” each time.

He was glad to find the room and waited while she knocked lightly on the door. His pheromones were probably driving her crazy and she wasn't helping him at all with the ‘candy’ she was taunting him with, which he could clearly see through her red and white stripes.

“A visitor.” she announced, and opened the door wider for him to enter.

He lifted his hand in greeting a group surrounding Kathy sitting on the hospital bed. As the volunteer shut the door, Kathy introduced him to her other visitors, “This is Jeremy.” and pointed out her friends and family.

The two cousins sitting beside her whispered while he greeted each one, “Geek?” and the other whispering, “He doesn't look like a geek.” obviously referring to a description Kathy had given them. Steve, leaning against the window sill, didn't even bother to look at him.

“Thought I would stop by and see how you were doing.” he stated, offering Kathy a smile.

“I'm good.” she quipped, “They're releasing me soon; just waiting on paperwork.”

Feeling the animosity from Steve, he thought it best to make his visit short. “Ok, I'm glad to hear it,” he mused, “take care of yourself.”

“I will.” she vowed, offering him a smile.

With a nod, he turned to leave and opened up the door. Stepping out, he was greeted by the candy striped helper. “Oh, hi...” he blurted, surprised to see her there, “um, what's your name?”

“Kelsey.” she chirped with a smile, “You can call me Kay.”

“Hello Kay.” he greeted, offering, “I'm Jeremy.” and side stepped her.

“Do you remember the way back?” she asked, falling in step beside him.

Knowing full well she was making up excuses to talk with him, he tolerated her attempt simply because of her appeal. She was a hard image to look away from. “Yes, I think so.” he replied, not wanting to encourage her but unable to be more forceful.

“Ok, there's a short cut if you want to skip the lobby.” she offered, emitting an “Oops” when bumping into him to avoid a cart of food. “That elevator didn't seem very safe.”

Well, if she was going to keep leading him on, he might as well let her. “Alright, I'm game for anything.” he quipped, “Lead the way.” directing her ahead of him.

It worked out nicely as she was able to keep from bumping into him and he gained the scenery of her backside. Focusing on her buttocks to see through her clothes; a tattoo, of a pair of guns crossing each other with the words “Bad Ass” written on a ribbon underneath, caught his eye. Usually, girls went with hearts and roses, but this girl was a little different.

They rounded the nursing station and headed down another hallway. At least this one wasn't as cluttered. Kay slowed to walk beside him asking, “So, you haven't been to Citizen's Medical before?”

“No, I was born at Maple's.” he confessed, sensing her pheromones engulf him.

“Oh, how about a quick tour?” she asked, brushing her breast against his arm.

You didn't need any special skills to see where this was headed. He played along with the ploy replying with, “I'm game for anything.”

“This is the old cathedral.” she announced, opening up a door on the left at the end of the hall. “The new one is much larger.”

The musty smell of an unused room lingered in the air and dust particles flickered in the light cascading from colored glass, disturbed by their intrusion. Three pews faced a wooden podium aligned under the stained glass of an opened arched angel.

“Doesn't get much use.” he noted out loud, stepping towards the podium.

“But what’s interesting here is this room.” she pointed out, indicating a solid wood door on the right. Walking over to it, she opened it up. “I’m not sure, but I think the minister used this for counseling and stuff.” stepping aside to let him enter.

A desk with a leather chair behind it came into view. Across from it, a green vinyl couch held a matching pillow on each end. Above it, a window with a view of the rolling hills in the distance and the flower garden arranged on the ground. But the room lacked the articles usually found in such an office; obvious signs that its user had long since vacated the room.

“Not much in here.” he noted aloud, raking his finger on a dust-cover desk as he stepped closer to the view.

“It has something that no other room has in this part of the building.” Kay retorted, and grinned.

“Oh?” he asked, turning away from the window to focus on her.

“Yep.” she quipped, “Behold, the only door around here with a lock on it.” and pointed out the dead bolt.

“I guess they needed privacy,” Jeremy observed, “for the intimate conversations they had in here.”

“What if I told you I wanted to get intimate with you?” she asked, and turned the bolt. “You did say you were game for anything.” she recalled, stepping up to him.

“You got me there.” he admitted, sending out messages to her. He watched as his suggestions were enacted as she unbuttoned the striped flap of her dress and let it fall. “What game would you like to play?” he asked, watching her blouse spread open.

A sly grin crossed her face as she suggested, “How about you be the patient and I’ll be the nurse?” and pulled up his shirt.

“I’m game for that!” he exclaimed, suggesting she undress him.

Standing nude while she knelt, he waited for her to fix the ache he had in his crotch. But sounds of people entering the prayer room made his acute ears perk up. Tapping on her head, he alerted Kay of their approach. Surprised at their presence, she stood up with her eyes wide in fear.

“Who is it?” she asked, scrambling for her clothes.

He gave her a shrug and said, “How should I know?” leaning his head in their direction.

“C’mon Daphne, we only have twenty minutes.” the male urged, approaching the locked door.

“Daphne?” he asked in a whisper as Kay scrambled to get clothes on.

“Yeah, but I can’t hear her.” she agreed, and pointed out his condition, “Get dressed; they have a key!”

“Hide behind the desk.” he suggested, “I’ll be ok.” and the door knob turned.

“It’s locked.” the male exclaimed, as Kay went behind the desk.

“Oh, maybe it’s occupied.” Daphne giggled.

“Occupied.” the male mocked, and Jeremy could hear him rummage around objects in his pocket.

“C’mon Barry, we aren’t the only two people that know about the room.” Daphne cautioned.

“Nope.” Barry agreed, sliding the key in the lock, “But we’re the only two with a key.” and opened the door.

Jeremy had turned his ability on as soon as Kay ducked under the desk. He even had time to kick his clothes under the couch. But two more people in the room was making it crowded fast, so he stepped up on the couch arm to get out of their way.

“See?” Barry observed, “Nobody in here.” and dropped the keys back in his pocket.

Daphne locked the door and said, “There could have been. Probably a fifty-fifty shot.” and faced her lover.

“No way, I probably locked it earlier and forgot.” he rationalized, grabbing her.

“You know you’re not supposed to.” she chastised, “The janitor needs to get in here and he’ll change the lock if it is.”

“Ha!” Barry scoffed, “You’d have better luck finding George in the boiler room sleeping.” pulling up Daphne’s smock.

As clothes came off, he could see Kay peeking out from behind the desk, getting her eyes full. But when Barry threw Daphne on the couch, it caused him to lose his balance and he ended up in a sitting position on the back of it. There Daphne sat, just below him, with his manhood inches away from her hair.

He wasn’t there long as Barry dove after her, forcing him to move his legs. The only place to go was the window, so he perched on the window sill, hovering above them.

“Get me up.” Barry ordered, and stood up straddling the sitting girl.

While his manhood headed for her mouth, his face was headed for Jeremy’s chest. That forced him further out the window. With the probability of getting head-butted by Barry, he dropped out the window and caught the ledge.

Swaying in the breeze, his own manhood scraped the stucco on the wall. This was not good. Just catching himself was stressing his fingers and hanging there with his weight on them was making them work overtime. He waited a moment and tried to pull himself up.

Barry was humping away in the mouth of Daphne and blocking the window while he did it. The little freak was looking out over the landscape with his tongue hanging out. Carefully, so his own private parts wouldn’t get torn up, he lowered himself back down.

Giving one arm a break, he held on to the smooth concrete ledge with the other, while shaking life back into it. Then, he did the same with the other. Scraping his toes on the wall, he couldn’t find any footing there. In fact, the next ledge was well out of his reach. Of all the exercising he’d done over the past few weeks, chin-ups wasn’t one of them.

Hearing the couple move around, he tried to pull himself back up. This time, he came face to face with Daphne, who was getting it from behind while her distorted face was in the window. He didn’t have the strength or ability to work around the grunting woman. He eased himself back down again, realizing how much his fingers felt like they were cramping.

The situation was now critical and his fingers on one hand slipped off the ledge. *‘Nanonaut, what can you do?’* he thought to himself, feeling his strength fading fast.

*‘Converting sugar and oil,’* it responded, *‘excreting pulvilli through phalange pores.’* adding, *‘Host will see a noticeable difference.’*

He reached for the ledge, trying to replace his hand before the second one slipped off and it stuck. Like super glue, it was instant. The fingers already on the ledge stopped sliding and he was able to relax his grip. His toes on the wall had the same effect and he finally found his footing, stuck to the side of the hospital.

Peeling his extremities off allowed him to remove them from the surfaces. It was like removing flypaper, without the sticky residue left behind. Instead, the goo stayed on him. This would be another ability he would be glad to turn off. But since it was activated, he might as well get some use out of it. Going back through the office was pointless since they’d locked the door. Besides, he’d already seen enough of the sweaty couple that knocked him out of being horny.

Peel and stick; stick and peel; it required a rhythm for him to develop since he was actually crawling on all four extremities. He crawled to the next window and found the window closed. In fact, it seemed to be the norm throughout the whole floor. He crawled over to the new part of the building and found that the windows there were made not to open.

Thinking his options were poor, he went back to the old part and went up a level in search of an open window. He could climb down and go through the front door again with an image of clothes on but then it would be awkward seeing Marge, the desk clerk, again. He could also go through the building in camouflage, just as he was. But, bumping into someone was a risk. Besides, that was a lot of work.

Fortunately, he came across another window not far from the one he left. He would be able to rest up before heading back to the office room for his clothes. Even though the room wasn't empty, it was large enough for him to go undetected. Climbing in, he watched a mother hovering over her son while he laid in a hospital bed. It was easy to determine that by the one-sided conversation she was having with him.

She had warned him about riding a motorcycle without a helmet but because he hadn't heeded the warning, he was in the state he was in as a result of it. He was unresponsive and judging by the bandage on his head and the equipment attached, his condition was critical.

While the mother was emitting pheromones of grief, her son emitted nothing. Whether his mind was dormant in coma or damaged beyond repair, Jeremy couldn't tell. But he suspected her scolding was in vain. He sat in the floor listening to her sobbing drown out the beeping of her son's heartbeat. Even though she wouldn't know it, he did feel her pain. He answered her signals with suggestions of sympathy and reassurance.

While she was crying on his chest, the machine stopped its beeping, causing him to stand up to see what was happening. The beep turned into a long high pitch tone and the mother raised up off of her son. The fear in her eyes said it all, as her son had ceased to live. It was just as emotional for Jeremy as her pheromones bathed him in anguish. A long, drawn out wail was followed by pleas for him to stay. He had to get away from the heavy burden of despair and turned off his ability to sense pheromones. Someone could notice the tears dropping from his cheeks.

The door burst open and a nurse entered, followed by another and then a male, possibly a doctor. The hysterical mother was pleading for them to save him and the second nurse escorted her out. Jeremy, taking advantage of the opportunity to leave, followed behind them; passing the male whispering to the other nurse, "He's a goner." The nurse agreeing, "He's better off that way."

The mother was directed to a chair outside the room and the nurse stayed with her, urging her to stay seated. The poor woman argued, "No, I have to tell him something!" and tried to stand.

The nurse blocked her efforts claiming, "The best you can do for him is to stay out of the way."

Slowly sitting back down, she explained, "I... I have to tell him I love him."

"Its alright." the unconcerned nurse replied, looking around as if finding something better to do.

Seeing the physical trauma causing her body to shiver, he just couldn't stand there and let the poor woman suffer. Whether an afterlife existed or not, many thought it did. He supposed that was all that mattered in the end. It was comforting at least to believe it.

Kneeling beside her, he leaned in close to her ear and whispered, "Its ok, I already know." and moved away from a very shocked mother.

## Chapter 13

He spent the beginning of summer body-building and defense training during the day and climbing walls at night. His body was becoming too bulky and he settled for a swimmer's build instead, sticking with their training regimen. His father's concern was that the time could be more useful preparing for the college education he wanted his son to have. But with the infinite knowledge available on the internet, he could easily comprehend his expected studies and actually sought other studies he was interested in.

The first few weeks weren't very noteworthy, if you could call hanging upside down by your feet on a ceiling while doing crunches uneventful. He did lack any webbing he could shoot out to complete his spider-like abilities. Because of the laws of physics, he felt that the whole spider man hype was not plausible. Just crawling on walls was a slower process than what the movies portrayed. And, jumping from one wall to another was risky, having to peel off of one and stick to another could leave him stuck to both if they were close enough; or worse, face plant on the wall he was on because his feet wouldn't peel off the right way.

Oh, and turning the sticky substance off was fine and dandy, but that still didn't clear up the gooey mess he already had. Dishwashing soap seemed the best at removing it and he made a habit out of keeping a small container of it in his possession.

He still didn't make any efforts to go out and fight crime. The consequences of being discovered were enough to keep him from being an invisible hero. But watching the news with his parents one evening would allow him to make an exception to his concerns. Amy Shaw was reporting on an update regarding the women that had turned up at the dam.

The coroner had released documents claiming that signs of torture and rape were apparent and seemed to be the evidence of a serial killer. In Amy's own words, "It may very well be that these victims were dead before they hit the water."

"That is pretty sick dad," he commented, after the reporter signed off.

"There's sick people out there," he agreed, "Somebody has the way and the means to get by with it too."

That evening, he researched the victims, but didn't find much about them. He searched for maps of the river and gained some insight on the complexity of its source and destinations.

While the main river was pretty much used by transportation: hauling coal; party boats; and cruises, a few rivers that poured into it seemed remote. If he was a murdering kind, he wouldn't risk dumping off a body in such a populated river, opting instead for one of the minor ones that would take the remains to it. He wondered if the police were monitoring those inlets.

Finding a camping ground on the banks of one, he thought that would be a good start and prepared to stake out the promising site. Donning sweat pants, sweat shirt, and sandals in case he needed to strip, he gathered his keys and phone. With a bag of cut up vegetables to munch on, he headed out to find a spot to survey from.

The camp was less than an hour away and it always amazed him how fast one could go from city to nothing in such a short distance. The well-off had their suburbs with pricey houses and

then there were the even more reclusive residences, whose property had passed down for generations to offspring. As franchises diminished, mom and pop stores emerged, with an occasional familiar gas station off to the sides. Where they were open 24/7 in the city, they were closing at night in the country as there wasn't enough business worth keeping them open overnight.

He came within sight of the campground's entrance and parked on the side of the road. A booth illuminated by a single outdoor fixture attached to it was the check-in office, sporting a speed limit sign of five miles an hour.

He rolled down his window to be able to hear anything important and picked up his phone. While it was charging, he started draining it by reading science articles on the internet. It helped take the creepiness out of the area as the wind blew the shadow of maple leaves over the road.

The longer he sat, the more he thought of how ridiculous it was for him to be there. All he had heard so far was a dog in the distance past the check-in booth. Determined to give it time, he settled back in his seat and watched a video on weightlessness and its effect on the human body. That was a long clip and he was glad to have unlimited data.

A scream pierced the air and he jerked up at hearing it. Getting out of his car, he turned his stealth on and started stripping. Locking his car and putting the keys behind the driver side tire, he headed off in the direction of the sound.

"Oh my god, you're crazy!" he heard, causing him to pick up his pace.

Climbing walls did one thing for him; it toughened up his feet. Night vision allowed him to dodge the trees and bushes while running full speed ahead. He came to the edge of the water and found a camper to his right. A foggy mist hovered above the ground and blurred the line between land and water.

Pheromones in the air caused him to look to his left and a girl sporting bikini bottoms ran at him. He stepped back out of the way of the bouncing breasts and detected her heightened excitement. Looking back for the source of her emotions, he saw a male with a round belly in pursuit. He was nowhere near as fit as his prey and was struggling to catch up. Jeremy stepped in front of him and for the first time in his life, threw the first punch.

The man stopped dead in his tracks and gazed at nothing. As if dropped by a lumber jack, he fell back with a thud. The man still thought he was running and his legs lifted up and down a few times. The dumbfounded expression on his face was overpowered by his mouth that formed unintelligible words, making his cheeks suck in and out like a fish out of water.

Jeremy picked up his arms and drug him to the nearest tree. He needed something to tie him to the tree with so he wouldn't escape before the police got there. He sure wasn't hanging around for them. His concern was the guy recovering before he was secure.

He headed for the camper in hopes of finding a rope and almost got struck with the side door opening. "Boogie?" the girl called, peering out in the dark.

'Boogie?' he thought, wondering what that meant, lurking behind the door.

"Where's my boogie man?" she cooed, stepping out of the trailer.

Jeremy rolled his eyes. Either they were horsing around or role playing. His efforts were futile. He followed behind the girl and stopped when she discovered the slobbering mouth of 'boogie'.

"Damn it Gilbert!" she chastised, kicking his lifeless foot, "You were supposed to fuck me!" and kicked him again.

Gilbert moaned and moved his head side to side. Jeremy thought he had punched any erection he had out of him. She wasn't going to get much out of him for a while.

“Your drunk ass can sleep out here tonight!” she threatened with a huff, crossing her arms.

Getting no response, she turned and headed back towards the camper. Thinking he had put the guy out, he thought the least he could do was try to revive him. He walked to the river and cupped his hands. Bringing back as much water as he could, he dumped it on Gilbert’s face. Reflexes caused him to shake his head but then the man started snoring.

He justified the man’s poor condition thinking alcohol and running doesn’t mix well when you’re out of shape. Of course, a solid punch in the snout didn’t help his condition either. But still, the guy would have probably woken up by now if it wasn’t for the other factors involved. Still, he did feel kind of bad about it all.

Seeing that there wasn’t much else he could do for Gilbert, he strolled back over to the camper to see if the girl was alright. Turning on his UV sensor, he didn’t detect her in the camper. Looking around, he saw a heat signature towards the water edge. He turned and headed in that direction.

An open beer sat on a portable table while she laid in a lawn chair with the top tilted back. He stepped closer to see what she was up to since she seemed to be making the chair move.

Blonde hair cascaded over the sides of the chair and her breasts came into view, pointing at an angle into the night sky. He followed her hand as she reached for the beer and guzzled it down. Her other hand had slipped inside her bikini.

She dropped the beer on the grass and grabbed a breast, rolling a nipple between her fingers. He stepped as close as he could without breathing on her and smelled her sex building up. The tantalizing aroma made his manhood stiffen and the vision of her playing with herself sped up its process. Instinctively, he reached a hand towards the vacant breast and stopped himself.

*‘No touching without permission.’* he thought, pulling his hand back.

The guilt of invading someone’s privacy took hold of him and he stood up to leave. She tilted her head back and closed her eyes in anticipation of her orgasm. Cursing himself for lusting after her, he turned to slip away in the dark.

His plan of disappearing without being noticed faded in an instant when his cockhead smacked her open mouth. Pre-cum left a snail’s trail across her cheek and his manhood struck the side of the lawn chair. Horrified, he froze in anticipation of the blood-curdling scream she was bound to let out.

“What the hell?” she asked, sitting up and wiping her cheek. Smelling the gooey substance, she asked, “What the hell is that?” and tasted it.

There was no way he could fix it. No amount of explaining, no flight of fantasy, and no fairy tale wild enough to solve the puzzle he had thrust at her. His high intellect was gridlocked with scenarios that ended in catastrophe. He stepped back from her just as dazed as Gilbert when he was punched in the face.

Her head tilted to the side upon hearing his foot snap a twig and she asked, “Who’s there?” and then looked right through him.

He froze again, just for a second, and took a couple of steps backwards.

“Don’t go.” she called, turning around in her chair and placing her feet on the ground. “I won’t bite.” she promised, looking around in his direction.

Instincts told him to run away as fast as he could, but her voice begged him to stay. Maybe it was the way she didn’t mind being topless even when someone else could see her. Perhaps the thought of being someone’s ghost intrigued him; but whatever led him to take a step forward instead of backwards chased his rational thinking away.

“What are you?” she asked, “Do you even know?” she added, her eyes darting around looking for any changes.

He didn't want to tell her that he was anything, deciding that she could come up with a rational explanation on her own. He stopped a few inches from her and stood there just to see what she would do.

Her eyes saw the grass move and she could make out his foot impression. Worried she might scare it away, she slowly lifted her hand. “Can I touch you?” she asked, bringing her hand closer to his leg.

Thinking she would be surprised to find skin instead of nothing, he watched as her hand approached. When she touched solid surface, she jerked her hand back a little and cautiously approached again.

“I can see right through you.” she whispered, as her hand met his thigh. She felt upwards and came so close to his manhood, he flinched.

“Its ok.” she soothed, lightening up on her touch. Feeling him relax, she continued exploring upward. Her fingers brushed over his stomach and then up to his chest. “My...” she gasped, “You're a healthy one.” and brought her other hand up to touch him.

Just to see how she would react, he traced down her arm with a finger. Goosebumps formed in the finger's path and she let out a giggle, causing him to stop.

“Go on, you can touch.” she offered, as her other hand caressed the back side of his leg.

He picked up where he left off, over her shoulder and then the side of the face he'd marked. He watched her eyes follow her hand behind his leg and was just as amazed as his mind portrayed her palm and fingers through him. But other things were more interesting, since she did give him permission.

The hand on his chest started back down while the other slid up his leg. While he traced his finger towards her breast, they both reached their intended targets. As his finger raked over her nipple, he felt one hand grab an ass cheek while the other found his manhood.

She urged him closer with a tug and he stepped up. He was careful not to brush against her, letting mystery be the theme. Guessing his length, she was wrong and poked herself in the eye. Adjusting to him, she raised her head and placed the head in her mouth.

He lifted the breast to knead it and she looked down to see nothing making it rise. Looking back at nothing in her mouth, she put more in it. That caused him to relinquish her breast and place his hand on her head.

She let him back out while grabbing his other ass cheek and then forced him deep in her mouth with both hands. The sensation traveled to his testicles and made him quiver from it.

She urged him in and out until he got the hint and took over. Pumping into her mouth, he climaxed down her throat as she opened up for him. As he pulled out, her saliva came with it and a string of it dripped to the ground.

She wiped her mouth and said, “I just sucked off an invisible cock.” seeming astonished over the event.

He had to return the favor and urged her head back. She understood and laid back against the lawn chair. Bending down, he got close to a nipple and blew on it. She emitted a gasp and her nipple perked up. She watched it spring up and down as his tongue flicked over it repeatedly.

“That is...” she started, but paused as he sucked in the tip, “crazy.” she finished, feeling the suction.

Letting it go, he blew on the other one. Repeating his tonguing, he sucked it in, causing her arms to wrap around his head and legs to clamp together. He let go when she loosened her hug and started licking his way down her stomach.

She actually trembled with anticipation the closer he got to her sex. She saw nothing pull her panty crotch to the side, revealing her swollen lips. Another burst of air and then one of her lips was sucked in.

“Fuck me.” she gasped, feeling the tugging and then rolling around in his mouth.

Releasing it, he did the same on the other side while she spread her legs wider. Her breasts heaved up and down and she covered her eyes with an arm. He let it spring from his mouth and waited a few seconds.

With a heavy breath, she moaned, “Too wild; too wild.” and he sucked in her clit.

Her back arched and her head pushed back on the chair. Slamming back against the chair, her sex came up and forced more of it in his mouth. He took advantage and stabbed her hole with his tongue.

With determination, she bucked into his mouth, grabbing her breasts to hold on to. He timed his thrusts with her rhythm and she climaxed into his mouth. A squeak came out and then a growl while he kept up his work. That turned into heavy panting as she settled back down on the lawn chair.

He sat up and let her recover, feeling his pleasuring of her had made him aroused. He rubbed the ache but only made it worse as it stood at full erection. He coaxed her on her side and climbed behind her, caressing her thigh up to her breast. She relaxed as he spooned against her and kneaded the soft melon. She invited him in by raising her leg and he caressed her side on the way to her ass.

He had put one side of her bikini in her crack apparently but he had an easier way to gain access. Pulling a string, a side came loose and white skin contrasted against her tan. Taking himself in hand, he ran his cockhead between her cheeks and worked his way to a wet spot. Passing it, he found her clit and raked it over it.

“Cookie?” a voice called out, causing him to stop while the girl stiffened.

A moment passed and she called back, “What?”

Gilbert strolled down the path saying, “I think I damn near broke my nose on that tree back there.”

“Well, you should have, you ole drunk.” she huffed, wiggling against his cock.

“I’m going to need some aspirin.” he thought out loud.

“In the cabinet above the stove.” she instructed, while the alien rubbed his cock up and down her slit.

“What the hell you doing down here in the dark?” he asked, rubbing his forehead.

“Getting fucked by an alien.” she confessed, feeling his play on her anus.

“Yeah right; you crazy cunt.” he replied, turning back towards the camper, “And I’m the one that bumped my head.” he mumbled in the dark.

She spoke up when he was out of sight saying, “I married that fool for his money.” adding, “Trust me, it wasn’t enough.”

With that, he stabbed his cock in her. She sucked in air as he entered and then melted in his arms. He slid his arm under her head and grabbed a breast while he squeezed her ass cheeks apart.

She watched while nothing lifted her leg in the air, allowing the alien to go deeper. Her leg was brought down on another leg that wasn't there and the thrusting picked up speed. Nothing pounded against her ass and forced the ache inside her to worsen.

She tried to hold back, but the invisible force wouldn't let her as it started squirting hot liquid deep inside her. Her cervix squeezed nothing, as she rocketed to orgasm; forcing the alien to cover her mouth. She screamed into nothing as his thrusting became twitches and then bursts of thrusts.

After they climaxed, he released her and rolled off of the lawn chair. A rush of guilt came over him again; thinking he came to save a damsel not in distress and ended up screwing her instead. But his thoughts were interrupted when the girl called Cookie rolled on her back.

"I wish I could see you." she confessed, tying her bikini back together.

Looking at the river, he had an idea. Since her illusion of him being an alien, turning off his cloaking wasn't plausible, he settled for a wet silhouette. He walked over to the edge, picked up a handful of water and tossed it at her.

Feeling the spray, she looked where he was and watched nothing walk into the water. A moment later, a shape of a man was formed in water drops as it walked back to the shore.

Looking up at the sky as it came through the beads of water, she awed, "That is fucking amazing."

Reaching out to her, he took her hand and he bowed down to kiss it. That wasn't good enough for her because she grabbed him behind the neck and kissed him on the lips, watching her tongue dart into nothing as it was sucked on.

Releasing him, she asked, "Do you need to phone home or something?"

## Chapter 14

His poor detective skills had failed him. He obviously had nothing to go on either. He could stake out a thousand places and never find anything. Even if the police had a clue where to look, they sure wouldn't share that information with him. He thought it would be better to release what they knew in hopes of a witness stepping forward. But he could do nothing about what they did or didn't do. Thinking he was helpless without information, he decided to let it go for now.

But then, watching the news the next afternoon would bring him right back to it. A breaking news bulletin flashed on the screen and the television anchor behind the news desk filled him in on the story.

"This just in..." he began, papers in hand, "Our own news investigator, Amy Shaw, is being sought after by authorities. She is thought to have been abducted outside of her residence. The police are not releasing a statement as it is under investigation at this time."

He didn't need to know how to form carbon into graphene and make highly charged batteries out of it to see the clue in that announcement. It had to be more than coincidence that she would disappear right after taping her investigation on the river murders. To quote Sherlock Holmes, "The game was afoot."

He headed upstairs to clean up from the yard work he'd done that day with plans to start looking for the missing reporter. After showering, he donned his sweat clothes and headed out.

First place to look was her house. Turns out, she didn't live in a house but an apartment building on the west side. Next problem, you had to be buzzed in. And then, there was the policeman outside the door.

He walked past the officer and turned the corner and considered climbing the building to look for her room. But something else caught his attention. Miss Shaw's pheromones were still in the area. He remembered her characteristics specifically. That was the good news. He then had the challenge of figuring out which way she went.

He found her scent in the laundry mat, outside a closed deli, and at an ATM. Deciding that he could trace her back and forth from too many places, he went back to his car. He headed away from her apartment and picked her back up at the news station. Not finding anything leading away from her apartment, he headed east, hoping to find something there.

Feeling time pass by, his gut told him that she would be in serious trouble before he could track her down. About the time that hopeless anxiety took over, he picked her trail up at a hardware store. Pulling in to the lot, he could tell where she was as it was heavy in one parking spot. He was sure that she didn't go inside as her pheromones were too weak around the door. But, he realized that another scent that seemed to stay with her had gone in. It might very well be the person that had her.

Pulling out of the parking lot, he kept his head leaning out the window, driving slow enough to keep the wind from blowing. He sped up when he was sure of the direction and slowed down when passing cross streets. He found himself on a state route and the traffic lights became fewer and fewer. With less motorists on the road, he could slow down when passing roads to check on the scent. After passing Possum Ridge, he lost her. He found a place to cross over the divided roadway and went back.

Making his turn, he followed a gravel road, passing a field with a barn tucked away in the corner. Clean cut grass tried to drown out her scent and he passed a farm house claiming ownership of the field. Nature took over as trees spread their branches over the road, causing the temperature to drop a little. It was so thick in some places, the setting sunlight couldn't make it to the ground.

The overgrowth on the sides of the road ceased and a wrought iron gate came into view. A mailbox protruded out with "RR1 Box 398" written on the side. Apparently, he'd gone from Possum Ridge to

something else that had the generic name of rural route one. It was so far away from the beaten path, they didn't even bother with a sign.

The neatly trimmed hill disappeared and overgrowth took over once more. Crossing over a large drainage pipe that provided a path for a creek, he followed the gravel to the left. Faint traces of his interest lingered in the air. As trees blocked the sun, the orange light peeked through enough to see a leaf-covered path forking off of the gravel drive.

Slowing down, he passed it and quickly knew she hadn't gone any further. Thinking he needed to park facing the way he came, he continued until he saw another path that led into a cornfield and turned around. Pulling off to the side of the road, he mowed down tall grass and stopped.

He stripped his clothes off and turned invisible. Well aware that the leaves over the drive could give him away, he cut through from the side. He climbed an overgrown bank, struggling with the uneven terrain. Scratches appeared on his transparent legs and faded as the nanobots repaired the damage. He surveyed the view at the edge of a field, noting a fence leading off on the side. Since no residence was visible, he followed her pheromones.

The grass was high enough to tickle his testicles. Unsure of just what it was he was walking into, he went slow, trying not to disturb the grass too much. He found himself closer to the driveway and walked parallel with it. The trees that had the entrance partially hidden continued to line the narrow pathway and it bent around a small, unkempt, pond.

At one time, it may have been the property of a well off farmer, but neglect had taken its toll. A rusted-out car sat off to the side, while nature grew through it. The scene was not comforting but he didn't let that discourage him. He continued around another bend with her pheromones gaining strength. An old colonial house surrounded by trees came into view. It was a mere skeleton of its better days. He became more cautious and tip-toed to a hollowed-out window, having little left but the frame it was in.

Relying on his night vision, he could see all the way through the gutted-out home. Climbing in, he walked carefully through the clutter of what once was pieces of the house. Thinking that there would be a basement with his target in it, he searched for an entrance. One step towards the kitchen revealed a hole of what once was a cellar, the floorboards covering it had caved into the pit.

Her scent led him out the back door and he found a barn behind it. Following along the side of it, he came across an open area with a four-wheeler parked in the center. Given the condition, he would guess the vehicle to be somewhat new. Miss Shaw's pheromones were strong here and his heart raced in fear. An orange glow flickered shadow and light on the ground.

The vehicle had a spotlight on and he followed its path towards a large tree. Under it, a man sat on a tree stump, fooling with something in his hands. He recognized pheromones from somebody he had crossed paths with and waited until the man looked up to see if he could identify him.

"Don't worry," the man stated, looking in Jeremy's direction, "I'll be with you in a minute." and went back to his task in hand.

The man that called out from the party boat, asking if Kathy was alright, was now sitting under a tree in the middle of nowhere. Peeking around the corner of the barn, he came up close and personal with an armpit. Stepping back from the barn, a young woman he didn't recognize hung from a hook at the end of a chain on the barn wall. Beside her, his search had now ended, finding the reporter hanging in the same fashion beside the other woman. At the other end, a barrel stood burning debris and providing an eerie source of light.

While the hanging stranger was clothed, poor Amy was not and she didn't seem to be conscious. While he was figuring out just how they had been suspended there, the stranger's eyes widened and her breathing came in gasps, sucking in and blowing out the gag over her mouth. Then, he became aware of the man's footsteps approaching.

"Now, we don't need these cumbersome clothes anymore." the man claimed, twisting a blade in his hand. Grabbing the girl's blouse, "Sorry it took so long. The last girl had leather on." he claimed, pulling the blade upwards, "I had to sharpen it again." and separated the material.

Sliding the blade between the cups of her bra, he explained, "Have to see what kind of puppies you have." punctuating his words with a smile and a slice outwards. The bra split in two and her breasts sprang out.

He grabbed one and brought the knife down to it, making the girl cry, and leaving Jeremy in shock. He needed something to kill this sick piece of trash with. He circled behind him and started looking for something heavy.

"Oh, that's right" the man quipped, "You're new to the party." and pulled the knife back from her nipple. "Let me explain how it works." and grabbed her pants by the waist.

"You see, the lady on your left had the pleasure of watching me and another girl get it on." he started, unbuttoning the blue jean shorts. "We had a good time for a while." he mused, cutting the shorts off of her. "But, like all of the others, I fucked her to death." and let the pants fall to the ground.

Making his way to the tree, Jeremy found a duffle bag the man had brought with him. Careful not to make a sound, he started looking through it.

"Maybe you'll be able to survive my needs." he thought aloud, "This girl here won't; she's not a professional like you are." and cut the girl's panties away.

Needle-nose pliers, binder clips, nylon rope... Jeremy had no luck with finding a weapon. So far, the pliers seemed to be his best bet. Feeling the pockets on the sides, a hard, square surface was in one. He wished he could see through cloth in the dark but he needed a light source and it was getting pretty dark.

"But the good news is, you get to watch and learn." the man continued, running the back side of the blade between her slit. He pulled the blade away and focused on his first victim.

"I think it's time we wake up my next sex toy here." he said, nodding at the naked Amy. "You get to see a television icon do the nasty."

Jeremy lifted the box from the pouch and took it and the pliers behind the tree. Carefully, he opened the lid on the box and peered inside. He was surprised to see needles, loaded with liquid, sitting side by side. He suspected that it was the drug used to knock the girls out.

"Let's see if this will do the trick." the deviant thought aloud, and bit Amy's right nipple.

With a gasp, her eyes flew open and she started to scream. The man clamped his hand over her mouth and hissed, "Stop that, you know I don't like a cry baby." and smeared her face with his hand.

Addressing the professional, he said, "This bitch right here was trying to knock the fun right out of my parties." and looked at Amy, "She didn't know she was going to be joining me on one." and grabbed her sex and squeezed.

Jeremy, removed the cap on the needle of one of the syringes and kept the other ones covered. Stepping out, he wielded it with one hand while holding the pliers with the other. Anyone watching would have been amazed at seeing two oddly paired objects floating at them.

"See?" the scumbag quipped, "She learned something from the last fuck toy we had." and stuck his finger in her sex. "Let's see if you're learning anything." and brought his wet finger to the girl's lips, "Lick it clean."

With defined purpose, Jeremy stabbed the needle into the side of the pervert's neck, squeezing the substance into his flesh.

"What the...?" the despicable predator exclaimed, grabbing his neck. Spinning around, he watched a universe materialize in front of him, complete with stars and galaxies in the shape of a very fit body called Jeremy Dodd.

"Lick this." Jeremy seethed, and punched the guy head on with the fist holding the pliers.

His head whipped back and he dropped to his knees, reeling from the blow. While his eyes blinked in the vision of Jeremy, the knife fell from his limp hand. Gaining some senses, he fumbled for the knife he'd lost but Jeremy kicked it away. He mouthed the word, "Fuck" and keeled over, succumbing to the drug.

He ran and got the rope from the gym bag and tied his victim's hands and feet.

"I don't know what the hell you are, but get us down from here!" Amy protested, surprising Jeremy.

He was a little occupied with the sicko and just now realized the two girls had witnessed his transformation from nothing into the cosmos. He stepped over his captive and looked at the helpless duo.

Jane Doe shivered from his breath as it caressed her chest. Afraid, she looked away from him. The reporter had no qualms about looking at him and give him a stern stare.

Following the chains up over their heads, he could see them draped around pulleys, connected to an I-beam. They disappeared into the loft. Grinning, he leapt up and grabbed the chains, pulling himself further up. With sticky fingers and feet, he made his way to the top.

Inside, he found two winches and cranked the one holding Amy. Next, Jane Doe's was lowered and he stuck his head out to check on them. Amy was removing the gag on the other as he started to peel and stick his way back down.

He didn't even make it half way down before both girls started kicking the unconscious man. By the time he made it to the two naked, pissed off women, the guy was breathing with a rasp. He pulled Amy's arm back shaking his head.

"Oh no!" she argued, "This sick bastard is getting what's coming to him!" wrestling her arm from him. Like punting a football, she nailed him in his teeth.

"Let's string him up like he did us!" Jane Doe suggested, kicking him in the stomach.

Jeremy didn't want to speak, fearing that he would give himself away to Amy. She would probably recognize his voice. But hanging him up might be a good idea, giving him no chance to escape. So, with a shrug, he grabbed the perverted maniac and drug him to the chains. Placing a hook under each arm, leaving his hands tied behind his back, he climbed up and started cranking both gears the opposite way.

Again, before he could get back down, Amy had the knife and was removing his clothes. He hopped back down and gave her a stern look, opening his arms in a, "What are you doing?" gesture.

"You weren't here." she huffed, unbuckling his belt. "You missed the good parts." pulling the belt through the loops. "This bastard raped and beat a girl every day!" she testified, unzipping his pants. "Of course, he wasn't sick enough to rape her after she starved to death!" yanking his pants down. "So he dumps her in the river and starts on a new one; rinse and repeat." and cut his underwear off.

Jane Doe tied his feet to the same axle theirs had been tied to. Rising up, she gave the offender an uppercut, right in the scrotum. History repeated itself as that caused him to open his eyes wide and let out a scream of pain.

"Now-now..." Amy taunted, cupping his mouth with her hand, "You know we don't like a cry baby." shoving the back of his head into the barn wall.

"Let's see if he's learned anything yet." Jane Doe stated, and grabbed his balls.

He gritted his teeth as the girl applied pressure. "Good boy, you're catching on."

Jeremy stepped back, realizing that, in order to stop them, he would have to knock them both out. So, letting them get off some steam, he waited for the right moment.

"Let me play with his stick-pussy." Amy interrupted, "I want to see if he sharpened this knife good enough to split it down the middle."

"I never cut up nobody's pussy!" the captive denied, "Oh God, please don't!"

Amy lowered the blade and scraped it against his shriveling noodle. "Don't blame us if you never thought of it."

"Us?" Jane Doe asked, stepping back, "I'm not watching you do that!"

Finally, one of them had some common sense. "The police will want him." Jeremy growled, trying to conceal his voice.

"They can have him when I'm through." Amy growled back, adding pressure on the blade.

At the tip of a blade, the once egotistical sadist started crying, "Please; don't let her cut me!" and received a backhand for his outburst.

"It was all fun and games until your ass got to be the fun, huh?" Amy sneered, "I wonder if you're man enough to survive my needs." and cut a line, a half of an inch long, on his dick.

"Help me!" the man cried, feeling blood trickle off of the tip of his member.

"How many times has a girl said that with you on the other end of this knife?" Amy jeered, and laughed wickedly. "Take a guess!"

He turned his head to keep from looking at her, afraid any expression he had would set her off, admitting, "I don't know!"

“Come on lady.” Jane Doe interrupted, “You don’t want to turn into him.” she cautioned.

Whipping her head in her direction, she barked, “No, I wouldn’t want him dying of thirst.” and looked back at him, “Why wait a month when I can kill him now?”

The needle went in as she reared her arm back, intending to stab her abductor. A look of shock crossed her face and she turned to the starry creature. “Did you just...?” she started, but couldn’t finish, dropping to her knees. He caught her arm and let her down gently, taking the knife from her hand.

“What the hell?” Jane Doe asked, stepping over to see what happened.

The last needle went into her thigh and he let her down just as carefully. It was obvious that Amy had witnessed some traumatic scenes that had affected her psychologically. The man probably deserved to die right there on the spot for the sins he’d committed. But there were complications. The law could work forwards and backwards. If she killed him, his family could say he was murdered and Amy would suffer even more. The other woman couldn’t be trusted and would probably work against Amy. It was better if this whole scenario played out a different way.

“Hey!” the piece of shit yelled, “I’m glad you’re seeing this my way.” and smiled, “Get me down and we can have some fun!” nodding his head in glee.

Jeremy walked over to the helpless deviant and looked at him quizzically. Turning on his ability to climb walls, he placed a sticky hand over his nose and mouth, cutting off his oxygen supply. He waited while the man struggled and passed out, and then released him from the suffocation. Checking for a heartbeat, he was pleased to find one. Even better, the man started breathing again. He gave the villain another shot, not wanting him to be conscious for a while. Pulling his pants up, he placed the used syringes in his back pocket and got him down.

Loading his passengers into the dune buggy, he kept the villain up front with him while the girls slumped over in the back seat. He didn’t need the scum to wake up but if he did, he was getting knocked out again. He kept a syringe ready, just in case. Following the long driveway to the road, he turned towards his car.

Sure enough, the man groaned and shook his head. Looking around, he then turned to see the driver. With a smile, Jeremy, dressed now in his birthday suit, backhanded him, causing him to slump back down. Blood trickled out of his nose that caused Jeremy to smile even more. He wasn’t sure how long the drug lasted but biting a nipple or punching a groin seemed to revive them pretty good. He used the syringe again, making sure it hit a vein that time.

Grabbing his phone, he hopped back in the buggy and drove it backwards to the driveway he just left. Setting it down on the seat, he went to work setting up the scenario that would have less scrutiny than killing the rapist outright.

“Wake up!” he demanded, “The cops are here!” he exclaimed, slapping Amy across the face.

“What the hell?” she asked, shaking off the sting. “What the hell happened?” she asked, darting her head around to take in the situation.

Blue lights approached as both girls were shaking off the cobwebs. The four-wheeler was turned on its side, the girls were in the backseat of a strange car, and Mister Creep was nowhere in sight.

As the police stopped in front of his headlights, Jeremy got out to greet them. “Hey, over here!” he called, pointing at the overturned vehicle.

Two officers got out and met him at the driveway. “What happened?” the first one asked, as red flashing lights pulled up behind the cruiser.

“I don’t know.” he claimed, “The girls in my car said this guy attacked them.” and pointed to a man face down beside the vehicle. “He’s got his leg stuck under there but he’s breathing. I just can’t get him out by myself.”

The officer signaled for the other one to step up and looked at Jeremy, “Ok, let’s push it off of him.” and placed his hands on the vehicle.

The second officer grabbed the closest arm and prepared to pull him out. Timing it on three, both pushed the vehicle. The officer gave the arm a yank and the limp body of the rapist was drug away from the car. Medics were bringing equipment when the bastard woke up. Looking up, the first person he saw was Jeremy standing beside a policeman.

“I’ll kill you!” he swore, raising the hand he was laying on to point at him.

“Weapon!” the one pulling him out exclaimed, reaching for his own.

The flashing lights reflected off of the blade in his hand and as the villain looked at it in amazement, a loud pop, pop, pop, rang in the air. The look of surprise faded and the man thumped head first to the ground. Two in the back and one in the head had put an end to a very sadistic animal.

Jeremy jumped back on reflex, and watched the event unfold. He looked back to his car and saw both of the girl’s faces as they stood shivering in the blankets the medics provided. He walked over to the victims as the one cop complimented the other on being such a quick draw.

“They just blasted that guy to Hell.” he started, and asked, “Are you guys alright?”

“Yeah, but why?” Amy asked, looking at a crowd forming around the body.

Shrugging, he stated “He had a knife and threatened them with it.”

“I guess that knocked the fun right out of his party.” Amy smirked.

## Chapter 15

He was no hero, especially a super one. Yes, he made sure the dirt bag saw his face right before knocking him out again. It was true, he did plant the knife in his hands with sticky residue by scraping the substance off his own hands. He even cut the crotch in the guy's pants to match the one on his member. In fact, he did everything but pull the trigger himself. But it beat the possibility of Miss Shaw ruining her career and living with a death on her hands. And that was what he could live with; making the world a little bit better with a little bit of ingenuity. So what if it didn't make him a hero?

The news that a serial killer was caught left out all of the gory details. Two escaped victims led to the demise of Amy's subject of investigation. Of course, they weren't releasing any names until they notified next of kin. He didn't think he would be surprised to find out who the criminal's relatives were.

With any news comes the media, trying to find out information regarding the story. This time, it wasn't just one channel, but all three. Even more, they shared their information with the national media. So, when they showed up, it was a traffic nightmare for such a small street. As much as he hated using his abilities frivolously, he had to calm his parents down.

'I don't know.' was his favorite answer. He had to give one on some of them but the events pertaining to the women were all that same answer.

When asked what he was doing out there in nowhere land, he was prepared. "I'm studying to be a scientist. I was out in the country getting a better visual of the Milky Way. You can't see much near the city."

From the looks of it, he had done well. Nobody questioned his story of stumbling on two naked women. The closest one reporter came to scrutiny was mentioning that he had saved one woman from drowning and now two more from a serial killer. His response was, "I don't know, right place at the right time I guess."

But just as he thought he had seen the last of the reporters, another one showed up three days later. But this one was quite familiar.

"Hey." he greeted, stepping outside his front door.

"Hello." she replied, shaking his hand, "I wanted to stop by and thank you personally for your help."

"Oh..." he feigned, "Nothing to it."

"It was to me." she contested, "I'm still a bit confused about it all." she confessed, and mentioned, "I still don't know how I got in your car."

"Uh huh." he mumbled, "I put you guys in my car." he claimed, looking down at the breezeway.

Seeing his reluctance in discussing the matter, she tried a different approach, "Well, I'm just asking because the police are."

He became a little aggravated at the veiled threat. "Look, I didn't touch either of you inappropriately; I even made sure not to touch any of your lady parts." he defended.

“Oh no!” she corrected, “I didn’t mean that you had. I was just wondering if you saw…” and paused to consider keeping it vague, “someone else?”

Nodding that he had heard her and was taking it in, he replied, “There was you and the other girl…” he thought out loud, “and then the guy you said had attacked you.”

With a thoughtful glare, she retorted, “That’s just it. I don’t remember telling you anything about the man attacking us.”

“Oh, well, you were fading in and out.” he rationalized, “I’m surprised you remember anything after what you’d been through.” sending messages of doubt to her.

“Um, yes, it is a bit fuzzy to be honest.” she agreed. “But I wanted to at least offer you dinner.” taking her turn to look at the welcome mat, “It’s the least I could do.”

His ability was affecting her again as he detected a change in her pheromones. Thinking that turning her down would seem suspicious and wondering if the police really were questioning her, he relented, “That’d be alright.” wondering if he could get more information from her.

“Great, pick you up at seven?” she asked, seeming elated that he’d agreed.

With a nod, he replied, “That’d be OK too.”

The news released the name of the serial killer, claiming he was a dentist in Southside. He was wrong in thinking the name wouldn’t surprise him as they announced a Freddie Cleaver was captured and killed, ending the two-year long investigation. He had thought the name seemed fitting and then thought of Freddie Krueger.

“You need to stay away from trouble son.” Jerold advised, changing the channel.

“I don’t know what to tell you, trouble seems to find me a lot.” he retorted. Changing the subject, he asked, “How are you feeling?”

“I’m fantastic!” he admitted, “Its working pretty good for me; heart rate, blood pressure all normal. My age spots have cleared up and I feel a lot healthier.”

To be honest, he did look pretty good. “Have you told mom?” he asked, curious what her reaction would be.

“Nope!” he exclaimed. “But, she suspects something is up.” and grinned. “Let’s just say my energy level has increased in the bedroom.”

“Great, I didn’t need to know that dad.” he grimaced, getting up from the couch. “I got a date.” and headed upstairs to change.

A little sports car with the top down pulled up with Amy, wearing a strapless summer top, at the wheel. She greeted him with a smile as he hopped in the convertible. “Ready for a taste of Italian?” she asked.

Since it wasn’t his choice, he was going to eat whatever they offered, “Sure, sounds great.” he replied, buckling up.

She drove to the city and things started looking familiar. He’d thought she had picked a restaurant near her apartment as they passed it and turned the corner. But, a turn into a garage shot that expectation down. She swiped an I.D. and the gate opened.

“You have a restaurant in your apartment complex?” he asked curiously.

“How do you know this is my apartment?” she asked, looking at him quizzically.

“Oh, I’ve been by here plenty of times.” he lied, giving her a cheesy smile.

“Hmm.” she grunted, pulling through the entrance.

A reception area greeted them and she nodded at a neighbor, struggling with a large flower pot. Jeremy held the door for her and then caught up with Amy just in time to see the elevator doors open. “No doorman?” he asked, stepping beside her.

“Used to, but he quit; we are going to get another one soon.” she explained, “Somebody needs to watch who gets in here.” she grumbled, pushing button number fifteen.

The elevator opened up and they turned to the right, finding a ladder with a maintenance man standing on it. As they walked around him, they saw him mounting a camera to the wall.

Seeing him take notice, Amy stated, “Everything is reactive and not proactive here.” Adding, “A girl was to be kidnapped before they do anything to prevent it.”

“I guess it’s all about saving money.” Jeremy contemplated, stepping around a tool box.

“Yes, my money.” she huffed, stopping at a door.

So much for his thinking a restaurant on the roof was in the plans as she pulled out her keys and opened the door.

“Is that you love?” a melodious tone called, as the two entered the apartment.

“Don’t pay any attention to the mess.” Amy whispered, “Yeah, we’re here.” and addressed him again, “We’re trying to move.” indicating the boxes in the living room.

He nodded in understanding, thinking the abduction had probably rattled her a great deal and she was looking for more privacy.

Directing him to the sound of the voice he’d heard, they entered the kitchen. The smell of food was strong for him and the temperature went up several degrees.

“Hello!” a female wearing a tank top greeted, extending a hand.

“Hi.” he returned, shaking the hand of a short Italian with curly brown hair. He kept his eyes on hers to keep from focusing on her braless chest.

“This is Emilianina Messina.” Amy introduced.

“You can call me Emma.” she informed him with a smile.

Amy leaned in and kissed the girl on her lips causing Jeremy to pretend that the stove had a more interesting scene. He’d seen it before but there’s a difference between a video clip and witnessing it first-hand. “What are we cooking?” he asked, nodding at the cookware.

“Lasagna.” Emma replied, turning back to the task at hand.

“Not just any old lasagna either.” Amy corrected, “Real lasagna; the way it’s supposed to be made.”

He had no clue how lasagna was made to begin with, so whichever way she made it would probably make no difference to him. But, for politeness sake, he smiled saying, “This will be a real treat then.”

And it was. The meal was delicious and he raved about it. She explained that there were no processed foods used in the making of it. That explained the attraction he had for the taste. When the conversation lulled on the topic of the dinner’s preparations, he changed topics to liven it up.

“So, how long have you two lived here?” he asked, looking at Amy.

“We moved in when I relocated after landing the job on the television network.” Amy explained, “Emmy and I have been together since high school.”

“Best of friends stick together.” he commented, taking a bite of garlic bread.

“We’re more than friends.” Emma pointed out, “We’re lovers.” picking up her napkin.

To each their own was his philosophy. He had no opinion on same sex relationships. As long as it didn’t affect him, he didn’t really care. “That’s great; we all need somebody to love.” he stated, and took another bite of his lasagna.

“Yes...” Amy agreed, and asked, “Is there someone you love Jeremy?”

“Loved.” he corrected, “It didn’t work out.” he explained, and reached for his drink.

“Oh, such a shame.” Emma remarked, “I don’t see why not; but their loss is someone else’s gain.” and rubbed her foot on his leg under the table.

He fumbled with his glass and sat it back down, trying to move his leg out of her way. “I hope so.” he replied, and asked, “So, is there a wedding in your future?” looking at Emma.

“We have reservations about it.” Amy offered, “It’s complicated with couples like us.” and smiled. “Not everyone is so... accepting.” she finished, and took a sip of her tea.

“People will come around.” he assured them, “Sometimes, it takes them a while but they usually get over their objections.” and offered them a smile.

“”What about you?” Emma asked, “Have you...” she started, rubbing his leg again, “come around?”

Banging his knee on the table, he cleared his throat. It was obvious his ability was affecting Emma. That left him to worry about Amy, thinking she may not be aware of Emma’s orientation. He sure didn’t want to be the guy that broke them up.

“Uh, sorry.” he apologized, hitting the table got their attention, “Yeah, I have no say in the matter.” he explained, “So, whatever I’m ok with.”

“Amy said she had someone I would enjoy coming for dinner.” Emma replied, “I think she was absolutely right.” and licked her spoon provocatively, “I could just eat you up.”

Amy placed her elbows on the table and her chin in her hand. “What do you think Em, does he get some desert?” she asked.

“Oh, I’ve been a little health conscious lately, I can pass on the sugar.” he confessed, sitting his napkin down.

Amy stood up saying, “There’s more than one kind of sugar.” and walked behind Emma. “We are having a sugar-free desert.” and raised the tank top above Emma’s breasts.

He took one look at the offering and looked back down at his plate, being raised in modesty. “Oh.” he stated, “I’m a little confused.” he admitted.

Amy cupped the bare breasts and massaged them, filling him in on their scheme. “I am a lesbian to be honest. But my love here is not.” nodding at the girl she was fondling. “Emma is bisexual.”

He looked up at Amy, trying to stay focused on her and her words rather than the erotic scene playing out in her hands.

“Every now and then, she gets an itch.” Amy continued, pinching and rolling Emma’s nipples. “Since the first day I met you, I’ve had an overwhelming feeling that you would be an ideal man to satisfy her cravings.” and asked, “So what do you say? Want a piece of my candy?”

Emma bit her bottom lip and gazed on him lustfully. Amy rubbed her nipples into the palms of her hands and licked her lips. Without a doubt, they were making a desert he just couldn’t refuse. “I’d love to have some.” he agreed, and stood up from the table.

“Great!” Amy exclaimed, and lifted the breasts in her hands, “Which one do you want?” pointing Emma’s nipples at him.

He stepped around the table and took the one closest to him, putting the nipple in his mouth. Amy sucked in the other one. The sensation caused Emma to gasp and grab each of their heads in her hands. He cupped the one he feasted on while Amy traced her hand down her stomach to her sex.

“Ok.” Emma relented, “Desert’s served in the bedroom!” pulling their hair to get them off of her.

He was the third wheel for a little while; not that he minded watching the two make love. But they invited him to join in and made him feel welcome, treating his manhood as an idol. Amy tolerated Emma worshipping it with her mouth since she was worshipping Emma’s love button. Things went a little awkward after Emma climbed on top of him.

Amy sat on his face and French kissed Emma while she rose and fell on his shaft. To time herself with her candy, Amy rose up and down on his protruding tongue. When she tired, Emma rolled off of him. Amy suggested a sixty nine position while Jeremy tapped Emma from behind.

Lesbian or not, Amy found herself licking Emma while a man pounded into her. Jeremy got a kick out of it when his balls kept striking Amy's nose. An occasional tongue flicked over his manhood sending sparks to his brain. With his enhanced senses, the erotic scene kept him climbing to orgasm.

The mention of the inevitable called Amy to action and she slapped his ass saying, "That's it; fuck her harder!"

Emma raised up from the feast she was having saying, "Give it to me!"

As he went over in bliss, Amy was a victim of back splatter but it didn't faze her, saying, "Fill her up with seed!"

Emma climaxed with him yelling, "Hell yeah; I want it so bad!"

Sperm travels at twenty five to thirty miles an hour. The one thing that travels faster in the same instant is neurons firing in the brain. Several sparked in his cerebral vortex when Amy demanded, "That's right; give us a baby!"

His pounding slowed rapidly, leaving him twitching inside Emma. "What..." he stuttered, "What was that?" he finished, blinking from the stun the words caused.

Emma moved forward and cupped her sex while Amy rolled off of the bed. Neither one spoke but acted busy straightening themselves out from the tussle.

"Let me guess." Jeremy mused, "Emma gets an itch about once a month."

Emma looked away as Amy spoke up, "That's about the truth of it Jeremy." and took a step away from him. "We want a baby." she confessed.

"And it was going to be your little surprise for me down the road?" he asked, unable to see the logic in her reasoning.

"No!" Amy rebuked, "The plan was for you to never find out!" she huffed, picking up her blouse off of the floor.

He shook his head with that answer. "Oh no, you can't just have a baby and keep the father in the dark!" he chastised, looking at both of them.

"We don't need a man!" Amy argued, as Emma stepped behind her.

"We both work Jer. We can support a baby on our own." Emma explained, "We just want a child to raise together."

"That's fine!" Jeremy contested, "But you could fill a guy in on the plan. There's plenty of dead beats to pick from!" he seethed.

"The plan?" Amy seethed back, "Is to have a baby without a man involved!" and huffed, "Filling them in on the plan is..." and leaned towards him, "not the plan!"

It was his fault for thinking with the wrong head. He got Nanonaut back online and asked, *'What are the odds that Emma could get pregnant?'*

*'Drone Emma is ovulating.'* it replied, stating *'with host's improved biological genetics, there is an eighty-nine percent chance of reproduction.'*

"If she's having a baby, I want to at least see the child every so often." he demanded, crossing his arms. "That's only fair."

"I doubt she is." Amy replied, "We've tried a few times." she admitted.

"But if she is..." he started, looking at her sternly.

"Yeah, ok; you can be a distant uncle or something." Amy consented, and hit him with a thought, "But you haven't been exactly honest with me either."

“Really?” he smirked, “Did I lie about Emma’s cooking or something?”

“Tell me you weren’t the one that rescued me at the barn!” she ordered, staring him in the eyes.

## Chapter 16

Why she would want a freak that climbs walls, turns invisible, and makes a universe appear on his body to father her lover's child was baffling to him. He had to break the news to her that his abilities were not automatically transferable. He did admit that Emma's chance of becoming pregnant was very high due to his enhanced biology.

But it was the fact that he'd risked his life to save hers that dominated her thinking. She could handle a freak of nature, because she and Emma were considered one, as long as the child had his courage and convictions.

Then the conversation turned into a side show as they wanted to see his abilities. Each one raised the same question, how did he do that. Emma was more concerned than impressed, stating, "Thank God that isn't hereditary!"

"I know, right?" Amy laughed, "We wouldn't be able to see the kid let alone peel it off of the walls!"

He stressed how important it was that his abilities had to remain a secret as it was a matter of him becoming a Guinea pig.

"Who the hell would believe it if we did?" Amy asked.

"Wind up in a nut house." Emma mused.

The hard part was explaining how he tracked her down. Sniffing her out was a poor analogy of his skill. It was more like ants following the pheromones of a scout ant. But they were stuck on the dog tracking a scent analogy.

"Oh, you need a name!" Amy exclaimed, and offered, "Black Sky?"

"Dark Defender!" Emma chimed in.

"Uh, I'm no superhero." he confessed, "I really don't need a name."

"Nonsense!" Amy quipped, "You're a hero to Chrystal and me." waving off his silly opinion.

"Chrystal?" he asked, not recalling the name.

"Duh." Amy mocked, "The prostitute you rescued with me." and went on about her revelations. "She's decided to advocate for the legalization of prostitution. If it was a regulated industry, it would eliminate a lot of the crime and violence associated with it."

"It is the oldest profession and prohibition never works." Emma thought out loud.

"There's so much violence around the issue, it doesn't even make the news anymore, maybe a footnote is all that's mentioned." Amy complained, shaking her head.

Jeremy changed the subject asking, "Do they know anything about the guy that kidnapped you?" wondering why the man wasn't who he thought he was.

"Oh yes, the bastard was using the abandoned place next door to him to carry out his sick fantasies." Amy explained, "He has a wife you know; claims she knew nothing about his escapades." and addressed Emma, "Probably had her scared to death, the poor woman."

He kept a few secrets to himself. They didn't need to know that he could make suggestions and repair tissue at a rapid pace. The vague admittance of seeing in the dark left his ability to see

heat and UV rays a secret only to him. Needless to say, seeing through clothes wouldn't have been an ability they would find amusing.

But climbing walls while invisible was more than enough for them to believe he had super powers. He left with the promise that he would help people with his abilities and made them promise to keep his secret between them. They asked if he could come back should her pregnancy not take. He relented, offering them his cell phone number.

Refusing the ride home that Amy had offered, claiming the to need the exercise, he walked out of the apartment content with his arrangement with the two lovers. Night had fallen and rather than make a hasty trip back to the house just to watch a rerun, he thought a scenic walk or run was more appealing. The city did have a nice skyline.

He headed for the waterfront, wanting to follow it across the downtown area. Business was closed and the night clubs were open. A line waited outside a popular club with the beat of the music pouring out every time the front door opened and muffled with its closing.

Not being old enough or naive enough to be attracted to alcohol, the women he passed sporting the latest fashion in night club attire piqued his interest. Some emitted a desire to mate while most seemed to be more interested in having fun. His ability eliminated the guessing game and in a strange way, took any challenge out of it.

A homeless character sat on a storefront stoop, snuggling into a military coat. It left him to wonder if he was there by choice or by a negligent family. It seemed that either path that led him there could have been prevented by someone in his life that cared. The end justified the means, he supposed, thinking the man lacked the one to care.

The street lights grew further apart and skyscrapers gave way to high rises. Those fell behind and he passed an apartment complex. A figure on the corner emitted pheromones of a female in an anxious state of mind. A white wife beater shirt and short cutoffs contrasted against the high heels she wore. She wrung her hands as she paced the corner back and forth.

A black sedan slammed on its brakes and came to an abrupt halt in front of her. The passenger front door opened and a man stepped out. If handkerchiefs on the head and saggy pants were in fashion, this character was in vogue.

The girl threw up her hands in defense of the oncoming thug, exclaiming, "Now hold on Bennie!" stepping backwards, "I can explain."

"Hush!" the aggressor replied, snatching her arm, "It'll be alright." he assured her, "The boss just wants to talk to you." and grabbed her around the waist with his free arm.

A sense of fear rushed over Jeremy as the pheromones increased from the now panicked woman. Unabashed, he kept walking to the corner.

"He'll kill me this time!" she feared, "Please let me go!" she begged, trying to wrestle away from him.

"I'm telling you bitch, he just wants to talk!" he argued, pulling her closer to the car.

The back passenger door opened and another man stepped out. Older, wearing a leather trench coat, and using a walking stick, he stepped aside ordering, "Get her in the car."

"Hey!" Jeremy called, "Is she for hire?" he asked, coming to a stop in front of them.

"Keep moving fucktard!" Bennie snapped, maintaining his grip on the struggling captive.

"Whoa!" he retorted, "Is that any way to talk to a customer?" giving him a discerning glare.

"This one's on break." the older one stated, giving a nod in her direction.

"Oh..." Jeremy sighed, "Is there any way she can take her break later?"

"Afraid not." the elder thug stated, "There's another one two blocks back." and nodded down the street he came down.

“Really; I like this one.” he professed, nodding at the captive.

“He said no; get to hoofing it!” Bennie hissed.

The trench coat held up a hand to Bennie, “You don’t want this one, she’s defective.” he explained.

Jeremy huffed, stating, “What kind of operation turns down business?”

The older one smiled, flashing a gold tooth at him. “Best let this go.” he warned.

Bennie had made it to the back door with his prize. Jeremy was afraid that if the girl got in the car, she’d be in serious trouble or dead before he could find her again. Stepping up, he grabbed the girl’s flailing arm.

“I don’t think so.” he retorted, “This piece of ass is coming with me!” and pulled.

“What the fuck!” Bennie exclaimed, releasing her arm.

Jeremy ducked the backhand he threw and yanked on the girl again. This time, Bennie lost his grip on her. Stepping back, he guided the girl behind him.

Bennie drew a gun and pointed it at Jeremy. Reading the man’s intentions, Jeremy kicked it out of his hand. The metal weapon slammed into the back quarter panel, leaving a dent behind as it clamored to the ground.

“Huge mistake!” trench coat bantered, and reached for his own weapon.

“Don’t Stitches!” the girl screamed, backing away.

But Jeremy wasn’t letting another weapon come into play and leapt on the gold-toothed villain. His weight was enough to topple Stitches and both succumbed to gravity. The man was heavier and rolled on top of Jeremy. It was the best thing to happen to him as a blast rang out.

The arm across his neck relaxed and a far-away stare crossed his face. Gold tooth Stitches slumped over on him. A “Holy fuck!” came out of Bennie’s mouth while the girl let out a scream. Jeremy took advantage of the shock and tossed a lifeless Stitches off to the side. Jumping up, he now faced a baffled Bennie.

“Fuck you!” he exclaimed, and started pulling the trigger in rapid succession.

One headed for his stomach and he turned sideways. Another intended for his chest grazed his sweatshirt. A third, angled lower, struck his leg while a fourth whizzed by his ear. Bennie had no time to pull the trigger again as Jeremy had grabbed the hot barrel and twisted the gun out of his hand. Another blast from inside the car shattered glass and sped towards Jeremy.

With a twist, he used Bennie for a shield and caught the missile with his back. More popped off and Jeremy, yanking Bennie like a rag doll, caught them all with yet another lifeless body.

The car was thrown in drive and tires squealed as the driver made his get-away. With mathematical accuracy, Jeremy pointed Bennie’s weapon and fired the last bullet. In clear slow motion, he watched the lead follow the path he intended through a broken window to the head peeking out behind a headrest. The car swerved to the left and plowed into a retaining wall.

“Holy shit!” the girl exclaimed, witnessing the carnage.

Jeremy looked around and surveyed the area. Wiping the gun clean, he placed it in Stitches’ hand. Padding him down, he took his wallet and emptied it, leaving singles behind. The wad of cash was large that he’d found in the front pocket. He stowed it away in his sweat pants. Walking over to the car, he tossed the wallet on the front seat and glanced at the driver. A bullet hole leaked fluid right behind his ear. He didn’t bother to look at its exit, knowing it would be far worse than the entrance.

It reminded him of his own wound and he turned on communication with Nanonaut. *‘How much damage to my leg?’* he asked, walking back over to the corner.

*'Host has sustained tears in skin, muscle, and tendons in the center of the left quadriceps femoral group.'* it replied, as Jeremy looked at the girl.

"Those shots will bring the cops." she informed him.

*'Femur?'* he thought, *'All the way to the bone?'* he asked, and addressed the girl with, "Best take off then."

"Come with me." she offered, "You've been hit." and nodded at his leg.

*'The femur bone is undamaged.'* Nanonaut reported, *'The intrusion is being extracted. Estimated time of repairs...'* it offered, *'Thirty minutes.'*

"It's just a scratch." he explained, "It's already stopped bleeding." and smiled, thinking, *'How is that possible? I felt it hit the bone.'*

*'The host has transformed bone matter to an allotrope of carbyne.'* the microbial-bug rambled, *'It is estimated to be three times stronger than diamond.'*

"Come on!" the girl urged, offering him a hand, "They'll be here any minute."

She led him to a staircase on the side of the apartment building. He followed her up thinking, *'So all of my bones are metal or something?'*

*'Host is a carbon-based species.'* it corrected, *'Molecules were re-arranged to create carbyne to ensure fractures cannot occur.'*

Before they hit the top of the stairs, he could hear authorities pulling up at the scene. The girl could too and urged him to hurry.

*'But I wasn't notified.'* he complained, *'When did this happen?'* making his way to a door.

"Here we are." the girl informed him, opening the door.

*'Host was not informed as it is not a noticeable difference.'* the little bot quipped, *'Transformation began when host suffered fractures to rib cage.'* it explained.

She left him standing in her living room viewing a worn out chair and a couch that had seen better days. A crack pipe sat on top of a wooden-cased television left over from the last millennium. Used candles from all colors and types lined up behind it. Fading wallpaper of a flowery pattern adorned the walls. A leak from the past still haunted the ceiling, leaving a circle of stain in the middle.

He picked up a picture of a woman at a park thinking, *'I've never broken a rib.'*

*'Host suffered two in the dugout of the baseball field.'* Nanonaut informed him.

*'Great, why was I not informed?'* he asked, still having doubts regarding the nanobot's intentions, setting the picture back down.

*'The host did not see a noticeable difference.'* it quipped.

"Here we go." the girl called, entering the room with a case in hand. "First aid kit."

"I'm fine really." he replied, thinking it was his own fault for not being specific with the parasite. But even if he did know, would it have mattered? The ribs would have still needed repaired.

She dropped to her knees in front of him saying, "I'll see about that." and sat the case on the floor. Reaching up, she grabbed the sides of his sweat pants.

"Oh, I don't have any..." he warned, as she yanked them down.

"Commando huh?" she quipped, looking at his manhood eye to eye. Pulling her eyes away from it, she looked at the wound above his knee.

The bullet was half in, half out of his leg. The bots had worked it back out of the path it created. She pinched the exposed half and pulled. "You're lucky." she noted, seeing what remained of the wound. Pulling out a bottle, she warned, "This might sting a bit." and squirted a clear liquid on it. *'Hydrogen peroxide'* he thought, watching it bubble.

She placed a pad over the hole and put her things back in the container. Picking up the bullet, she asked, "How did it get so flat? It didn't hit anything really." turning it over in the light.

"Probably faulty to begin with." he suggested, listening to Nanonaut give him a play by play report on the nanobots' work on his wound.

"Probably." she half agreed, dropping it in her case. "I really want to thank you for helping me out." she sighed, "Three strikes and girls disappear, you know?"

"Strikes?" he asked, wondering what that meant.

"You know, not being able to pay your rent." she vaguely stated.

"That was your landlord?" he asked, giving her a curious look.

"Landlord, pimp, whatever." she quipped, looking up at him, "They give us a place to stay and a corner to work on." and looked away, "Sometimes you have to make a choice between demons. All of them can cost you plenty."

"You need a reboot." he surmised, "You know, start over somewhere else."

"Yeah, I know." she sighed, and grabbed his manhood. "But let me thank you anyways." and put it in her mouth.

He didn't think he could perform given the violent event that just occurred. But, she proved that thought incorrect as she made it grow in her mouth. She showed techniques that validated her profession and got him off rather quickly. Licking her fingers, she asked, "How was that?"

He smiled and said, "That was the nicest thank you I've ever gotten." and pulled his sweat pants up. Reaching in the pocket, he pulled out all of the cash he'd taken from the pimping landlord. "Here, this'll help you get somewhere safer." and handed it to her.

"I hope it does." she sighed, "I can't stay here."

He left the apartment, convinced that he was not really a hero. None he knew of exploited the women they saved. Yet here he was, in one day, sexually taking advantage of two victims. What he'd done was just saved them for himself really. Maybe if he would just stop having sex with them instead of taking advantage of his abilities, he might have a shot. But have a shot at what? He didn't really want to be a hero anyway.

To take himself out of the thoughts he was having, he started jogging, making his way back to the suburbia where he lived. He came up to Julie's house and saw her bedroom light on. *'I know you're home.'* he sent her, and kicked off his shoes to climb up the brick wall.

Since she didn't answer, he figured she had the communication turned off. Making his way to the window, he raised his head above the window ledge. He blinked at the sight of Julie, between two men, having sex. He could see the one facing her was going at it and could only guess what the male behind her was gyrating into.

She must have sensed his presence because she looked over the man's shoulder right at him. *'Like what you see?'* she sent, licking her lips.

*'Sorry,'* he sent back, *'didn't know you were busy.'* and looked away.

*'So what do you think?'* she asked, *'Two swinging dicks at once.'* she specified.

He rolled his eyes and sent, *'Look, when I said that, it wasn't supposed to be a challenge.'* and sighed, *'How'd you get two guys to share?'*

*'They're bi.'* she explained, *'Have you ever watched two guys going at it?'*

*'Uh, no.'* he replied, *'Not on my list of things to see.'* he admitted.

*'What a turn-on.'* she sent back, *'I didn't expect to enjoy it so much.'*

*'So now you're hooked.'* he sent, climbing back down.

*'I don't know;'* she admitted, *'maybe with three. Want to join?'*

Grimacing from the thought of it, he sent, *'Oh no, you go ahead and enjoy all of that. I just wouldn't see the fun in it.'*

*'So how did you climb up the wall?'* she sent, as he dusted off his hands.

He smiled hearing the question, knowing he had a skill she wasn't aware of. *'Just a technique I picked up somewhere.'* he professed, stepping back into his shoes.

*'You're not funny.'* she sent back, *'What's the secret?'*

*'Just sugar and oil;'* he confessed, *'it makes pulvilli that comes out of the pores in your hand.'* walking towards his house.

*'Valentina says that works.'* she confirmed, *'Now let me show you my trick.'*

He opened up his mind to her and a vision came into his mind's eye. He was able to see through her eyes. A penis protruded out of her mouth while her hand was masturbating it. Another penis was pointed at her face, also being masturbated.

*'What the fuck.'* he sent her, closing the inner vision.

*'You can do that with everybody.'* she quipped, ignoring his complaint.

*'Somehow, I don't think I would want to.'* he contested, rounding the corner.

*'So what's you're fifteen minutes of fame gotten you?'* she asked.

*'Right place, right time, is all. No real value in it.'* he sent back, guessing she'd seen him on the news.

*'I can read you like a book.'* she sent, *'You're trying to be some kind of hero.'*

He denied it sending, *'No way, I'm no hero.'*

*'Keep telling yourself that.'* she sent back, *'You're the only one believing it.'*

He walked the rest of the way, looking for those up late still parked on their couch watching TV. One was watching the late night show, glancing every so often at a bowl of popcorn in their lap. A female was being made love to but he couldn't make out much; the partner had his head between her legs. Ok, maybe chameleon skills on hyper intelligence mode was incredible, but still, communication, whether audible or visual, without wires was pretty cool. Anyone claiming otherwise would only have to see the next streaming visual he had of a woman, in the buff, gazing in a mirror, being transmitted back to them.

Then again, if anyone knew he could, they'd dissect him for it. But they'd have to catch him first. That would be odds in his favor as he had the means to escape anything thrown at him. Still, it would be a good reason not to play hero.

The street light shown through the night marking the street his house was on. A pair of tennis shoes tied together draped over the electric wires. The thought of removing the pair crossed his mind but then the mere fact that he was still skin and bone... or metal... or carbon changed his mind. Nanonaut couldn't evaluate the damage should high voltage electricity pass through him. It was a smarter choice to leave things like that a mystery.

The garage door was open but the lights were off. Wondering why his father would turn out the lights but forget the door was open, he stepped into an open area. Gone were the shelves of electronics and beakers. No medical equipment or testing devices. The bicycles and lawn equipment were still in place. Getting an eerie feeling, his senses went on high alert.

The hot water heater glowed in his UV vision while the outline of the kitchen door gave off a light blue hue. He stepped through the doorway and noted the heat from the usual places from rechargers to the refrigerator. Looking for human heat signatures, he made his way through the house. No sign of life was found upstairs so he started turning on lights.

No notes lying around and everything seemed in its place. Grabbing his phone and unplugging it, he found five missed calls. Every one of them were from his mother.

## Chapter 17

Playing the voice mail, he listened to the sad news that his father was rushed to the hospital after passing out at home was relayed by a very upset mother. While he was out screwing around, his dad was in jeopardy.

Grabbing keys to his car, he headed out, thinking his father was a victim of his own creation. Calling his mother in the car, he found out that they hadn't told her anything and she was still waiting in the emergency room. She was glad to hear from him and he explained that he left his phone at home. He stated that he was on his way and hung up, tossing it on the car seat and climbing in. Punching the steering wheel, he got back out and shut the garage door, making a mental note to ask his mother why it was open and almost empty.

But bigger things concerned him as he sped down the street. If his father's illness had nothing to do with the nanobots, they could take samples and find them. If it had something to do with it, they might not be able to help him at all. Either way, his father's secret would be out. Even worse, the same hospital he worked for would be the same people that would find out.

*'What's wrong?'* Julie sent, as he went past her block.

He explained the situation and she wished him the best. There's not really much you can say to somebody with a loved one in bad shape. Since he wasn't sure how critical the situation was, he didn't mention anything about his father's self-experimentation or the risk he was taking with his employment. Instead, he assured her, along with himself, everything will be alright. She offered to come along but he told her it was silly since she was already occupied anyway.

If he thought the last hospital was a busy place, the hospital his dad worked at was even bigger. Even at this time of the night, people were still coming and going. Passing the emergency entrance, he looked for a parking spot. There wasn't one available near the entrance so he ended up parking in the garage. Footing it across the street, he passed the visitors, patients, and staff that were in the smoking area. He passed through the automatic doors and saw his mother, sitting among other people with their own problems, seeming to be in a trance.

"Hey." he greeted her, taking a seat beside her.

"Oh god honey!" she exclaimed, pulling him into a hug. "I was worried sick." she confessed.

"I know, I'm sorry." he apologized, hugging her back.

"He's been in for a while." she informed him, "I don't know what's going on."

"So, you don't know if it's his heart?" he asked, holding her hand.

"No," she started, squeezing his hand, "he was in the garage playing with his gizmos when I came home. I called him in to eat and he never answered me" and sighed, "I went into the garage and saw him collapsed on the driveway."

"What did the doctors say?" he asked, trying to understand the situation.

"I haven't seen one." she replied, "Everybody's been so rude. You know, a van on the street even drove off after seeing him hit the ground." and held back tears, "And here, I can't get an answer from anyone." and looked at him angrily, "It's like nobody cares."

Patting her hand in reassurance, he vowed, "I'll find out what's going on." and stood up.

He was brushed off by the same people his mother had dealings with claiming the doctor would be with them momentarily. It was obvious that they had no clue what was going on. With his father's pheromones lingering in the air, they beckoned him to follow. Getting messages of distress, there was no way he could ignore it. He headed for the bathroom and stripped. Hiding his clothes and personal items in the vent, he left to follow his father's trail.

The hallway was busy with staff and patients and he hugged the wall to avoid contact with anyone. Passing small rooms with patients of broken limbs and internal issues, he went past the large nurse station in the center of this web of woes. The trail led him to a set of doors marked with 'Authorized Personnel Only' signs.

Not risking discovery, he waited until someone opened the doors for him. A nurse, focused on a chart in her hands, walked through and he slipped in without touching anything. A large glass window with a slot cut out was the first thing he noticed. A guard looking at monitors sat in a swivel chair behind it. That reminded him of the cameras and he looked behind him, over the door, to see the dark bubble of one aimed down the hallway.

Not knowing if his ability could fool a camera, he climbed on the wall and peeked into the security room. Spotting the monitor that would have the camera image of the hallway, he was relieved to see that his display was just as camouflaged electronically. The overweight guard was none the wiser. He climbed down and tip-toed past the window.

Another set of double doors was at the other end and he waited patiently for someone to open them. An orderly pushed the door open with a cart of towels and sheets, and the doors closed before he could get through. A smile crossed his lips upon seeing the same nurse that unknowingly let him in was coming back through. She let him through the second set of doors and he hugged the wall looking at a crossroad.

Following her to the left, his father's pheromones dropped substantially, so he went back to the right. A bold red sign hung from the ceiling half-way down the hallway with the single word 'Quarantine' and yellow biohazard signs adorning the walls with instructions to wear protection. Carts along the sides held the protective gear. His ability led him past several rooms and lingered in front of the last one. Luckily, the door opened into the room instead of out.

Plastic sheeting surrounded the center of the room and he stepped up to it. Finding where they separated, he cautiously spread them open. Nothing was in the middle except a bare spot where the bed should be. He knew his father had been here as his pheromones were heavy in the air. They had to have taken him somewhere else and his fear was that he was taken to surgery.

The only thing left was the elevator at the end of the hallway. Looking up, he saw another camera focused on it. Looking at the elevator, it had a key pad. Turning on his UV ability, he could clearly see the four buttons with smudges and fingerprints on them. Once again, patience would have to work because he feared pushing the buttons would trigger consequences.

A bearded man wearing a doctor's coat and carrying a folder came through the double doors. Jeremy estimated him to be around forty to fifty years old. He had been working here a while since he pushed the buttons on the elevator so fast, it had to be second nature for him. Jeremy squeezed in while the man pressed a button. With only three choices, the man picked L2.

In such closed quarters, he had to check his breathing as he could clearly hear the man's intake and exhale. The man cleared his throat and startled him for a second. The short ride down seemed to go on and on. Finally, the elevator stopped and the doors opened.

Whatever was on L1 didn't matter because his father's pheromones picked up strongly here. A security station with another guard waved the doctor on and Jeremy followed him through the doors. A nurse's station with a male sitting behind a computer monitor greeted the bearded man.

"Hey." the man nodded, his glasses reflecting the florescent lighting.

"Got the results." the doctor claimed, holding up the folder.

Jeremy looked past the two to the corridor. His father was definitely down that direction. He followed the pheromones and passed rooms of equipment and supplies. Paint had been neglected and the lack of ventilation made the air stale. It occurred to him that hospitals wouldn't have so many contamination instances if they would just increase their ventilation and add some filters.

He went past a metal door and knew his father had to have gone through it. The pheromones decreased significantly. Turning back, he faced it. He looked around and noted the camera at the end of the hall. Fighting the urge to burst through the door, he summoned up the patience he needed to figure out what would happen if he went through the door.

He didn't have to stand there long because the doctor came down the hallway and forced him to move out of the way. Stepping up to the door Jeremy was just in front of, the man pushed it open. Jeremy followed right behind him.

Sixth sense must have kicked in because the bearded doctor turned around to see the door close. Jeremy was already against the wall. It was hard to stay put when his father was within eye sight. Strapped to a gurney, he looked ill. He looked at the room to fight the impatience, noting the dungeon-like qualities such as exposed bricks and open piping.

Another guard sat in front of his father and looked up from his phone to address the doctor, "Welcome back." he greeted, and stood up.

"Good to go Frank, I've got it from here." the doctor replied, and patted him on the shoulder.

The guard walked out of the overly large room and as Jeremy watched him leave, he noticed another camera directly over the door. So many thoughts ran through his head, he was becoming irrational. Whatever was wrong with his father had him past quarantine and into total isolation. Maybe strapping his father down was for the safety of the people trying to help him, but still, seeing him like that was unsettling.

"Results are in." the doctor stated, opening the folder. "You are infested with nanobots."

"It's not a bad thing." Jerold whispered, seeming sedated, "They can repair cell tissue."

"You see, that's the problem." the bearded man retorted, "We don't need them when we have perfectly fine medicine already." and stepped closer to his bedside, "Now, the only question I have now, is your wife infected?" and looked at the I.V. drip feeding into Jerold Dodd.

"I already told you, nobody knows anything." Jerold claimed, "Come on Charles, let me out of here."

"Let's give it some time." Charles replied, "Scopolamine takes a while to kick in." and looked at Jerold, "So, tell me about your son. He saw you administer the drug, didn't he?"

"He wouldn't know what I was doing." Jerold professed, "Let's let this go and I'll stop my research."

"A little too late for that." Charles replied, and pulled out a scalpel from his coat, "This will never do." and sliced Jerold's arm with it.

Blood poured out for a few seconds but stopped. Charles and Jeremy witnessed the nanobots at work, healing the wound as if time went backwards, repairing the gash to its original state. The doctor seemed amazed by the event and shook his head.

“That is pretty amazing, I have to admit.” he exclaimed, but noted, “That is enough to revolutionize every aspect of the medical industry.” and pulled out his phone.

It was exactly the situation his father warned him about. Whoever this Charles was, he wasn't there to help his dad. If he needed any further confirmation, the phone call he made would leave no doubt.

“He's developed medical bots.” the man informed his call, and started pacing in front of the door. “I can, but whether he remembers or not, he's still loaded with them.”

Jeremy found the guard's pheromones and looked to see if he was monitoring the cameras. He sat in his chair, eating a bag of chips, and glancing at the display. This was a situation Jeremy couldn't see a way out of. Even if he rescued his father, he couldn't see where anyone would be on his side. They could claim his dad was mental and even call it an abduction.

“The first time he gets hurt, he's going to notice something isn't right.” Charles stated, turning to look at Jerold, “You might want to nip this problem in the bud and move on.”

Running scenarios in his head, they all ended with his father being labeled as an escaped mental patient and right back in the very same situation he was already in. He changed pheromones and found the man behind the counter. He was entering data into the computer. After getting past this floor, he would have to get past the quarantine level.

His next concern was his mother. She was still sitting in the ER not having a clue what was going on. He couldn't imagine showing up with his father and getting her to run with them to their cars. And then, where would they go exactly? But Charles would end his self-debate when he hung up the phone.

“Well Jerold, it seems you're more trouble than you're worth.” he claimed, pulling out rubber gloves from his pocket. “The Board believes you're a liability and are wanting to eliminate the threat of you going public.” and pulled a glove over his hand.

“Now wait a minute Charles, we've known each other for decades.” Jerold protested, “Just let me go, you said yourself that you took all of my gear. I can keep my mouth shut.” and struggled in his bonds.

“I don't call the shots Jerold. Besides, you signed papers.” he noted, pulling the second glove on. “Don't worry though, I'll make sure June knows you loved her.” and stepped closer to him.

“She'll know what you did to me!” Jerold retorted, raising his voice.

“She knows you collapsed outside your home. She doesn't know we tranquilized you.” he quipped, moving the I.V. machine out of the way.

“I've got a kid Charlie!” Jerold argued, struggling even more against his restraints.

“It's been nice working with you.” the bearded man stated, and covered Jerold's mouth while pinching his nose with the gloved hand.

Guard and camera be damned, Jeremy wasn't going to stand there and let this guy end his father's life. Stepping up beside him, he yanked the needle out of his father's arm and stabbed the doctor right in the temple with it.

The result was immediate as the man screamed and let go of Jerold. Trembling, he reached up and yanked the needle out. Turning to see who had done the deed, Jeremy saw his eye start twitching uncontrollably. A thick mixture trailed down the side of his cheek.

“What the fuck!” the man screamed, and took a step away from the gurney. His next step faltered and he fell to his knee.

Jeremy opened up a channel to the guard and saw him studying the screen. He was now aware something was wrong, seeing the doctor had dropped. Jeremy broke the image as the guard started out of the security room.

Jerold watched as his would-be murderer moaned in pain and tried to get the right side of his body to work right. He had no clue what was wrong with Charlie, but whatever it was, he was more than glad it was happening. "That's what you get motherfucker!" he spat, straining to see him.

Jeremy stepped to the door, anticipating the guard's arrival. He could hear the man sprinting down the hallway. As expected, the door flew open and the guard came in, gun in hand, looking over the room.

"What's going on?" he asked, aiming the gun back and forth between doctor and patient.

"He..." the doctor tried to speak, "He stabbed head!"

The guard looked at Jerold in puzzlement, stating, "He's strapped down." and stepped over to the ailing doctor.

"I don't care." Charles argued, "Shoot him!"

"I'm not doing that!" the guard replied, "He's strapped down!"

"Give me the damn thing and I'll do it myself!" Charles demanded, grabbing for the gun.

He tried to yank it out of his hand but ended up pulling on the trigger, where a very nervous guard had his finger. A loud pop echoed in the room and a bullet struck the doctor's limp arm. That was ok since he wasn't able to use it anyway, Jeremy thought.

The left hand let go of the weapon and the guard grabbed the microphone on his shoulder.

"Shots fired!" he announced, "Man down." and gave his location.

Apparently, Doc Charlie was the only one around that was in on this scheme as more showed up to the party and secured the safety of his father while pinning down an irate man with a whole in his head.

"I'm telling you he stabbed me in the head with a needle!" the doctor protested, as he became the one strapped to a gurney.

"I was watching him, the patient didn't move and the next thing I know, he was on his knees on the floor." the guard explained, "He wanted me to shoot the guy who was still strapped down tight. Grabbed my gun, and it went off."

But his testimony was falling on deaf ears as nurses and doctors were asking both what was wrong. Jerold professed that he was fine and that the doctor had him restrained for no reason. They released him and checked out the chart. That immediately reminded Jeremy of the folder Doc Charles had before the chaos.

Looking around, he saw it under his father's gurney. Carefully maneuvering around the people, he pushed it further back under the gurney. Patience again was required as he waited for enough people to leave the room so he could get it. He witnessed his dad get off of the bed and stand up, proving that he was fine, but a nurse insisted on tests since he did pass out.

A wheelchair was brought in and they pushed him out. As he was heading out the door, Jerold said, "Can somebody tell my family that I'm ok?"

Jeremy snatched up the folder and memorized it. Test results were on top, detailing health and vital information. Anomalies were listed on another page. A scribbled signature at the bottom of the last page of the analysis was unreadable but the title below it claimed it was the CEO. If that wasn't the head of this operation, maybe he would know who was.

Catching up with the parade of people surrounding his father, he followed them to another room where his dad would wait test results. He was able to sneak the folder under the bed sheet

and follow an intern back out to the waiting room. With his mother still wringing her hands in worry, he entered the bathroom and dressed.

Coming back out, he noted a nurse and someone in a suit talking to his mother. Two policemen were at the counter and the suited man stepped over and addressed them. Jeremy approached his mother and asked, "What's going on?"

"There you are! The last time I saw you, you were headed into the bathroom." June exclaimed, "I thought you fell in!"

"Sorry, heavy dinner." he muttered, and rolled his eyes away.

"But your husband is ok, I think." the nurse continued, "We're just waiting on some tests." and then offered, "Would you like to go see him?"

Jerold was reading the folder when they entered. Sitting it on his bed, he greeted them with, "There you guys are!" and caught June in a hug.

"Hey dad." Jeremy greeted, taking a seat on the other side of the bed.

His dad explained that he had an altercation with a jealous colleague. Jeremy tried to swallow that line and grimaced.

"It's ok son, I'm fine." he assured him, "Dehydration is all; I'll be out in no time."

They sat and talked for a while before the man in a suit entered, followed by the two policemen.

He introduced himself with, "James Roche..." and shook his father's hand, "Customer Service." and indicated the two police officers, "They have some questions for you."

"Mr. Dodd, we've reviewed the video. Can you tell us what he was trying to do when he leaned over you? We don't have a clear view of it." the first officer asked.

"He was trying to suffocate me." Jerold admitted.

The second one stepped up and said, "You were pretty lucky; him stepping on the I.V. caused it to pull out and POW, like a whip, struck him in the side of his head."

The second officer waved him back and addressed his father, "We can assume you're pressing charges?" he asked.

His dad nodded in agreement. Jeremy thought he wouldn't have a choice after telling them the guy was suffocating him. But the suited man butted in.

"We, here at Maple Medical, would like to express our apologies for Doctor Shoemaker's actions. Can we expect a settlement outside of the courtroom?"

"It depends on how fast I can get released from this crazy madhouse." Jerold replied, looking at him sternly, "It's bad enough to have to work here."

"Oh, ok..." the man nodded in understanding, "I'll get right on that!" and wiggled past the two officers and on out the door.

Traveling home he passed Julie's block and she messaged him. How she knew he was close was a bit of a mystery but he intended to learn that trick.

'All good now?' she asked.

'Yeah, for now.' he replied, 'Why aren't you asleep?'

'These two swinging dicks snore.' she sent, causing him to laugh out loud.

He tried to get a vision of what she was looking at and was relieved to see she was looking down at her chest. 'Say, those boobs are growing nicely.'

'Focus on the road pervert.' she sent back, and blocked him from receiving her eyesight.

Like any revelation, it surprised him how simple it was. She obviously had been monitoring him driving past. A smile crept on his face when the thought of her finding him interesting enough to see what he was looking at; especially while in the middle of other guys.

The first thing Jeremy did when they got home was look up the CEO of Maple Medical. He planned out exactly what he thought would need to happen to shake the devil off of his father. Lying in bed, he tried again to see what Julie was up to but had no luck. He did find a neighbor on the block awake. She went to the restroom and took a leak.

He fell asleep thinking about one Mister Trego Eldon who was about to get a visit from a very pissed off nano-boy.

## Chapter 18

Apparently, a Chief Executive Officer's home address was not readily available online. After trying several promising websites the next day to find his address, he gave up on it. Every place he found on the web wanted you to fill out an application and charge you a fee. He had to think of some other way to get the information and it may be as easy as finding someone that knew the guy.

Heading downstairs, he was surprised to see his father still in his night clothes. Apparently, he was taking a leave of absence, giving him a break from the odd situation he was bound to face at work.

"Hey." Jeremy greeted, "How are you feeling?" he asked.

Looking around for his wife, he turned to his son and said, "I'm fine." and whispered, "I didn't pass out from exhaustion; they used a tranquilizer on me."

"What; that's crazy!" Jeremy exclaimed, taking a seat at the table.

"Shut up loud mouth." Jerold hissed, "Your mother doesn't know anything about this." and took a seat beside him. "She thinks I called Clutter Cleaners and had the garage cleaned up."

"But what if we get the stuff back?" Jeremy asked, wondering how he was going to explain that.

"We aren't." Jerold explained, "It's not worth the risk of life and limb."

"But they don't have a right to keep it dad." he contested, listening to his dad surrendering to these thugs.

"Yes they do son." he countered, "I signed papers; anything I do in my field of work is theirs." and smiled, "Besides, they're offering to buy me out of my job plus settle for a great deal of money over the incident yesterday." and patted him on the back.

Jeremy frowned, saying, "It sounds too good to be true."

The day he thought was going to be epic had turned into chaos before it even arrived. His plan of going to comic con with Julie was ruined; she wasn't his girlfriend anymore. His dad was in denial if he thought powerful people were just going to pay him off and leave him alone. Even worse, his mother could be in danger over it.

With so much going on, he needed some time to clear his head. Girlfriend or not, he decided to go anyway, if only to get away from the situation he was in, if only for a little while. Sorting through the many problems he faced in his head, he pulled an easy one out and solved it. What to wear to comic con?

Superman wears tights so that would be a good choice. He wouldn't even have to wear anything but a cape. But Tron didn't wear a cape and the lighting on the suit was awesome. All he would need was a Frisbee. He just happened to have one too. He headed for the garage to get it.

Looking it over, he just couldn't see how he was going to put a ring of light around it. He could go without one, he supposed. Thinking a ballast around a florescent bathroom light might do the trick, he headed to a shelf that had extra parts.

*'What are you going as?'* Julie sent, causing him to fumble leftover switch covers.

'Tron.' he sent back, setting the box back on the shelf.

'That's lame.' she replied, causing him to drop his shoulders and smirk.

'Lame?' he asked, 'Got a better suggestion?' he sent, rubbing the back of his neck.

'Duh, Spiderman.' she offered.

'Too popular.' he replied, 'Everybody will be Spiderman there.' and asked, 'Who are you going as?'

'Kitty Pryde.' she replied, causing him to dig into his memory.

'Sprite?' he asked, remembering her from the X-Men. There was a side-story of her having an affair with Spiderman. Maybe she was throwing out a hint?

'Yeah, code name Shadowcat, pretty fitting, huh?' she sent.

He nodded in agreement, sending back, 'Yes it is. But, I'm more of a Deadpool kind of guy.'

'The dude that carries a fanny pack?' she asked.

He dropped his shoulders in defeat again, replying with, 'Yeah, that guy.'

'You can do better than that.' she chastised, and then asked, 'Say, can you give me a ride? I don't have a way there.'

First, she throws out an insult and then, she asks for a favor. He sent back, 'I don't know. My girlfriend might not like it.'

'If you have a girlfriend, you don't love her.' she replied, as if she had some insight into it.

'How would you know?' he asked, trying to fit a ballast into the center of a florescent ring.

'I know because I know.' she replied, being mysterious.

'That's clear as mud.' he sent back, trying to think of a power source.

'I knew when you were in love before.' she shot back, bringing up old emotions, 'Can I get a ride?'

He dropped the ballast on the table. 'Yeah, I guess.' he relented, and was immediately aware of her pheromones. He turned to look out the garage door and saw her turn from camouflage to solid, sporting a yellow V-shaped symbol on a black printed body suit, complete with black gloves to her elbows and knee-high boots. Had he not known better, he would have just watched Miss Marvel appear out of thin air at his residence.

"Ok, that was pretty good." he confessed, "Nice wig." he complimented, wondering how she had kept it hidden.

"Do I look hot or what?" she asked, stepping up to the work table.

"Oh, I guess so." he agreed, going back to his project.

"I can do Mystique." she claimed, and switched to the aqua blue character.

He glanced at her and went back to his work, "That looks ok too."

She switched to Super Girl and then Wonder Woman, parading in front of him and asked, "So which one do you like?"

"Stop that, somebody is liable to see you." he warned, wondering what had gotten into her.

"So what one?" she asked, leaving the Wonder Woman image over her body.

"It doesn't matter." he replied, "You're going to look good in anything."

She glanced at the doorway and back at him, "So, is this too much?" and changed the image to a kaleidoscope of colors spinning over top of each other.

"What?" he asked, stunned at the movement of colors, "How are you doing that?"

"GIF format!" she quipped, a sly grin crossing her face.

He grabbed her around the waist and pulled her behind the shelving. "Look, I think somebody is watching my house." he informed her.

"Why?" she asked, watching him head towards the door.

“My dad was attacked by a colleague. I think it’s the hospital trying to figure out his nanobots.” he explained, shutting the garage door. “Or, at least keep them a secret.”

“Oh, was that what was going on? I thought he was sick or something.” she asked, stepping out from the shelves.

He explained the events from that night to her and how it seemed to be rectified for now. “But they won’t let a billion-dollar industry collapse, I can tell you that.”

“It’s just like curing cancer, they’d lose a lot of money over that, I bet.” she agreed. “I’ll tone it down though, I don’t usually show off. I’ve been looking at heroes all day and learning how to display their costumes. Just kind of excited to show it to somebody.”

“Tell me, how can you keep that wig hidden when you’re cloaking?” he asked, unable to come up with the solution.

“Oh, had it tucked under my arm,” she explained, “just rolled it up and hid it, just like that.”

“That was perfect then; putting it on when you’re appearing.” he admitted, and changed the subject, “So, you’re two boyfriends couldn’t give you a ride?”

“I let them go.” she quipped, looking at his project. “Too much drama for me.” she confessed.

“Oh, sorry to hear that.” he feigned, pulling out a motorcycle battery. In a way, he was glad she had boy trouble. It seemed justified to him.

“So who is the girlfriend?” she asked, watching him place it on the table.

“Nobody.” he replied, wrapping a wire around a terminal.

“Do I know her?” she asked, stepping up beside him.

“It’s nobody.” he reconfirmed, touching the second wire to a terminal. The circular light lit up.

“So you were lying.” she assumed, picking up the light.

He looked at the light and then the battery. Thinking it would be too much to carry around, he gave up on it, dropping the wire. “Yeah, I guess I did.”

“Were you trying to make me jealous or something?” she asked, setting down the bulb.

“I’m trying to make myself unavailable right now.” he sighed, walking away from the table.

She followed him across the concrete floor stating, “But why; everybody needs somebody you know.”

“I’m not like everybody else.” he pointed out, pulling down a blue tarp.

Following him back to the table, she rationalized, “Neither am I; that’s why I can’t be with anyone either.”

Spreading out the tarp, he mused, “So, I guess you’ll be a cat lady and I’ll be the old guy yelling at kids to stay off of my lawn.”

She smirked at the analogy, stating, “It doesn’t have to be that way.” watching him work with the tarp.

“Yes it does.” he retorted, rolling his eyes, “You decided that for us when you kicked me to the curb.” and sped up his work on the tarp.

She furrowed her brow and snapped back with, “I wasn’t the one with pussy juice on me.” and huffed, “But that’s not all, oh no.” placing her fists on her hips, “You infected me with parasites; that makes sure I will never be ordinary again.”

He stopped his work and looked at the ceiling. “Is that it?” he asked, and looked at her, “You think I did it on purpose?” and let go of the tarp, “Tell me Julie; were you really so happy with acne and glasses?” and looked her up and down, “Look at you; from geek to chic. You’re absolutely gorgeous with the pick of anyone you choose.” staring into her eyes, “You could be

anything you want with a rocking hot body and perfect health. Even more, you have powers ordinary people can only dream about.” and turned back to his work, “If you ask me, I think I did you a favor, accident or not.” picking the plastic back up, “It sure beats being a door mat and punching bag.”

She placed her hand on his arm, stopping him from his work. “I realize that now. But it was traumatic for me at first.” she confessed, pulling his arm to get him to look at her. “I really should thank you instead of beating you up over it.”

He nodded his head in agreement, “Good; I’m glad...” he started, but then, Julie kissed him.

She lingered on his lips, pressing into him. He instinctively raised his arms and wrapped them around her. His beastly side came out and a hand dropped to an ass cheek and he gave it a squeeze. Her breasts pressed into his chest and the idea that she was completely naked, despite the image of Wonder Woman’s one piece outfit on her skin, raised his heart beat.

She placed a hand behind his head and their kiss became heated and tongues intertwined. Reluctantly, both broke away from the lustful connection and stared into each other’s eyes.

“Julie...” he started, trying to think with the right head.

She lifted a finger and placed it on his lips, saying, “I know, you’re not looking for a relationship.”

“I got burned, Julie.” he explained, “I just can’t...” and fumbled the thought, “I don’t want that kind of pain again.”

“It’s not your fault.” she assured him, “The nanobot’s heals your body but they can’t do anything for your heart.” and turned away from him, “I got the same scar you have.”

“I still have feelings for you.” he confessed, “I just can’t fall so deep in love again.”

She turned back around and stepped to him, “You can do one thing though.”

“Oh yeah?” he asked curiously, “What’s that?”

“Be Spiderman.” she quipped, pushing the tarp away. “You don’t want to draw attention by being different anyway.”

The tarp he planned on making a cape out of slid to the floor, just like the kiss and tell conversation, into a worthless heap. She was right though, he needed a costume that didn’t need accessories and wouldn’t stick out in a crowd. So, Spiderman it was, and he switched his image to The Amazing Spiderman replica and took off his sweats.

The kitchen door opened and June Dodd stepped into the garage.

“Hello Julie.” she greeted, and then addressed her son, “Spiderman?” she asked rhetorically, “What is it with you and skin tight outfits?” stepping over to the pair. “Are you trying to get molested?” flashing him a grin.

“I think he looks great Mrs. D.” Julie defended, placing a hand on his shoulders.

“Of course; you would think so.” she replied, rolling her eyes at her. “So how long will you two be gone?” addressing her son.

“Well, it’s like an all-day event but there’s concerts and stuff tonight.” he thought out loud, “I’ll probably be out late.”

“Good”. she replied, and explained, “Your father and I want to spend some quality time together.”

“Oh, Mrs. D wants some loving!” Julie cooed, batting her eyes.

“At least I have a license for it.” she snapped back. “Just do us all a favor and call when you’re on the way home.”

“Will do Mom.” he replied, watching her go back in the kitchen.

They both watched the kitchen door close and then turned to each other.

“That was close.” he noted aloud, picking up the tarp.

She shrugged, stating, “It wouldn’t have been so bad if we were caught.”

“But she would think we were dating.” he pointed out, folding up the cover.

She punched him in the arm over that, saying, “What’s wrong with that? I’m as good as anyone else.”

He rubbed the impact realizing she had been working out, stating, “You’re right; you can be my pretend girlfriend.”

A look of shock crossed her face and she retorted, “No, you can be my fuck buddy.” crossing her arms.

“Friends with benefits.” he contemplated, rubbing his chin in thought. “I always wanted to do Wonder Woman.” and shrugged his shoulders, “Although Leeloo would have been better.”

“That slut from the Fifth Element?” she huffed, “I always wanted to do Deadpool.” she sneered.

“Easy enough.” he quipped, and changed his image to the red and black costume.

She rolled her eyes and changed to the white stripes of the thermal suit worn by Leeloo. “Is that what you want?”

He studied her for a moment and said, “Lose the wig.” walking around her.

She pulled it from her head and let her hair down. “Better?” she asked.

“Perfect.” he nodded, “Just convince people your hair is orange and you’re in business.”

“Yeah?” she replied, looking down at her chest, “At least she didn’t have big boobs.”

“And Wonder Woman did.” he pointed out, and turned towards the kitchen, “Mom, we’re leaving!” he called through the door. After she replied, they headed out of the garage and climbed in his car.

They made their way out of the suburb and on to the main route. With the sun shining and the temperature rising, it seemed to ease the troubles on his mind. People looked and smiled at his costume image and a teenage girl in the back seat of a sedan took his picture at a red light. Julie had her own admirers and she ate the attention up.

Further down the road, Julie placed a hand on his lap and studied his crotch. “That’s pretty cool the way your dick moves through the image. Do you notice it when you walk?” she asked, poking at it.

He glanced at her and then back at the road, “Not really, a dick has a mind all its own.”

She pinched it between finger and thumb and started waving it around. “It takes a little time to catch up with the image.”

“Quit playing with it Julie.” he warned, “You’re going to get it started.”

She ignored his plea and started stroking it. “You’ll have to finish what you start.” he stated, feeling the sensation arouse him.

“Alright, I will.” she quipped, and ducked her head under his arm.

It was awkward at first, having people stare at him in his costume while Julie serviced him. But the more she worked on him, the less he cared. She kept at it until he pulled into a parking space in a garage near the convention center. There, he let her have what she had been working so hard on getting.

Wiping his remnants off of her chin, she quipped, “I’m driving home so you can return the favor.”

## Chapter 19

The convention center was alive with people. The walkway had tables holding flyers and pamphlets, even as others offered documentation to the passerby, heading to the main entrance. The eccentric and extravagant sported their costumes and formal wear while others came dressed comfortably in tees and jeans. For a place considered to be the center of convention, it certainly attracted the unconventional.

Skinny Hulks and over-weight Wonder Women dressed to support their favorite heroes and villains. The two joined in the odd congregation of fantasy and sci-fi. As the crowd thickened, Julie grabbed his hand, keeping him close as a wall of people surrounded them. Both used their skills to make a pathway for themselves.

But of all people to see at such an event, Steve Otto, along with Kathy Ferguson, were the last two Jeremy would have expected. He actually squeezed Julie's hand tighter from the jolt of torture caused by his enemy over the years. It quickly passed though, realizing that Steve had become insignificant. Maybe his concern for Kathy's wellbeing suppressed his emotions in the hospital. Perhaps it was the arrogant stance he currently took, seeming to hover over Kathy. But the loathing was unmistakable.

*'Dickhead.'* Julie noted, displaying a smirk on her face.

*'Yeah.'* Jeremy sent back, *'Didn't expect him here.'*

He'd hope to pass them without being recognized and signaled the pair to focus on the booth they were in front of. But as they approached them, another figure stepped out into the middle of the congested walkway. Wearing camouflage and a ski mask, the large man raised an assault weapon.

Before Jeremy could say, "What the hell?" the assailant pulled the trigger.

Sweeping the crowd, the popping sound rattled them to the nerves. People started dropping, followed by screams. As the muzzle came point blank in front of Julie, Jeremy pushed her to the left, leaving enough time for him to dodge the bullets intended for him.

But the gunman continued his blast and Steve and Kathy were to be his next victims. Horrified, Jeremy watched Steve yank Kathy in front of himself, using her for a shield. Unable to witness the damage, Jeremy jumped on instinct to catch her as Steve let her go. While he was taking a dive, Jeremy was wrestling a stricken Kathy as gently as he could to the ground.

The gunman continued his spin around and the crowd ahead of them were stuck, even as many were hitting the ground.

*'Get the guy, I'll look after Kathy.'* Julie sent, and Jeremy saw her turn invisible.

Thoroughly pissed, more at Steve than the gunman, he bolted ahead and jumped out to get the gunman while his back was turned. *'Fucking Steve!'* he sent, aiming his wrath at the gunman.

*'I know!'* Julie sent back, arriving at Kathy while he closed in on the murderer.

Guards poured out of the center, pulling their weapons and aiming; but the sight of a young girl taking a round in the head shook him more than the friendly fire coming at him. Snatching the demon by the collar with one hand, he spun around his side and grabbed his arm, hoping to take control of the direction the rounds were taking.

The man jerked and spun back towards the direction he had come, maintaining the pressure on the trigger. Once again, Julie was in the way but she was hunkered down by Kathy. Jeremy forced the gun up and the gunman shook him off. A round from a guard struck the back of the camouflage and had zero effect on the masked menace.

The gun came back down and shots were sent in Julie's direction. To anyone brave enough to look, Steve seemed to pop out from under the table and flailed his limbs in front of the girls. The look of shock on his face as he was drug about like a rag doll was almost comical. Julie was using him for a shield.

Jeremy was no hero, allowing the gunman to finish the remaining rounds into Steve. Life drained out of his eyes as a bullet penetrated his forehead while a path of them went from his neck down and riddled his chest with lead. The clip fell out and Jeremy felt the villain's hand scrambling for another. As more bullets hit the gunman, the sickening click of another clip struck Jeremy's ears.

This time, he was ready, and when the gunman aimed the gun, wanting to spin around to face the guards, he grabbed the barrel and forced it up. As the assailant pulled the trigger, intentional or not, the business end came under his chin. A grin crossed Jeremy's face as he forced the man to blow his own brains out.

Guards were now on him, still firing at the stiff on the ground. Jeremy had to move fast to dodge both stray rounds and footsteps. Sounds he hadn't focused on filled his ears and the mass of misery was overwhelming. Scrambling to get up, his first thought was of Julie and the crisis she was dealing with. He arrived seeing Julie, hands on bullet wounds, seeming to appear from nowhere.

"Is she ok?" he asked, kneeling beside the two. But he knew the answer seeing three holes in the chest leaking blood like water.

"I don't know!" Julie snapped, pulling a finger out of the hole in the center.

"Shock." he noted out loud, and lifted Kathy's legs. Letting them rest in his lap, he looked at the grave expression on her face and then at the blood that escaped from her wounds.

Julie raised up to better position herself, and he offered to put pressure over one of the holes. In doing so, Julie revealed a bullet hole in her hand.

"You're hurt." he pointed, nodding at her hand.

"It's ok." she smiled, "It's already getting better." and wiped the sweat from her brow on her forearm.

Sirens and mayhem poured over them and as the screams and sobbing filled the air, paramedics tapped their shoulders, relieving them of their duties. The shallow-breathing Kathy was now in the hands of professionals.

Both stood up and faced the carnage before them. Mothers rocked lifeless children and others grieved for significant others. A terrible tragedy not meant to be witnessed by the civilized, such loss of life should only be on a battlefield.

They walked towards the entrance as a flood of people came out of it. A guard grabbed Jeremy's shoulder from behind, greeting him with, "Hey!"

He stopped and turned, looking at a young man in uniform.

"Man, I am so sorry." he rambled, "I was aiming at the shooter."

Not having a clue what the man was saying, he shrugged and said, "No problem, I'm fine."

"No man, your shoulder." he pointed out, "I got you..." and placed a finger on his back, "right there." and smeared blood away from the spot.

"Nope," Jeremy smiled, "I'm good." feeling the spot where he rubbed.

“Wow, I could have sworn...” the guard mumbled, scratching his head.

“Probably blood splatter.” Jeremy surmised, and patted the guy on his arm, “My costume doesn’t even have a hole in it.”

“Ok...” the man relented, “Great.” and thumbed behind him, “I’ll just go and see what else I can do.”

At least the crowd inside had now moved out and the displays were wide open. But their goal was the showers used by athletes and they headed for them. Both filled their hands from the soap dispensary and stepped in to the concrete structure of the showers.

“How does it feel to be a hero?” Julie asked, smearing her soap on his chest.

He smirked at that, saying, “I’m no hero.” and admitted, “I helped the shooter kill Steve.”

She nodded knowingly, stating, “I held the weasel there while you did it.”

He lathered soap on her chest, watching the blood roll off of her breasts. “I know.” he sighed, “And I appreciate it.”

“They’ll think he was a hero for blocking the shooter from killing other people.” she mentioned, directing him to turn around.

“It won’t matter at all to Steve.” he retorted, “He’s gone either way and he got what he deserved; if you ask me.” letting her wash his back. “How’s your hand?”

She held it up, showing that it had completely healed. “He got me right before you pushed me away.” and looked at it herself, “It had a round hole right through it at first.”

He explained Carbyne to her and the transformation her bones will change into. He didn’t have answers to the questions she had from that information. “I don’t know.” he admitted, “Maybe you’re done growing or maybe the bones grow like their supposed to.”

“Either way, I think it’ll be ok.” she quipped, and changed the subject, “So, did you really get shot?” she asked, letting him wash her breasts.

“I don’t know that either; I’ll have to check with Nanonaut for a damage report.” he replied, grinning at his sci-fi humor.

“Oh!” Julie gasped, “You should name him Scotty!” she suggested, working her way to his sex organ.

He was washing her back since she was so close, but her comment made him laugh. “I’m giving her all she’s got, captain!” he chirped, rubbing her back aggressively.

“Phasors on stun!” she jibed, and tugged his manhood with each, “Pew, pew!” sound effect she made.

He laughed even more over that. But his thoughts went somewhere else. He asked the girl with his goods in her hands, “You think Kathy will be all right?”

Clutching him around his testicles, she asked, “Why; you wanting to fuck her?”

Aware of the threat, he said, “The thought has crossed my mind.” anyway, but added, “But I was thinking she lost a lot of blood.”

She gave him a squeeze and let go, looking at him, saying, “A lot of it was mine. I think she’s going to be ok.”

Towels found in a locker dried them off and the subject of their departure came up.

“There’s going to be reporters and police out there.” Julie pointed out, “Do you want to face that or should we just sneak out.”

“That’s the reason for the shower;” he explained, “can’t stealth around with blood and gravel all over us.” and snapped her backside with the towel.

“Let’s walk outside and when they rush us, turn invisible.” she connived, heading down the back hallway.

“Oh yeah, let’s freak them out.” he chided, “So they can claim it was angels or ghosts.”

“Yeah!” she agreed, not recognizing him being sarcastic, “They’re bring in ghost hunters and make up haunting stories.” she fantasized.

It was the most ignorant idea he had ever heard. But really, there wasn’t a single reason he could think of to not go along with the idea. Another thought crossed his mind and he offered her another scenario, “Maybe they’ll think comic book heroes are real.”

“Or time travelers!” she exclaimed, as they turned into the main hallway.

“Ok,” he said, taking her hand. “here’s what we’ll do.” and gave her his plans for their dramatic exit.

Passing stragglers in the facility, occupied by the concern for their displays, they stopped at the double doors. Taking a deep breath, they both shoved a door open.

At first, nobody noticed Deadpool and Leeloo, holding hands and strolling out, as if it was just a nice day. But out of the crowd ahead of them, a voice sounded out, coming from the guard that apologized, rang the alarm with, “There he is!”

Cameras and microphones were scooped up in haste while remaining attendees headed in their direction with camera phones at the ready. As flashes went off in front of them, they changed their images, much to the surprise of the witnesses.

Jeremy chose his universe image while Julie turned into the violet shades of a Nebula. The crowd running at them abruptly halted as they laid eyes on a menacing male backdrop displaying galaxies and a cluster of ultraviolet gas clouds in a female form that was filled with sparkling newborn stars.

Julie laid her hand on Jeremy’s shoulder and gave the crowd a wink. Both turned invisible in front of an awestruck crowd..

Many were not ready for such a surprise and those savvy few that recorded the event were quickly accosted by reporters. While amazement was in the air, along with a few heads still looking up, the couple fought off the urge to laugh and snicker as they desperately wanted to keep hidden. Getting out of the front of the center, they ran towards the parking lot.

Changing into Spiderman and Wonder Woman, they climbed into Jeremy’s car. Only then did they feel safe enough to let go.

“Oh my god!” Julie busted out, followed by a wail of laughter.

Jeremy, grinning from ear to ear, had to agree, “I know!” and chuckled, “We killed it!” and found the keys under his seat.

“Did you see that one kid?” she asked, “We totally blew his mind!” and remembered her seatbelt.

“That guard shit a brick!” Jeremy howled, “Bet he doesn’t wash that finger for a while.”

“Finger?” she asked, “Where did he put his finger?” she teased.

“You know what I mean.” he retorted, starting the car.

Between wires for cameras and emergency vehicles, the escape from the lot was nothing but aggravating. A policeman directed traffic away from entering the lot and bent down to peer inside the car when they approached. Satisfied they were not the cosplayers the police wanted to question, he waved them on out into the street.

But the ride home turned solemn as the two remembered the ones they could not save. Both started to speak at once after a moment of silence passed.

“I think I could have...” Julie considered, over top of Jeremy’s, “Maybe I should have...”

“Hind sight is twenty-twenty.” Jeremy philosophized, “Would a, could a, should a, and all that.” turning on the street to their subdivision. “What’s done is done,” he shrugged, “and that’s all there is to that.”

“But I could have jumped in when he came back around. That’s all I’m saying.” she defended with a huff.

“And let Kathy bleed to death while getting hit by rounds?” he argued, and let out a sigh, “No, you did what you could and if that saved one from dying on the scene, that’s more than some people bothered doing.”

She let out a sigh saying, “I guess you’re right.” and looked away from him, “Maybe we’ll do better next time.”

Jeremy raised his eyebrows at the odd comment. “Next time?” he retorted, “Let’s hope there isn’t a next time.”

“You know what I mean.” she explained, “There’s no sense having abilities if you don’t use them.” and looked at him, “And what better way to use them than by helping other people?”

“The problem I have isn’t helping people; it’s like no good deed goes unpunished.” he contemplated. “Like, you help one and that one takes advantage of you.” and rolled his eyes, “I’ve found out it’s better for you to help people and not let them know it was you doing the helping, you know?”

“Well, we screwed that one up today.” she quipped, as the car turned onto her street.

He shrugged saying, “I’m over it.” and came to a stop at the curb in front of her house. “I’m tired of playing it safe.” and smiled, “Letting loose every now and then is good.” throwing the car in park.

“I’m going to check out the news!” she exclaimed, “I bet they’re going crazy!” and opened the car door.

“Ok,” he nodded, “I’m going to do the same.” and put the car in drive, “Talk to you later.”

She turned back to him with an inquisitive look and asked, “Where are you going?”

“Home” he replied questionably, “Why?”

“Um, aren’t your parents doing the nasty?” she pointed out, “We’re back early since Comicon was cut short.”

He looked down the street remembering the conversation. “You’re right, and I can’t be seen in public, somebody might recognize me.”

“Come on…” she offered, “You can hang out for a while.” and stepped out of the car.

He stowed the keys and followed her inside. He knew her mother wasn’t home because she used a key to get in.

“So where’s your mom?” he asked, wiping his feet on the welcome mat.

“Boyfriend’s.” she replied nonchalantly, dropping her keys in a dish on the banister.

Taken aback by that news, since he had met her father at graduation, he asked, “Really; since when?”

“Since Dad got a girlfriend.” she answered, snatching up the remote on the sofa arm.

“Ok, so how long?” he asked again, plopping down on the sofa.

“Christmas for the girlfriend, New Years for the boyfriend.” she sighed, plopping down beside him, “I saw it coming of course. I can read them like a book.” and clicked on the television.

“Wow, I’m so sorry. I didn’t know.” he consoled, thinking she’d been having a terrible time.

She changed the channel to a commercial about bloating and the wonderful drug that magically made you feel like you weren’t. They listened to the long list of side effects that came

with using it. Some of them were worse than what the pill was supposed to help. After watching the flies that swarmed an actress' stomach as she strolled in a city park disappear, the news came on.

A news anchor they both were familiar with welcomed them back and the red and white banner on the bottom of the screen had 'breaking news' written in crimson over it. A brief summary of the shooting was given and then an introduction to a reporter, live on the scene, was given. She was standing off to the side of the walkway with police tape directly behind him.

Anchor: *We now go live on the scene with our very own Amy Shaw.*

Amy: *Thank you Jim; I'm standing just a few feet away from the very spot the incident took place. Police say it was a lone gunman in full body armor with an assault rifle of an undisclosed make and model.*

Anchor: *And what is the situation like there now?*

Amy: *There's a morbid silence here Jim. The crowds attending what is usually a festival of fun and fantasy that turned violent and bloody. Now, most of the crowd has gone, leaving investigators pouring over the crime scene.*

Anchor: *We understand at last count that eight had lost their lives, nine including the gunman, and an estimated thirteen injured. Has that been revised?*

Amy: *No it hasn't, and we are reminded that this is an investigation and a briefing will be held sometime soon.*

"That's Amy." Jeremy exclaimed, leaning towards the TV.

"The reporter that got kidnapped?" she asked, looking at him curiously.

"Yeah." he replied, "We've met."

"Uh huh..." she teased, "Bet you screwed her too."

"What; are you psychic?" he jibed back, giving her a grin.

"Nope, telepathic." she corrected, "I can almost read your thoughts."

The scene changed on the screen and displayed a podium that had been set up right outside a set of doors and a crowd had gathered in front of it.

Anchor: *We now go to the Gravel County Police Department where our reporter is standing by.*

Reporter: *We are told that there is an announcement regarding the incident and we are expecting the Chief of Police any moment.*

Sure enough, a uniformed officer stepped out of the building and approached the microphone. Others followed him, dressed in uniforms and suits, and stood on either side of the chief. The camera adjusted and zoomed in on the podium while the crowd quieted down.

Chief: *Ladies and gentlemen; I first want to send my condolences to the victim's families and friends who are grieving at this time. We will not name the assailant out of respect and focus on just the event that took place at the convention center today. At approximately five twenty-seven today, a lone gunman approached a crowd gathered in front of the convention center and discharged an AK-47, spraying the attendees with approximately thirty-five rounds of ammunition.*

"That's one clip and part of another." Jeremy pointed out. "The guy was trying to spend a clip every time he circled around."

Chief: *There were five clips found on the body, along with a nine millimeter revolver. We believe the suspect intended on continuing his assault into the facility. However, he was interrupted by a cosplayer, roughly twenty to twenty-five years old, dressed in a Deadpool costume. This individual wrestled with the assailant and managed to force the gunman to kill*

*himself with his own weapon. We are currently seeking this person of interest, along with a female of the same age range, dressed in a Leeloo costume, attributed to saving the life of another victim during the assault, for questioning.*

*“That’s me!” Julie exclaimed, now leaning in closer to the television.*

*Questions were thrown at the chief and he calmed them down by raising his hand in the air.*

*Chief: I am sure you all have questions and we will get to them momentarily. I want to introduce Mayor McKinley. He will brief you on the crisis management and details for the hotline we have set up.*

*Julie got up, stating she was going to make popcorn. It seemed appropriate for the situation. The mayor brought up the street closings surrounding the facility and what people can do to help the victims and their families. The Q&A session started when Julie returned with a large bowl of popcorn. Jeremy agreed that butter would have ruined it for him. They both settled in for the reporter questions.*

*Reporter: These two people you’re looking for; is there any truth that they are extra-terrestrial?*

*Chief: There is no evidence of such a thing. Let’s try to use some common sense here.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> Reporter: Witnesses claim they disappeared right in front of them, is there a technology the military has that would allow them to do that?*

*Chief: I’m not going to speculate on military capabilities, I’m only interested in finding the facts that are relevant to this case. Let’s stay away from bouts of fantasy and keep it real. You, you’re next.*

*But the news anchor interrupted the session claiming the announcement was winding down and they were going back to the scene where they were ready to interview one of the witnesses.*

*Amy Shaw: I am with Clyde Mandel who survived the incident; Clyde, tell us what happened.*

*Witness: I was getting ready to take a pic of this hot-looking babe in a Leeloo outfit when bam, this dude in a Call of Duty costume steps out from behind a sign and starts blasting away at everybody. I still got the pic I wanted though; that girl was super-hot.*

*Amy Shaw: We have been able to send that photo to our station; if we can put that up for our viewers.*

*A picture of Jeremy and Julie walking away from the camera appeared on the TV with the gunman in the background, weapon raised, surrounded by a wall of people.*

## Chapter 20

“He’s right, look at that ass.” Jeremy teased, pointing at the image, receiving a slap on the wrist for his comment.

Amy Shaw: *After taking that photo, what did you do next?*

Witness: *I flipped it on recorder and started taping.*

Amy Shaw: *I want to advise our viewers that what they are about to see is graphic and contains violence.*

The news station then played the recording made by Clyde, showing the lunge Jeremy made after the gunman.

Amy Shaw: *Describe for me what you saw here.*

Witness: *You can see the Deadpool guy jumping on the gunman. Then, some douche bag shoves a girl in front of him and she gets blasted. Leeloo girl runs to the girl that gets blasted and douche bag dives under the table. But what shocked me was that Leeloo disappeared... right there. Gone, poof, like, faded out of the scene vanished. Next, Deadpool dude grabs the barrel of the gun and you can see his hand smoking when it comes around. Yep, right there, I didn’t know which one scared me more, the gunman or the guy getting his hand melted off from the barrel. The dude played Deadpool pretty good because anybody else would have let go, but my man didn’t. He forced the guy to shoot over my head when he aimed towards me.*

The camera was jittery and grainy, leaving much up to the viewer. Jeremy sat back and watched, listening to the witness describe the events.

Witness: *Next thing I know, douche bag comes out backwards from under the table, spins around and does a funky dance, like, trying to get the gunman to shoot him. Deadpool guy makes sure he gets some too. I think Leeloo girl yanked him out and used him for a meat shield but you just can’t see her.*

Anchor: *Wild speculations there Amy. Now we turn to our experts and ask; could this have been prevented?*

Julie’s cell phone rang and she picked it up and answered it with, “Hey.” and listened to the other end, “Yeah, he’s with me; we’re both ok.”

She hung up and said, “You need to call your parents. Mom said they’re trying to get ahold of you.”

“Crap, phone’s in the car.” he replied, getting up off of the sofa.

He changed his image to a blue tee shirt and jeans and headed outside. Heading down the steps to the sidewalk, he was met by a couple in business suits.

“Mr. Dodd?” the male called, rapidly approaching him.

‘Julie, we have company.’ he sent, nodding at the man.

“I’m Special Agent Johansson and this is my partner Agent Schmitz.” the female introduced, extending a hand. “We are from Homeland Security.”

‘Who is it?’ Julie asked, as Jeremy shook her hand.

*'Homeland Security they say.'* he sent back, saying, "Nice to meet you." while shaking her hand.

"Is Miss Chiders at home?" the female agent asked, displaying a badge on her hip while looking towards the house.

*'Best we talk to them, maybe persuade them to go somewhere else.'* he messaged, "Yeah, give me a minute to grab my phone; my parents are a little worried about me."

"Of course." Agent Johansson quipped, and followed him to his car.

He opened the door and bent over. To his surprise, the agent placed her hand on his ass cheek and leaned over with him. "Got it?" she asked, letting her hand slide down his backside.

"Uh, yeah," he replied, holding up the phone, "right here."

They met back up with her partner and headed for the house. Jeremy opened the door and called, "Julie, you have visitors." and ushered them inside.

Julie greeted them at the breezeway wearing an image of a black corset and matching black jeans. "Hello, who's this?" she asked, extending a hand.

"These are Homeland Security agents. I think they're lost or something." Jeremy mused, as the two flashed their badges on their hips.

Agent Schmitz had a hard time letting go of her hand as Agent Johansson spoke up, "Yes, pleased to meet you Miss Chiders, we are lucky to find Mr. Dodd here with you; he would have been our next stop."

"Well, you look totally uncomfortable in those coats, let me hang them up for you." Julie offered, holding out her hand for them.

Jeremy offered them a seat while Julie put their jackets up. He took a spot by the female while the male sat down in the love seat. He dialed his mother's phone and informed them of his safety and his plans to be out late, urging her to go ahead and enjoy the evening with his dad.

"Good, I'm glad to see you are watching the news." Agent Johansson noted aloud, "This is what we are here to discuss."

The news displayed another image of the two as they left the convention center. They were wearing the images of the universe and nebula just before turning invisible. Ironically, the banner over the doors behind them advertised the Comicon event by distinctly stating, 'Where fantasy comes alive.'

"So you think that's us?" Jeremy asked, looking at the female.

"No, we know that is you." she corrected, "We just need you to stop."

"Really?" Julie retorted, "There's no proof that was us."

"Miss Chiders, we have video, photos, and DNA." Agent Schmitz argued, "We know it's you two."

"Mr. Dodd, your prints and DNA was found at the abandoned farm the mass murderer used recently. They were also found where a pimp was shot, along with his cohorts." Johansson stated, and sighed, "You can't expect bodies to be dropping all over the place without leaving some evidence behind."

"First of all," Julie started, "call me Julie;" and looked at the female agent, "second, I don't know what you're talking about so leave me out of it."

"Oh, Mr. Dodd hasn't informed you about his escapades?" Agent Schmitz asked rhetorically, "Might I say he has been rather busy lately."

"Call me Jeremy." he instructed, "Are you here to arrest us?" he asked.

"Arrest you?" Johansson repeated, "Goodness no. Not right now anyway." and explained, "Our agency was fine with everything as long as you stayed out of the public eye." and nodded

at the television, “But given today’s events, Homeland’s pissed off, having to clean up your mess.”

“What we are here for is your cooperation.” Agent Schmitz explained, “We probably wouldn’t be successful in an arrest; you’d find some means of escape.”

“What we are looking for is your abilities.” Johansson stated, “As an ally of the government, we can protect you from corporate entities in exchange for your help in solving some of our nation’s problems.”

“That’s almost impossible.” Jeremy countered, “You must know that big pharma and the healthcare providers have it in for my father.”

“Oh, we are aware.” she agreed, “And you are not aware that we have taken steps to interfere with their plans to eliminate your father’s threat to their industry...” and gave Jeremy a stern glare, “for now.”

“We will let you and your friends lead a normal life.” Schmitz conveyed, “You two can perform favors for us on occasion.”

“Gee, I don’t know if I’m going to find the time.” Jeremy quipped, “I’ve got more than you two wanting to recruit our help.”

*‘What the hell Jeremy?!’* Julie sent, offering the two agents a smile.

*‘I’m not going to be their puppet; give them an inch and they’ll take a mile.’* he warned.

“News to us.” Johansson exclaimed, “Who’s approached you?”

“Russia, for one.” Jeremy lied, sending the message, *‘We can’t get into bed with one country Julie. They’ll have us spying on every government around.’*

*‘So telling them we’re in bed with Russia will solve that?’* she sent back, *‘That makes us traitors you know.’*

“Are you seriously considering collaboration with our enemy?” Schmitz asked, aghast at the thought.

“Collaborate?” Jeremy repeated, “I never said that; I’m just saying they might want a few, how you put it, favors from time to time.”

“If this is about money, I think we can come to an agreement.” Johansson offered, placing a hand on his knee.

*‘That was slick.’* Julie sent, allowing Schmitz to put his hand on her knee.

*‘Let’s see if it was slick enough.’* he sent back, saying, “Well, we do want isolation and a secure spot to do some projects we have in mind.”

“Like what?” Agent Johansson asked, “A bat cave or something?”

He couldn’t help but let out a chuckle, “No, more like an island.” and explained, “Large enough for our families to live on, of course.”

“And we both want careers at NASA.” Julie tossed in, sending, *‘Might as well insure it.’*

“Oh, and no paying taxes either.” Jeremy tossed in, giving them a facetious look.

“This isn’t an all-you-can eat menu!” Schmitz, bellowed. “Either play with us the way we want or lose the support of the United States Government!”

“Easy tiger, we’re just thinking things over.” Julie soothed, patting the hand on her knee. “Besides, whatever the government doesn’t agree to, I think we can probably get on our own.”

“Careful.” Agent Johansson warned, “There’s a thin line between asset and liability.” pointing out, “You don’t want to become a liability. Which is why we are here right now.”

*‘I’m going to blow their minds.’* Julie sent, and said, “Well, I really don’t need money, I’ve got a nice investment in the stock market.”

“Oh; you’re talking about the two point five million?” Agent Johansson asked, “There’s some concern about illegal practices you may be involved in, according to the S.E.C.” she remarked snidely, “You might be under investigation which makes us your saving grace.”

“Now wait a minute!” Julie argued, “I played the market fair and square.” and huffed, “You won’t find anything wrong with what I’ve done.”

The agent grinned at her outburst and quipped, “Maybe not; but those investigations are brutal.” and ticked off some examples, “Lawyers and court dates, over and over, paper trails, and red tape.” and sighed, “It’s messy when you go from five hundred dollars to seven figures. People get so protective over money.”

*‘I’m getting fucked.’* Julie sent, stating, “Fine, one favor and no investigation.”

*‘It is the government.’* Jeremy sent back, surprised she had been using her abilities on stocks and bonds.

“That’s a start dear.” the agent quipped snidely, “But we both know there’s other charges. Killing Steven Otto would be one.”

But something else made both of them stand up. *‘A news van just pulled up.’* was distinctly heard coming out of both agent’s ears.

Jeremy was the first to address the two agents. “You aren’t here to negotiate with us, are you?” he asked, leering at the female.

“Whoa!” Schmitz exclaimed, standing up himself. “What are you talking about?”

“We can hear your earpieces.” Julie pointed out, giving him a hairy eyeball.

“Stand down”. Johansson replied, talking into the cuff of her blouse.

“I didn’t want a fight with the government.” Jeremy huffed, “You two are here to make sure we do.”

*‘Driver is inspecting subject one’s car.’* the earpieces alerted, as Schmitz replied, “We aren’t looking for a fight. You have to understand, people like you are a menace to society.”

Johansson rolled her eyes as Julie got in his face. “Tell that to the people we saved at Comicon motherfucker!” pointing her index finger at his nose.

“Then tell us why you’re here.” Jeremy demanded, stepping over to the bay window and peering out.

“They want you downtown.” Johansson admitted, looking down at her lap.

“Sit your ass down.” Julie demanded, and watched the agent raise his hands in surrender and taking a seat.

“Why, what’s downtown?” Jeremy asked, watching Amy look at his car and then at her phone.

“I guess they want to question you there.” she replied, turning to look at him.

“You mean interrogate.” he corrected, seeing Amy look towards the house.

“Well yes, but I don’t think they’ll hurt you.” she countered.

“That won’t happen even if they wanted to.” Julie sneered, pacing in front of the two agents.

“Let me take care of Amy and we’ll head downtown.” Jeremy decided. letting the curtain fall back in place as the reporter headed for the house. “Julie, answer the door please.”

“Are you serious?” Johansson asked, “You’re going to turn yourself in?”

“Nope,” he replied, taking Julie’s spot on the floor, “I said we were going downtown. But I’m not getting cuffed.”

“They’re going to want you restrained.” Schmitz pointed out, watching the man closely.

“I want an island to myself.” he shrugged, “Guess we both aren’t getting what we want.” and looked towards the knock on the door.

“Hi, Amy Shaw, channel nine.” he could hear, “I’m actually looking for Jeremy, Jeremy Dodd.”

“Right this way.” Julie directed, and the door opened wide.

“Jeremy,” Amy exclaimed, “there you are.” and noticed the two other guests, “Hello, Amy Shaw.”

“Channel Nine, we heard.” Agent Schmitz smirked, “Agent Schmitz, this is my partner, Agent Johansson.”

“Agents?” she asked, seeming shocked, “What branch?”

“Homeland Security.” Johansson explained, “We’re meeting with Jeremy and his... friend Julie.” and shook her hand.

Amy turned her head and said, “Didn’t take you long.” and smiled, “I guess you’re here to offer them the keys to the city.”

“Actually, we’ve been instructed to bring them in.” Schmitz confessed, taking his seat.

“Really; now that would be stupid.” Amy quipped, looking at Jeremy, “Are you trying to keep this mess alive for some reason?”

Johansson, seeming concerned, replied, “No, we are trying to keep it from repeating.”

Amy actually laughed a little, and then stopped herself, “Well, I don’t know how to take that really. Are you saying you don’t want somebody stopping gunmen from performing mass murders or you don’t want the cooperation of the people doing the saving?”

“Now look, we are here on orders. They say, we do.” Schmitz stated matter-of-factly.

“Ok, but I came here to advise Mr. Dodd on how to deal with the media attention he and Miss...?” she paused, as Julie gave her last name, “Chiders, thank you, are bound to attract.” and opened her hands, “Do I tell a story about how the visual effects were an illusion these known geniuses are more than capable of...” and looked at agent Schmitz, “Or do I tell a story where the D.H.S. is harassing and holding against their will, the very heroes that stopped a mass murderer, to keep them from being heroes again?”

Silence fell as they mulled over her words. Amy thought the silence was too long and urged, “Go ahead and ask your field officer, he can take that question to his superiors.”

“Oh, we’re going with them, just not in handcuffs.” Julie explained.

“Well, I’ll need to know what story I’m going with.” Amy contended, “Tell you what, I’ll give them two hours. If you don’t call me; I’ll assume I’m running with the big bad government is being oppressive and trampling on rights again.” and walked towards the door, “You have my number Jeremy, call me soon.” and opened the door, “Agents Schmitz and Johansson... got it.” she quipped, and shut the door behind her.

“Alright, you two ready to go?” Jeremy asked, looking at the bewildered agents.

Their headpieces sounded off stating the reporter had left. Johansson seemed to take the lead and sent back, “Exiting residence, green light.” and stood up first.

“Oh...,” Jeremy seemed to remember as he approached the entrance, “I hate Tasers. If I get hit with one, I’m liable to retaliate.” and opened the front door. “We don’t want that, just a nice ride and no drama.”

Rolling her eyes, Johansson talked in her cuff, “Black Knight and Violet Vixen in custody, stand down.” and followed Jeremy outside.

The ride downtown was uneventful except the caravan of vehicles that followed behind Jeremy as he and Julie drove Johansson, while Schmitz drove their department’s sedan.

“So, who’s the one in charge of this operation?” Jeremy asked, pulling up in front of the federal building.

“That’s Officer Healey” she replied, “Go around back.” she directed.

“Why?” he asked, “Is there an ambush waiting on me?” and drove into the garage instead.

“I guess it doesn’t matter.” she relented, as the car pulled into a spot in the mostly empty garage.

“So what floor is he on?” Jeremy prodded, putting the car in park and turning it off.

“Oh, it’s she,” she corrected, “but we have to to to lower level two.”

*‘Well she isn’t going to be on lower level one.’* Julie sent, stepping out of the car.

*‘I’m guessing higher ups are higher up.’* he messaged back, dropping the keys between the door and the seat.

Schmitz pulled in and parked beside them, followed by the S.W.A.T.-like van and another sedan.

“Ok, this way guys.” Johansson motioned, taking the lead out of the garage.

Doors burst open and soldiers dressed in Black Ops gear filed out on the concrete floor. If the suits and battle equipment wasn’t intimidating enough, the laser beams swirling around beaded in on the two supposed subjects.

“Wow, too much for me.” Jeremy remarked, “We’ll just meet you inside.” and both he and Julie disappeared.

They moved fast so the beams of light would shine on the walls behind them. The support beam made of concrete allowed them the luxury of climbing out of the way. As agents swarmed the area in an ever widening search, they waited until Johansson returned, seeming defeated.

Scratching her head and then cursing, she headed out of the garage while the rest of the militia continued their search.

*‘Time to follow the leader.’* Jeremy sent, and both climbed down off of the column.

Johansson turned around once before entering the building. The pair didn’t know if it was their presence that caused it or the regret in losing them but they gave her a little more room until she stepped into the revolving glass door.

They took the partition behind her and kept the momentum going until they could get out behind her. Their lead stopped at the security desk and showed her badge. She leaned in and asked the guard, “Hey, you haven’t seen anything weird recently here have you?”

“Nope.” the man quipped, “Except someone asking me if I have seen anything weird.”

With a scowl, she huffed and turned away, walking on down the hallway. She stopped at a set of elevators and looked at her watch. Pushing the up button, she crossed her arms and waited. The elevator must have been already on their floor as it opened soon after.

Hugging the walls of a fairly good sized carriage, the two watched her press number five after using an access card in a slot on the wall. Both communicated caution about sudden movements and slow breathing to each other, not wanting to get the agent’s attention. With some relief, the elevator came to a stop and the doors opened.

Back on the tail, they followed the unsuspecting pigeon to her destination outside a wooden door. Letting out a sigh and shaking her head of hair, she knocked on the door.

“Enter.” someone called, and Johansson opened the door.

An older woman stood behind a desk littered in paperwork. She was studying a monitor adorned with Post it notes. Glancing at her visitor over a dainty pair of bifocals, she smirked.

Julie went left while Jeremy took the right and both bore witness to the conversation.

“Where the hell are they?” she asked, focusing back on the monitor.

“I don’t know. I didn’t think they could really turn invisible like that.” Johansson defended.

“It’s a sorry cluster fuck of a situation.” she huffed, “Get your ass back outside and don’t come back without them.” and plopped down in her chair.

A universe full of galaxies appeared sitting on the corner of her desk in the form of a man.

## Chapter 21

Papers flew as the older woman jumped back, causing the wheeled chair to pivot sideways and dumping its occupant into the floor.

“Oh, she has us.” Jeremy quipped, and nodded at a nebula in the form of a woman standing behind Johansson.

The older woman sat up and peered over her desk as Jeremy picked up her placard off of the desk. “Security Officer Gladys Healey.” he read out loud.

“He told you no Tasers.” Julie yelled, and slapped one out of Johansson’s hand before she could aim it.

He glanced at the agent and then back at the officer. “You know, I’ve tried playing nice with you people. For some reason, nice just isn’t in your playbook.” and disappeared.

The officer rose up with a gun in her hands. Finding Jeremy gone, she aimed towards Julie who disappeared before she could focus on her.

“This cat and mouse game can go on all night.” Jeremy quipped, appearing right beside the stunned officer. “Let’s put the toys away and have a decent conversation.” and disappeared before she could swing the weapon on him.

“Look, we could have killed you if we wanted.” Julie pointed out, as she appeared with a choke hold from behind a bug-eyed Johansson.

Throwing her hands out, the officer asked, “What the fuck?” and tossed the gun on the desk.

The gun levitated off of the desk and Jeremy appeared with it in his hand. “Let’s put this thing up before somebody gets hurt.” he advised, and climbed up the wall to lay it on a high bookcase.

He jumped back down to face two awe-struck women with their mouths opened.

“I know, that’s scary.” he admitted, sitting back down on the corner of Healey’s desk, “You’re probably thinking POTUS is in danger right about now.” and straightened up.

Julie let go of the agent and she shook the violet cluster off of her. “Bitch, I let you go. Don’t even act like you broke free.”

Jeremy stood up and walked around the desk. Picking up the overturned chair, he sat it down beside the boss. “Here, have a seat.”

Julie pulled up a black four-legged chair and sat it beside the agent saying, “Take a load off.”

Both women took their seats as Jeremy stepped back in front of the desk. “Now, isn’t this nice?” he asked, looking in the eyes of the officer.

She looked away from the mesmerizing eyes of a very fit foe.

“Well, I can tell you, though I doubt you’re going to believe anything I say, that the President is perfectly safe with me.” and smiled, “I like my country after all.”

His words were met by silence from both government employees. He gave a shrug and paced in front of them, rubbing his chin.

“I guess you probably have questions for us and I know I have a few for you.” and spun around to face the officer. “Go ahead, you ask one and I’ll ask one; that’s fair.” and waited.

“Are you going to kill us?” she asked, staring at him intently.

“Why would I do that?” he asked, “Stupid question really; I could have already done that.”

“Yes, but you couldn’t gain information with us dead.” Johansson pointed out.

“I’m not looking for UFO evidence or the battle plans for some fucked up regime in a godforsaken country.” and huffed, “I just want to be left alone. But, you wanted to make sure that wasn’t going to happen. No, I don’t intend to kill anybody.”

The officer sighed and said, “Go ahead and ask your question.”

“Why did you want to interrogate us?” he asked, resuming his pacing.

“To see what you are capable of, of course.” she replied, “That’s a stupid question.”

He stopped and looked at her, and snapped, “And just asking was too easy for you?”

“Like you would just tell us?” she retorted, rolling her eyes.

He picked up a letter opener and stabbed it into his forearm, causing both women to gasp.

“Sorry, I’ve been a little thick-skinned lately.” he chided, and pushed the metal in past the tip. “Hang on, I’m trying.” he grunted, forcing it further in.

“That is…” Healey started, grimacing at the self-mutilation, “disturbing.”

“No really, its ok.” he replied, shoving the dull blade through his arm, “It’s not like you wouldn’t do worse I suspect.” rotating his arm for them to view.

“You’re going to need a medic.” Johansson thought out loud.

“No thanks, already got one.” he soothed, and yanked the blade out.

He kept rotating his arm back and forth so they could see both sides of the wound heal. “It’s nothing really.” he assured them, and laid the letter opener’s handle on the table, leaving the bloody end hanging over the side.

“Unbelievable.” was all the officer could say.

“We can see thermal, infrared, and gamma ray.” he continued on, addressing Johansson, “We can see through your clothes at the gun strapped to your ankle and the tattoo of an eagle on your arm and the hollow heart with a teardrop over your boss’ left breast.”

“We can smell what you had for dinner and track your scent to every place you have been in your entire life.” Julie added with a smile.

“We can communicate with each other without saying a word.” Jeremy confessed, looking up at the ceiling as if trying to recall them all, “And, it is almost impossible to break our bones.”

“We can read your emotions and see through your eyes.” Julie stated, helping him with the list, “We can manipulate your thoughts and suggest actions you normally wouldn’t take.”

“I guess you can walk on water too!” Healey sneered, doubting him quite a bit.

“We are advanced humans with abilities.” Jeremy explained, “We can be an asset or an enemy. That choice is up to you.” and sat down on the corner again. “Question!” he barked, holding up a finger. “Who is in the elevator?”

Both women looked towards the door curiously while Julie gave the answer, “Schmitz!” and smelled the air, “He’s pissed, and tired.” and looked at his boss, “He’s straightening his tie,” and stared ahead, “.looking at his watch…” and smiled, “and fixing his hair.” and looked at Johansson, “Are you two fucking?” she asked rhetorically, “I’d like to ride him like a cowgirl, he’s cute.”

The ding from the elevator came through the open door confirming their outlandish remarks. Jeremy stood up and faced the doorway. “I think he’d love to see you again Julie.” crossing his arms.

Schmitz appeared in front of the door and his eyes grew wide as they filled with the image of outer space in the form of Jeremy. He drew his weapon and shot Jeremy just as he rolled his

eyes at him. The cartridge hit the floor, making a ringing sound on every bounce. The bullet hit Jeremy right on his sternum and ricocheted, embedding into the door jam.

“Ouch.” Jeremy complained, as the bullet wound shrunk and disappeared.

“Guess he wasn’t happy to see you again.” Julie quipped. “Come on in Agent Schmitz!”

The agent looked at Jeremy and then at his weapon, unable to determine what had just happened. He stepped into the office as Jeremy beckoned him in. Staring at the now violet, star-speckled, girl; his shoulders dropped with his jaw in amazement.

“Let’s not shoot that again. People die from ricochets all the time.” Jeremy advised.

“I got it.” Julie called, and urged the Government Issue out of his hands. The newly-arrived agent watched Julie climb up the wall and lay it on the top of the bookshelf with the other pistol.

“I know, nice ass.” Jeremy agreed, knowing what he was looking at. “Now, I think its Officer Healey’s turn on the questions.”

“Wait, you just got shot in the chest.” Schmitz interrupted, “Is nobody the least bit surprised this...” and cleared his throat, “whatever he is, is still standing?”

“Not really.” the officer retorted, “He’s skewered himself, climbed up walls, and turned invisible so far. A bullet bouncing off of him doesn’t seem that surprising right about now.” and turned to focus on Jeremy. “I can see where your abilities would come in quite useful to the government. Are you serious about helping us?”

He gave a half shrug and replied, “Depends, are you serious about helping us?”

The officer looked at her agents who gave her another shrug. Johansson relented and spoke up. “We kind of offered them a trade on favors.”

“We weren’t serious.” Schmitz explained, “We were just baiting them to bring them here.”

“So am I under investigation or not?” Julie demanded to know.

Jeremy voiced his concern, “I want to know if my parents are safe.”

“And I didn’t murder anybody. Steve O had it coming.” Julie flatly stated.

“What about NASA? Do we still get to work there?” Jeremy asked, “And I still want an island to myself.”

Holding her hands up, Healey settled them down, “Look, I don’t know what they said and I’m not making promises on anything.”

Jeremy leaned in on the female officer and growled, “Somebody better, or I’ll pop up behind you in your shower.”

“That’s right.” Julie added, “Snip-snip Schmitz!” opening and closing her fingers in scissor-like fashion.

“Don’t be crude!” Healey admonished, “We can work this out.”

“Fine, if you can’t make promises, give me the person that can.” Jeremy stated, tossing a block of Post it notes in her direction.

“Hold on,” she defended, “I said I wasn’t making promises, but I can get approval.” shoving the paper block back. “Come back tomorrow and we can work it out.”

“So...,” Jeremy surmised, “I’m telling Amy that the D.H.S. wanted to thank us for our help at the convention center and they are not going to stalk us. If they want us, they can call like anybody else, right?” grabbing the phone.

“Amy?” she asked, and looked at her two agents again.

With a sigh, Schmitz explained, “Amy Shaw, the news reporter.” and rolled his eyes, “They’re going to air a story at eleven. Based on this outcome, they’re either going to cover up their actions at the convention center or rake the D.H.S. over the coals for kidnapping and trampling on their rights.”

“Julie wants to tell the world we are aliens and the government has been covering it up all this time.” Jeremy suggested, “We come in peace but you would rather have enemies instead of allies, blah-blah-blah.”

“You know, seventy percent of the population believe the government is hiding UFO information anyway.” Julie mused, “Just think of what that will do to religion alone.”

“You can’t be serious!” Healey said incredulously, “Nobody will ever believe it!”

The universe faded away as the image of an alien grey replaced it. Jeremy raised his hand saying, “I come in peace; take me to your leader.” in a robotic tone.

“News at eleven!” Julie quipped, and nodded at the clock on the wall.

“Okay-okay.” the officer relented, waving off the alien, “Fix this mess with the media and then we can negotiate a deal.”

Jeremy changed back into shirt and pants as he picked up the receiver. Dialing Amy’s number from memory, he waited until she picked up.

“Amy it’s Jeremy.” he started after hearing her greeting, “Guess what, they want to play nice. Let’s roll with the cover up for now and put the scorched earth plan on the back burner.” he paused as he listened to her and said, “Yep, we can do that. We’re going to be back here tomorrow. If it goes south, you can call in the hounds then.”

“Hounds?” the officer mouthed, puzzled by the terminology.

He hung up the receiver and smiled, informing them, “We have an interview to go to. Seems they want to broadcast it over the national networks.”

“What a difference a day makes, huh?” Julie quipped, “Just this morning, I was trimming my toenails with a pair of wire cutters.” and spun around, “And tonight, fifteen minutes of fame!” and jabbed Johansson with her fist on her shoulder.

Brushing off her arm where Julie’d punched her, Johansson pointed out, “Yeah, but might I remind you that you are being sought after by the local police?”

“I might be able to help with that.” Healey piped in, offering a sly smile. “Domestic terrorism is a federal crime. If two federal agents happen to be around when they showed up, jurisdiction defaults to us.”

Jeremy nodded his head in understanding, “So, you do us a favor and what favor do you want in return?” he asked, a little suspicious of her intentions.

“Kumar Elijah Komati.” she rattled off, “He has a list we are interested in but have no grounds for a warrant.”

“We don’t know if it’s digital, paper, or what it is on.” Johansson added, “But it has to exist.”

“You get me a photo of it.” the officer bartered, “We’ll call it even on our jurisdiction favor.”

“Ok, what do I get for killing the invisible man story?” he asked, wondering how he was going to explain that scene away.

“That’s your mess.” she argued, “You clean it up.” and rose to her feet. “These two can follow you to the interview. Tomorrow, you two get briefed.”

“Are you serious?” Schmitz asked unbelievably, “You can’t trust these two.”

“No disappearing.” Johansson negotiated, standing up as well.

“No pointing weapons at us.” Jeremy countered, pointing a finger at her.

“And get those costumes off.” Healey added, “It’s intimidating.”

Julie changed images back to her corset and jeans while Jeremy changed into the dress clothes Schmitz was wearing. “What?” he asked with a smirk, “I got an interview.”

## Chapter 22

The interview turned out to be less dramatic than anticipated. Amy had already done her homework and explained away the incredible events of their changing and fading away, claiming the equipment was already inside the convention center. The two costumed patrons had entered the building and set it up, hoping the gimmick would ease some of the trauma from the events.

As predicted, two detectives and two police officers showed up before the interview even ended. As planned, Schmitz and Johansson stepped in and claimed jurisdiction over the pair.

In the end, they parted ways agreeing to be back at the federal building the next day. Julie asked him to spend the night and he accepted. They drove to her house knowing her mother wouldn't be home. Jeremy had thought his mishap with the teacher pushed Julie off of the deep end after her parents were already split up. He didn't dare ask her how often her mother was gone now-a-days, fearing it would be a touchy subject.

His phone rang as they pulled up to the suburban home.

"News?" Jeremy replied, not even given the chance to say hello. "Why are you watching the eleven o'clock news? I thought you guys had plans."

But June was having no deferments, "You're right, we didn't have plans on seeing you on the news." she barked through the phone.

No matter your age, a scolding from your mother was always a humbling experience; able to knock the most egotistical back down to ground level. As usual, she ended the speech with an, "I love you." but after the revelation that he intended to spend the night with Julie advised, "Wear a rubber." and abruptly hung up. He gave Julie an embarrassing smile and took a seat on the sofa.

"Everything alright?" she asked, sitting down beside him.

"Oh yeah." he assured her, "Apparently, when news worthy events occur, I'm supposed to call the family to make sure everyone is alright. If I somehow wind up as part of the news that is definitely a good reason to call the family."

"Well, they do love you." she quipped, adding, "More than some families I know of."

"How long do you think they'll be out there?" he asked, changing the subject.

"They're probably there for the night, don't you think?" she replied, knowing he was referring to the agents parked outside.

"That was funny, them thinking they were being sneaky." he reminisced, remembering them waiting until they got in the house before pulling their cars around the corner.

"I can smell them for miles." Julie quipped, leaning back on his arm.

That was a figure of speech that made him curl his nose. She had a habit of referencing their abilities to lowly animals. One thing he didn't feel appropriate was being lowly. "Sense them." he corrected.

"Whatever." she retorted, "You'd think they would trust us by now. I could have snapped that girl's neck."

"We have to be a concern for them." he explained, "We walked right into a federal building and appeared in the boss' office." and smiled, "She almost crapped herself."

“That was funny.” she admitted with a laugh, but then turned serious, “What did she mean they found your DNA all over the place?”

“Oh...” he replied vaguely, “I’ve helped out a few people here and there.”

“Really?” she quipped, “Doing what?” she asked, adjusting to face him.

“You know...” he started with a shrug, “Just stuff.”

“Come on” she urged, “Like what stuff?”

He rolled his eyes and confessed, “Ok, you remember the river serial killer?” receiving a nod, “I tracked the reporter that he kidnapped and saved her and another girl.”

“Are you serious?” she asked, amazed.

“Yep, that was me.” he admitted, “That was after I rescued Kathy when she fell overboard in the river.”

“I remember that.” she recalled, “You got a crush on her?”

“No way.” he countered, “I just keep bumping into her.” and turned a little more to confront her, “And then there was this prostitute in trouble. That’s the first time I got shot saving somebody.”

“Wow!” she exclaimed, “What did you do?” now interested in his tales.

“I stopped her pimp from killing her.” he quipped, matter-of-factly.

“So, all this time you’ve been playing super hero?” she determined, “And all I’ve done was play the stock market.” she thought out loud.

“I’m no hero.” he retorted, “I’ve done things heroes aren’t supposed to do.”

She replied with a smirk on her face, “Like using a gunman to kill your arch enemy?” she chided, “Get real, the creep had it coming. Consider it an act of making the world a better place.”

“Yeah.” he agreed, “But there’s been other things.”

“Creeping around in the girl showers?” she guessed.

“No.” he denied, but admitted, “I thought about it though.”

“Well I’ve done it.” she confessed, “It wasn’t as erotic as I thought it would be.”

“There’s not much purpose to it.” he pointed out, “Since I can see through most of the clothes they wear anyway.”

“Sweat pants are the easiest for me to see through.” she informed him, “You’d be surprised how many guys go commando.”

“I like the image you’re wearing.” he relayed, “No need to see through anything there.”

“Oh yeah?” she quipped, and changed images.

Swirls of light wrapped around her nipples, fanning out and circled around her torso. Colors of the rainbow formed in a design at her navel and plunged towards her sex. There, they split and wrapped around each of her legs and ended in curls around her ankles.

“Whoa, aren’t you’re Tron-looking.” he teased, and changed his image as well.

A black canvas appeared over his body and gold tribal designs started on his forehead. Intricate patterns of gold trailed around his neck and arms while gold hieroglyphs covered his chest. The trail continued down and wrapped the intricate design around his manhood.

“Where did you pick that up?” she asked, following the patterns down his legs.

“God of fertility statue.” he quipped with a grin, “Some Hindu thing.”

“Well I like it!” she exclaimed, tracing a finger over the pattern on his chest.

“And I like yours.” he replied, tracing a finger over the lighted lines that circled her breasts.

Tracing patterns turned into caressing and both looked into each other’s eyes. As if timed to a tee, both crushed their lips together and a heated battle of tongues ensued. A hand on the back of his head and one of his on her buttock enabled them to draw each other closer.

It had been a very long day for the agents and the order to follow and observe the two phenomenal subjects was a bitter sweet command. As fascinating as they were, the energy was fading from the two government personnel. Johansson pulled up within eyesight of the house right after the couple entered. Schmitz pulled in behind her and parked, exited his vehicle, and climbed in the passenger seat of his partner's sedan.

"Just about stupid." he huffed, settling into the seat, "How are we supposed to know if they leave?"

"I guess we see if that car starts driving itself." she quipped, nodding at Jeremy's car.

"I don't like it Lacy." Schmitz confessed, "There's too many unanswered questions."

"Craig, they're just kids." Lacy explained, "I think the world is safe from them."

"Yeah?" he asked, "If you could do what they can, how safe would the world be?"

"The world would be just fine." she replied with a shrug, "But I would have a blast."

He nodded in agreement, "Ok, I would too." he admitted, and reaffirmed, "I could really go for that Julie."

"I know," she remembered, "but try to keep it in your pants. Healy is already pissed from us losing them the last time."

"Which," he pointed out, "was not our fault." and harrumphed, "Full squad, night vision, and infrared but they just disappear. Tell me the military wouldn't want to figure out how to do that!"

"I think they know that." Lacy argued, "That's why they blew us off and infiltrated the boss' office." and faced her partner, "They were making a statement."

"Healy freak out?" he asked, not being there when they'd shown up.

"The guy popped in out of thin air." Lacy recalled, "And Julie? Popped in right behind me."

"Fuck!" he gasped, "What did Healy do?" he asked, clinging on her words.

"She hit the floor." Lacy quipped, "It was definitely a statement."

"Think she'll have them incarcerated tomorrow?" he asked, curiously.

"I think they're going to be impossible to round up." she imagined, "If she's smart, she'll recruit them for their abilities."

"We are the government." he noted, "We don't do anything smart."

"You got that right." she sighed, and jerked her head towards the house. "What was that?" she asked, hearing what sounded like broken glass.

"Don't know" he shrugged, "Think they're fighting?" listening to the muffled sounds.

"Or the Russians want their abilities." she considered, leaning her ear towards the noise.

"Fuck, let's go." Craig relented, and opened up his door.

Lacy followed suit and both approached the house. Weapons drawn, they cautiously climbed the steps. A light flickered through the window and Lacy leaned over in front of it. Peering in, she could see nothing but the disarray of the living room as it lit up from the sway of the small chandelier swinging from the ceiling.

She nodded at her partner and he tried the door. To his surprise, the knob turned in his hand. Grunting, as if someone was being restrained, came through the opened door and both agents entered the threshold. Craig pointed his weapon towards the living room while Lacy pointed towards the kitchen. Neither saw a soul yet the sounds seemed so close.

Lacy turned back towards her partner and saw him lower his weapon to his side. His head tilted sideways and up as if fascinated by the ceiling. She stepped up beside him and followed his gaze with her eyes.

In the corner, lusty eyes stared back at her and then closed as her body, lit with circles of light, was being ravaged by a black form highlighted by gold patterns. Her weapon dropped as well as she was transfixed on the pair making love doggy style on the ceiling.

Both of the sexual oddities stopped at the same time and looked at the two unannounced visitors. The black apparition pulled back and a shaft came out of the glowing female's sex.

Julie peeled her feet and knees off of the ceiling and dangled from her hands for a few seconds before dropping to the floor. Jeremy planted his hands and copied her. Both stood in front of the two jaw-dropped agents.

"What's wrong?" Jeremy asked, "Haven't you seen people having sex before?"

The silence was broken by Lacy saying, "Hell no, not on a ceiling anyway..." looking at the two up and down, "Dressed like that!"

"Oh, sorry." Jeremy apologized and both he and Julie removed their exotic images.

Craig rolled his eyes and whispered, "Great, now she's naked."

"What are you saying?" Jeremy contested, "I think she looks great naked." daring him to say otherwise.

Lacy stepped between the two and held a hand up at each of them. "Craig thinks she's hot." and huffed, "You both are hot." she admitted, "You heard us saying so earlier." and sighed, "It's just that seeing you both naked is driving us a little crazy for some reason." and looked down at his manhood, "There's something irresistible about you. I can't describe it."

"What Lacy is saying is, we can't help but want to screw both of you." Craig explained, "I've never wanted to sleep with another guy's woman before, until now."

"Oh, Julie is my fuck buddy." Jeremy explained, placing a hand on her shoulder. "What you two are feeling is our abilities."

"And we can't turn that off." Julie confessed, "So you have to fight it or give in to it. Not much else you can do really."

"Well fuck." Lacy sighed, "I can't match a ceiling session like that." dropping her hands.

"Neither can I." Craig admitted, and turned to leave.

Julie stepped forward and grabbed his shoulder, "You don't have to." she assured him, getting his attention.

"And neither do you." Jeremy added, taking Lacy by the hand.

Both led their prey to the center of the room and with a mesmerizing slowness, undressed them. After the last sock and knee-high was removed, they stepped back and looked at the two agents.

"Now we're equal." Julie grinned, and opened her arms wide, "Go ahead, I'm all yours." causing Craig to grab her in a hug.

"Do what you want with me." Jeremy conceded, followed by Lacy's leap in the air at him. He caught the sex-crazed girl and her momentum made the two back up against the wall. Obtaining the two overly erotic being's consent was all they'd needed to let loose their beastly cravings. Lust took over as they backed their designated lovers to a now bare wall.

Anyone looking in would have compared the two models of perfection to a demonic possession; watching them climb the wall backwards as their worshipers kissed, groped, and sucked their way down their bodies. The odd event went unnoticed by the two field agents as they were enjoying their path to an anticipated center of deliciousness.

Both found their treasure and feasted on the sex of the super humans. Jeremy and Julie both gasped as their slaves of lust hit their mark. Turning their heads, they looked at each other and smiled. They held hands and rode to a climax given by their lovers.

Johansson was the first to awaken from the night of debauchery. She lifted her head to assess her condition and gather her bearings. Nude on the floor of her subject's house, her leg was thrown over her partner's thigh and her knee was snuggled against his manhood.

She had never seen Craig naked before and fraternizing was frowned upon by their agency. She carefully raised her leg and removed it from his crotch. Neither one could keep a relationship with the long, stressful careers they had. But it seemed somehow cruel for the agency to pair her with such a hunk, as she looked over his chest and six pack, and then deny her a relationship with him.

She remembered the night before when she lost all control. Having Dodd pounding her while Craig fed her his cock brought out a groan from her lips. She seriously doubted Craig was going to forget that. Thankfully, she remembered Julie's finger being buried in his backside at the time. At least she had something to barter with.

Sitting up, she looked at the mess the living room was in. A smile crossed her lips as she remembered driving Jeremy literally up a wall. She glanced at the coffee table that Julie laid on while the three of them feasted on her breasts and sex. She wasn't gay but the high level of lust blocked out the repulsiveness of it. Whatever ability those two had, it was enough to kill all inhibitions.

But paper caught her eye, not recalling it on the table the night before. She leaned over and read it, *'Gone to hospital to check on a friend. Meet you downtown at one.'*

"Schmitz!" she exclaimed, "Get the fuck up!"

"Let's see that video." Jeremy stated, taking the key out of the ignition in the hospital garage.

"Right here." Julie quipped, holding up her phone.

They watched Lacy on top of Craig, riding him in rodeo fashion as they headed into the facility. He turned the volume down as other visitors were walking around them. At the reception desk, he turned it off. *'That'll do nicely.'* he messaged, asking for Kathy Ferguson's room.

*'And neither one of us are on that.'* she sent back, listening to the instructions the receptionist was giving.

"Three gunshot wounds and she isn't in critical care." the lady remarked, "One lucky girl right there."

"Must not have got anything vital." Jeremy replied, and turned towards the elevators.

"I don't know." Julie argued, "She was bleeding pretty heavy when I got to her." and pressed the elevator button.

They walked the hallway towards the room they were given and found the door open. Jeremy knocked on the wooden frame and called, "Hello?"

"Yeah?" someone called, "Come in."

They passed the restroom door and sink, "Hey!" Julie called, seeing Kathy sitting up in her bed.

"Hello there." Jeremy greeted, following Julie.

"Oh." Kathy replied, recognizing the two geeks. "Good to see you." she sighed.

"How are you feeling?" Julie asked, stepping up to the bedside.

"Better by the minute." she sighed, "They don't know why."

Jeremy and Julie looked at each other with concern. Looking back at Kathy, Jeremy quipped, "But that's good right?"

"I guess." she whispered, "But I've been having nightmares."

## Chapter 23

Julie sat down on the edge of her bed and Jeremy stepped beside her. They discussed the symptoms Kathy described using their abilities. It was Jeremy's theory that Julie's hand wound allowed nanobots to enter Kathy's wounds. It would explain the rapid regeneration and the nightmare.

"But I don't understand." Kathy stated, "What the hell are nanobots?"

"You heard us talking?" Julie asked, surprised at her question.

"What am I infected with?" Kathy asked, her anxiety increasing.

"That's not a bad thing." Julie assured her, "It's just that, there's some things you might want to be aware of."

Fear filled her eyes and she contested Julie's words, "Not bad? Until I what, get sick and die?"

"Oh no." Jeremy corrected, "If anything, you'll live a very long time." trying to calm her down.

"So what do I have to do?" she queried, "Drink blood or something?"

Kathy had always viewed the two as freaks. This seemed to confirm her assessment. With each enlightenment they gave her, the suspicion that they were people to be afraid of increased. What she didn't expect was the show and tell they gave. At the end, she didn't know whether to be grateful for the abilities or angry.

"You should have let me die." she surmised, thinking about her life overall.

Jeremy shrugged, saying, "Must be fate really. I saved you from drowning and Julie saved you from gunshot wounds." and smiled, "You obviously have a destiny. It's up to you to find it."

Julie gave her comfort by saying, "Besides, I'm here for you." and added, "Look what it's done for me."

Kathy had to admit, "Both of you look great." and laughed, "No more coke glasses."

But another visitor walked in and looked at the two former classmates.

"Oh mom." Kathy acknowledged, "Friends from high school."

"Yes, I know who they are." she informed her, offering a hand after sitting her drink down. "Can I get a word with you two real quick?" nodding towards the open door behind her.

Both left the room behind Kathy's mother. In the hallway, she turned around and faced them.

"Look, I appreciate your help with Kathy; I really do." she started, "But this has been pretty traumatic for her."

Jeremy crossed his arms and listened to her perspective. Julie held her thoughts back and waited until the middle aged woman finished.

"I haven't told her about Steve." she confessed, "I'm actually surprised she hasn't asked about him." and looked into the room, "I'd appreciate it if you didn't say anything either."

*'This woman is in denial.'* Julie messaged, *'Steve wasn't good for Kathy. I bet she would be happy that he's gone.'*

"I can hear you!" Kathy called, causing all three to turn towards her room.

“Oh dear.” Mrs. Ferguson exclaimed, and went back in the room.

They followed behind her and the mother of the wounded classmate asked, “What did you hear?”

“Steve.” she asked, “What happened to Steve?”

A trick question for sure. There’s opinions, truths and facts. The enhanced couple chose neither and let her mother explain.

“Steve stood up at the gunman to keep him from hitting you. He was gunned down standing over you.” she explained, taking her hand.

“I knew he was gone.” she mumbled, “I didn’t know how.”

“I didn’t want to add more stress on you.” she continued, “Try not to think about it.” and patted her hand.

*‘I guess it’ll make her feel better.’* Julie messaged, *‘Let’s hope she never finds out.’*

*‘Love is blind.’* Jeremy sent back, *‘If she really loved him, it won’t matter what he did.’*

“You two were there.” Kathy stated, looking at Julie, “Did he block the shooter?”

Julie bit her lip, holding back words she so desperately wanted to say. “When you were on the ground, he went over both of us and blocked the shooter from hitting you again.”

“When I was on the ground.” she repeated, nodding her head in understanding.

With a grimace, Julie replied, “Yes.” and looked away.

Kathy glanced at her mother and then back at Jeremy, “You couldn’t stop the guy?”

*‘I’m not telling her Steve’s life wasn’t worth saving.’* he thought, and shook his head, “No.”

“Stop obsessing over it Kat. What’s done is done.” Mrs. Ferguson advised, “What with losing your uncle and now your boyfriend, you should try to put it all out of your mind.”

“You helped the two women my uncle kidnapped...” Kathy started, but was interrupted.

“Enough!” her mother snapped, “We will not discuss this here.” she demanded.

“Why?” she retorted, “Because it was your brother?”

“Listen, we didn’t want to stress you out.” Jeremy butted in, “We just wanted to check on you.”

“Yeah, we should go.” Julie agreed, offering the two a smile.

“If you have any questions or something we can do for you, give us a call.” Jeremy offered.

“Thanks for stopping by.” Kathy replied, not seeming so thankful with her words.

*‘We need to get her out of here before they make a Guinea pig out of her.’* Jeremy messaged, as they headed out of the room.

*‘I can hear you.’* Kathy sent back, causing their eyes to roll.

This was becoming a nuisance so he addressed Nanonaut, *‘Why do both receive my messages?’* and it explained about broadcasting messages to all members of a colony capable of receiving the instructions.

Julie sent, *‘We are worried the doctors might want to keep you for research.’*

His two way radio used to communicate with Julie turned out to be as vulnerable as, simply put, as a two way radio. He put the conundrum on the back burner for the moment and addressed Kathy, *‘At least you’re learning to communicate. The nanobot attached to your neurons can help you understand more than we could.’*

“But what we need to focus on is the situation right now. She’s in the same hospital your dad worked and we know what happened there.” Julie reminded him.

*‘You’re right.’* he admitted, *‘Kathy, you need to keep your abilities a secret. There are powerful people that don’t want you to have them.’*

*‘And...’* Julie added, *‘You are sitting right in the middle of them.’*

A few seconds of silence came before she answered, *'So, you saved me and put me in danger? This is more bullshit I have to deal with. I didn't want this.'*

*'I'm sorry.'* Julie apologized, *'I didn't mean to infect you.'* and added, *'But, if I hadn't, you might have died.'*

Another gap before she answered had Jeremy thinking she was still figuring out the communication ability. But her response outweighed any other thoughts he had.

*'Being dead would have been better.'* she sent, making both of them stop in their tracks.

The pissed off look on Julie's face said more than enough for Jeremy to step in.

"Don't Julie." he warned, but since when did women listen to men?

*'Look here you ungrateful bitch.'* she sent back, *'I did what I could to save your miserable hide. You damn sure ought to be kissing my feet for that alone. Then, on top of that, I give you the ability to see in the dark and clear up your acne; not to mention breath under water because your sorry ass can't swim. You best not be wasting that gift away and use it to help somebody else just as pathetic as you were.'*

Those stinging words made Jeremy rub his temples. He now had the wonderful torture of waiting for Kathy's response. He didn't have to wait long either and he received, *'Fuck you.'* for her profound, well-thought, response.

Julie spun around at the nurse's station but Jeremy caught her by the arm, giving her a stern look and shaking his head 'no'.

Her piercing eyes stabbed into his but something more interesting caught her eye.

"Excuse me nurse." she called, obtaining the attention from a woman in uniform behind the counter.

"Room 324 would like to get an enema now." she whispered, "She's feeling constipated."

"Oh yes, right away, thank you." the nurse responded, and got up to address the problem.

Jeremy shook his head at her ingeniousness and led her to the elevator. Once they were in the steel carriage, Jeremy spoke up, "Enema huh?" and grinned.

"She deserves it." Julie defended, and asserted, "And I made sure that nurse got the message too."

"We probably have two agents around my car by now." Jeremy thought out loud.

"Wonder if they scoped out all of the hospitals or used their brains." Julie pondered out loud.

"Probably surveillance." Jeremy guessed, knowing hospitals had cameras everywhere.

They entered the garage following the pheromones of their resent lovers. Julie traced down Craig while Jeremy went after Lacy. Both found them near the exit where they were waiting for Jeremy's car to leave.

Lacy received a knock on the glass, startling her. Rolling down the window, she looked at him with surprise.

"Hey, you found us." he quipped, leaning on her car.

"Hey, you found us." she repeated, a defeated look crossing her face.

"You visiting someone too?" he asked, knowing full well that he was their target.

"Yeah, that's what it is." she smirked, "How's your friend?"

"Better than we could have imagined." he admitted, "Got time for lunch; want to get something to eat?"

The Olive Garden gave the two couples what they wanted and they had a pleasant conversation at first. But things turned serious when Jeremy asked a loaded question.

"So, you think they're really going to be up and up with us today?"

“To be honest; we don’t know.” Lacy admitted, sitting her drink down.

Craig shrugged as well, adding, “If history is any indication, probably not.”

“But you made a killer effort in trying to convince the boss.” Lacy pointed out, “She has to see the benefit in having you guys as allies.”

“She probably sees more benefit in farming our abilities to use on her own agents.” Julie contemplated.

“You couldn’t pay me to take them.” Lacy claimed, and wiped her mouth on a napkin.

“So, where can we find the guy with a list?” Jeremy asked nonchalantly.

“Oh no, that’s confidential.” Craig defended, “Need to know and all that.”

“Yes, I don’t even know why she said anything really.” Lacy contemplated, “It’s impossible to get anyway.”

“We want to get it, you know,” Julie started, pulling out her phone, “to give her a good reason to work with us.”

“We can’t tell you.” Craig insisted, “Let’s just hope they’re willing to work with you without it.”

“Is it as confidential as this?” Julie asked, pushing play on her phone and facing it towards the two agents.

Eyes grew wide as mouths dropped, staring at the incriminating evidence before them. A moan from the video caused Craig to snatch the phone out of her hand.

“Give me that!” he demanded, and fumbled around with the buttons.

“Oh, want a copy for yourself, huh?” Julie teased, “Its ok, I uploaded it to the cloud. I can make as many copies as you want.”

“What the hell!” Lacy exclaimed, her teeth clenching. Looking around to make sure she hadn’t attracted attention, she seethed, “This will end our careers!”

“Calm down.” Jeremy advised, “Nobody wants to do that.”

“That’s right” Julie confirmed, “We get the list, video goes poof!” and punctuated her remark by making an explosion with her hands complete with sound effects.

“Fine.” Lacy relented, throwing her napkin on the table, “Let’s go.”

The foursome climbed in Lacy’s sedan and she headed away from the city. Heading up a mountainside, they passed homes tucked away on either side built for the upper class. Coming around the side, the scenic view of the city below came into view. The road widened, allowing for parking off to the side, and Lacy pulled over at what could only be an observation point.

Nothing but the incredible view existed and Jeremy spoke up as they climbed out of the car.

“So, what are we doing here?” he asked, seeing the road continue around the mountainside.

“Your list is up there.” Lacy replied, nodding up the side of the incline. “If we go past this spot, they’ll see us coming.”

“Aerial shots are all we’ve been able to get.” Craig mused, “We lost a few drones getting them too.”

“Think you can climb that?” Lacy asked, knowing how steep it was.

Both Jeremy and Julie removed their clothes and sat them in the sedan. Jeremy looked up at the challenge ahead and said, “I don’t see a problem.” tucking his cell phone under his arm and turning invisible.

Julie followed suit and the two agents could track their progress by the movement of brush and dirt rolling down. But as they neared the top, both lost the trail of their subjects.

The cloaked duo came to the top of the mountain where it seemed to have been cut off flat and a four-story home boasting panels of glass crowned its center. A fence around the property

with stickers on each post warned of electric shock and light poles worthy of any stadium rose in the air evenly distributed. Cameras were on a few of the light poles that suggested someone in a security room was monitoring them.

Jeremy started taking photos and zoomed in on the cameras. The tint on the windows prevented them from seeing inside but heat signatures represented people standing guard on the other side of the dark glass. Julie tapped him on the shoulder and pointed towards the backyard.

Someone was walking the perimeter and heading their way. Two other men in dark suits stood at the patio entrance. They waited until the lookout passed and Jeremy took more pictures of the guards. Tucking it back under his arm, they both made their way to the doors.

Sending signals, they convinced one of the men guarding the door to use the restroom and followed him inside. They barely got through the door before the guard remaining called the guard they were following some foreign name. Jeremy almost bumped into him as he stopped and turned around.

The man spoke harshly to the other and pointed towards the floor. Dirt Julie and Jeremy tracked in was trampled on the foyer. Thankfully, it was an unrecognizable pattern and the guard shrugged and wiped his feet. They waited until both men went back to their tasks before wiping their own feet.

Stepping into the recreational area, they maneuvered around a pool table, wondering where to start looking for something that might be a list. But Julie had the ability to detect people's thoughts and they believed they could utilize it along with their superior vision. The trick seemed to be finding somebody that wasn't a guard.

But that turned out to be pretty easy when the guard outside came back in and triggered an alarm. That rallied the rest of the guards nicely and the duo stepped back to a wall to watch the excitement taking place. It then became apparent that the guard had grown suspicious after seeing other footprints outside, because he was adamantly pointing them out.

Out of the chaos came a man in a robe with plenty of gold for jewelry. He talked with his security team in Arabic and then turned away. They watched him hurry away and decided he looked enough like the odd man out to follow him.

He went up a staircase that belonged in a museum with its intricate carvings and gold leaf highlights. Following close behind him, they were led to a master bedroom where the man pulled on a painting over the bed and revealed a safe. After a quick glance around the room, he started dialing numbers.

Jeremy watched him over his shoulder and relayed the numbers to Julie. Opening the heavy door, the man reached in and pulled out a thumb drive. Turning it over in his hands, he shrugged and put it back in the safe. Spinning the tumblers, the man closed the painting cover and left.

They opened it back up and pulled out the thumb drive. Handing it to Julie, he went back in and pulled out a folder. Opening it up on the bed, Jeremy began to read the top letter.

*'United Nations Ambassador Kumar Elijah Komati,'* he transmitted to Julie, *'which explains him being untouchable.'* he opined, *'Islamic Republic's appointment for Tehran.'* he continued.

*'That's his get out of jail free card.'* Julie surmised, looking at the credentials.

*'Passport... money transfer...'* Jeremy listed, *'I've never seen so many zeros on a money receipt.'*

*'Get a photo of that.'* Julie wisely instructed, *'Take a pic of all of them.'*

## Chapter 24

Jeremy spread them on the bed and took photos of each document. Gathering them back up, he put them back in the folder, tossed it into the safe, and quietly closed the door. Turning the tumbler, he closed the painting over it and they left.

Getting out was a bit hairy, having to dodge the guards as they walked back and forth. But after going past the pool in the back, it was a breeze after that. Jeremy made a mental note to ditch the island dream and go for a mountain top mansion instead.

Peering over the side of the cliff they climbed earlier, they could see the observation point. Their hearts skipped a beat when the sedan, along with the two agents, wasn't parked there. They climbed down to the area and walked around in puzzlement. But something caught Julie's eye as she gazed at the view.

"There." she pointed over the side, "They're down there."

Jeremy looked over yet another steep incline and sighed. "Ok, let's go." and leapt over the railing.

He caught himself on a tree limb but had to let go because Julie just had to do the same thing. He landed on the pavement feet first and stood up. Julie landed beside him and both of them walked over to the car.

Craig had his elbow on the window ledge with his head in his hand. Lacy was covering over the steering wheel biting her nails while staring straight ahead. The two thieves walked to the back doors and opened them at the same time, causing the two agents to jump up from their seats.

"Jesus H. Christ!" Lacy screamed, as the doors to her sedan shut while Craig sounded out a 'Fuck'.

"We're back." Julie quipped, and grabbed her clothes off of the seat.

"Did you miss us?" Jeremy asked, leaning forward over their seats.

"We heard the alarm and had to leave because every time that happens, they start patrolling the road." she explained, "Find out anything?" she asked, pulling onto the road.

"We knew you couldn't come so we got pictures." Julie replied facetiously.

"And this." Jeremy added, showing the two the thumb drive.

"What's on it?" Lacy asked, glancing at it.

"I don't know," he admitted, "but the guy seemed awfully protective of it."

"So what do you guys want with an ambassador?" Julie asked.

"I guess I can tell you." Lacy replied, "It'll be on the news anyway. But the gunman at the convention center was a professor at a local college by the name of Jason Vaughn."

"Clean record." Craig noted, "All around outstanding citizen."

"The camo he wore came from a shop that sold them in bulk to a known terrorist sympathizer. We believe he was on a list of candidates chosen to commit terrorism by threatening his family."

"And the front man for that terrorist group is Komati." Craig informed them.

“So get somebody to do the dirty work for you.” Jeremy deduced, “Like that pizza guy...” and snapped his fingers, “Brian Wells.”

“Only the bomb isn’t strapped to him,” Lacy corrected, “it’s strapped to his family.”

“What happened to jihad and virgins?” Julie asked, trying to figure out the plot.

“The government monitors all foreign visitors now.” Craig explained, “They have to recruit inside the country because sneaking them in is almost impossible.”

“And there isn’t a huge line of citizens lining up for that job either.” Lacy added, “So, you get one man to force another into committing the terrorism for you. That way, you still have an insider puppeteering after the dirty deed is done.”

“What makes you think this professor was a victim instead of an accomplice?” Jeremy wondered.

“We found his family in a shipping container at the docks.” Lacy said, pulling into the federal building’s garage.

“That explains how you figured out the scheme.” Jeremy quipped, climbing out of the car, “But what links the ambassador to it?” he asked, climbing out of the car.

“Money has to come from somewhere.” Craig explained, “And he is one of the few with a lot of it and plenty of reasons to support terrorism.” falling in line with the group.

“Oh, like this kind of money?” Jeremy asked, scrolling through photos of money transfers.

“That’s it!” Lacy exclaimed, walking them around back, “Find the one at the other end of those receipt numbers and we are in business!”

Craig opened the door and both agents showed the guards their I.D. “Now we just need to get Healey briefed on this.” he was saying.

Speak of the devil, Officer Healey was waiting on the other side of the metal detector for them.

“Hey, might have your list here...” Jeremy greeted, passing through the scanner.

She didn’t say anything but nodded for them to follow her. Jeremy suspected that the supposed list was confidential and she didn’t want to talk about it in the hallway. The group followed her to a room made out of stainless steel. Even the table and seats were shiny metal. Thinking the room was designed to prevent someone from bugging it, he took a seat with Julie sitting down beside him.

He looked at Julie and smiled and then turned around, waiting for the others to enter. But they didn’t. Instead, the two agents remained outside along with their boss and the sound of a lock clicking as soon as the door was shut traveled to his ears. Officer Healey let a smile cross her face as she gazed at the two of them on the other side of the glass.

Jeremy stood up with a furrowed brow causing Julie to do the same. He walked to the door and glared at the officer in charge.

“What gives?” he screamed, “I brought you what you wanted.”

Julie realized the same thing he did, that both were now locked in the room. “Come on bitch!” she screamed, striking the thick window, “We aren’t playing here!”

Jeremy punched the glass as hard as he could causing his knuckles to bleed momentarily. Having no effect, he punched it a few more times. The bullet proof glass didn’t give so easily and he repeated his blows on one spot.

Officer Healey was surprised as the glass developed a flaw with tiny, spider web cracks marking his impacts. She looked to the side of the door and pressed something there.

Immediately, both he and Julie heard a hissing sound. His best guess was that they were gassing them. As agent Johansson seemed to protest and try to get around her boss to turn it off,

both of the advanced humans started punching the glass. With each impact, the officer in charge jerked her head back, expecting them to get through at any moment. But with her initiating the trigger, she was bound and determined to follow through on her decision, and witness the result.

The pounding weakened and came longer between them. The boss stood stoic as the two agents frantically argued for mercy. Eventually, the pounding stopped as Jeremy held Julie and wilted to the floor with her in his arms. Both were down for the count.

One minute he was out like a light and the next, a voice in his head saying, *'Host back online, regaining consciousness.'*

*'Nanobot?'* he asked himself, *'What is happening?'* trying to move.

*'Temporary paralysis'* it replied, *'Working on antibodies and developing immunity to foreign substance.'*

*'How long was I out?'* he asked, unable to move a muscle.

*'Internal clock estimates up to one hour,'* it replied, *'initiating antibody deployment.'*

*'What's going on?'* he asked, confused in his groggy state of mind.

*'Foreign object in left vein of extremity emitting a sedation chemical. Unable to clot.'* it informed him.

His eyes fluttered as the antibiotics worked on the paralyzing effects of the drug. After a few minutes, he opened his eyes. Staring into dim lighting, he was aware of the machine dispensing the drug beside him. Detecting a presence coming towards him, he closed his eyes and detected a scent he couldn't quite place.

*'Unknown substance intake causing loss of involuntary functions now eradicated. Estimated time of immunity on paralyzing substance; ten minutes.'* Nanobot called out.

He used his ability and saw through the person's eyes and found a feminine hand working on an IV drip. The person turned and walked over to a bed with another IV drip beside it. They looked at the face of Julie and then at the machine. Satisfied, the person walked out of the room.

*'Julie, you conscious yet?'* he sent.

*'I think so, what happened?'* she asked.

*'The nanobots are clearing out the gas they knocked us out with.'* he explained, *'They should be working on an immunity to the gas and the drug they're pumping into your arm.'*

*'That's what she's telling me.'* Julie sent back, *'I'm going to kill that bitch when I get out of here.'*

*'First, we have to get out of here.'* he sent back, *'Let's refrain from killing government agents for the moment.'*

*'You know what I mean.'* she sent back, *'Ten minutes to be immune to the drug.'*

His was a little less but he did have one day on her as far as nanobots go. He played out some scenarios in his mind while he waited. Obviously, killing them all wasn't an option. Breaking an arm or two here and there was plausible though. The best plan seemed to be spying on the officer for a little while and then maybe confronting her in a better environment.

*'Immunity achieved.'* Nanonaut alerted, causing him to try to sit up.

Restraints held him fast and he rolled his eyes. *'Nanonaut, I need strength to break these things on my wrists and ankles.'* he called.

*'Detecting dried epidermis wrapping extremities known as leather.'* it noted, *'Host can create nanobots to disassemble epidermis.'*

*'I can do what?'* he asked, astounded at the possibilities.

*'Nanobots can be generated to disassemble tissue just as the host has nanobots assemble tissue.'* it explained, *'These can be deployed through sweat glands of course.'*

*'Go ahead and do that and inform Julie how to do it too.'* he instructed, and pondered a fantastic thought. *'Nanonaut, can disassembling bots be deployed through saliva?'*

*'Any form of ejection is possible'* the micro bot agreed, *'estimated count needed of disassembly bots reached, deploying now.'*

Just the thought of pissing on somebody and watching them melt in front of him was a little disturbing. But if the need ever arose...

Nanobot interrupted with, *'Estimated time of disassembly is fifteen minutes.'*

He fought the urge to rush his escape and concentrated on any other people in his proximity. He tried to guess their distance by how strong their pheromones were.

*'Hey,'* Julie sent, *'this disassembly idea is going to rock.'*

Thinking she was going to go to a deep dark place where there would be no turning back, he strongly advised, *'Don't do anything you're going to regret.'*

*'Screw that,'* she replied, *'I'm going to disintegrate so many bitch's shoes.'*

Ok, so maybe he was the one with the morbid thoughts. He sent back what he had detected, *'There's four people I can tell are near us. There's two in each direction, left and right, further away.'*

A moment passed before she responded with, *'Ok, I got a lock on them.'* making Jeremy think of heat seeking missiles.

*'Ok.'* he explained, *'the mission is stealth. No shootouts or cluster bombs. Let's just concentrate on getting out of here.'*

*'We should wait for the next checkup though.'* Julie thought to him.

She had a good point. The nurse was bound to be back to make sure they were still out. *'You're right, I'm about ready though. If these straps break before she comes back, we are going to have to go.'*

*'Ready or not,'* Julie sent back, *'Miss Neosporin is coming back in.'*

He wondered what that scent was. Checking with his inner alien, he still had a few minutes and time ticked by slowly as she checked on them both. Finally, she walked away and he heard the door close behind her. As if planned, the restraints fell one by one right afterwards.

*'I'm free.'* he sent, and waited on her to condition.

Moments passed and she sent, *'Am now.'*

*'Ok, stealth out and run.'* he instructed, and did the same.

Well, it sounded easy but both of them were attached with more than restraints. Needle in the arm, pads on their chests, and monitors on their temples forced them to grab tubes and wires and start yanking. Machines sounded alarms causing their heartbeats to skip but Jeremy had a purpose. He bolted for the door and opened it in time to prevent the lock from engaging.

The familiar sound of hissing started as Julie caught up to him and both exited the door with people starting to bolt for their door. They had to use the wall to prevent contact with agents and nurses. Looking behind them, Jeremy saw one of the agents test the door and shook his head. Sure enough, all four agents pulled out weapons.

It was apparent that the security was not aware of their abilities as they relied on eyesight to try to find them. At the security office, the nurse was being questioned and she kept assuring them the subjects were subdued and unconscious when she checked on them last.

While they argued over why the sedation drugs didn't work, Julie and Jeremy left the scene of the breakout. There was a debate in the elevator as Jeremy, wanting to leave, suggested pressing "G" for ground floor but Julie wanted to press "5" to get to the officer.

She convinced him it was better to deal with it now rather than later when the fight could wind up on their doorstep. So, five won out.

The now familiar hallway was vacant but the offices had personnel working. They passed the busy bees as they went about their tasks and came to Officer Healey's door. They were in luck as it stood wide open.

She was on the phone seeming unaware of their escape, delighted in her eventful day.

"Yes director, the evidence we obtained will certainly lead to convictions." she quipped, reaching in a satchel on her desk, "I think we are going to put a serious dent in their terroristic plans." pulling out the thumb drive the couple stole and looking at it.

"Oh yes, the subjects are sedated and will be ready for the colonel's visit tomorrow." she assured the person, and put the thumb drive back in the bag.

A plop sounded out and a gooey mess appeared on top of her satchel. Healey watched curiously as the leather appeared to bubble. "All is going well on this end; we will have a full disclosure in the meeting tomorrow." not taking her eyes off of the absorption taking place on her leather purse, "Will do, talk to you later." she finished, hanging up the phone without looking.

She tilted her head as a hole appeared in the bag and brought a finger over to it.

"I wouldn't touch that if I were you." a voice warned, and a universe appeared sitting on the corner of her desk.

She looked up at the glaring eyes of Jeremy Dodd and then to the door which was closing fast. Before she could find the wits to speak, Jeremy spoke again.

"You know," he started, dropping two fingers in the hole, "I'm not even mad." and pulled out the thumb drive.

"You!" she stuttered, "You're not?" she asked, eyes as large as saucers.

"Nope, I figure I'd probably try to do the same." he reckoned with a shrug, "But Julie..." he countered, "I think she took it kind of personal." and they watch the violet nebula appear, leaning over her desk, with a pissed off glare.

Her phone rang and Jeremy nodded his head, "Oh, go ahead."

She picked it up and said, "Yes?" and a moment passed while she listened. "Escaped, you say?" and listened again, "Check everywhere, including my office." and hung up the phone.

"Watching us go down was funny huh?" Julie snapped, opening and closing her fist.

"Oh god." she muttered, leaning back from her desk.

Jeremy held up a hand and smiled, "Let's give her a chance." and then looked at Healey, "Knockout gas was a surprise. Thanks to you, we are immune to it now. That, and the sedation drug you had pumping in our arms."

"I..." she started, and cleared her throat, "I don't think you told us about all of your abilities."

Julie slapped the desk, saying, "I don't think you told us about all of your plans for us!"

"Careful..." Jeremy warned, "She bites." and reached into the ever widening hole of the satchel.

The phone rang again and he nodded consent. The officer greeted the caller the same as the last. "You found nothing?" she repeated, watching Jeremy pull out his phone. "What about DNA or toxicology?" she asked, and listened to their response, "So nothing to explain their capabilities." and listened, "Thanks." and hung up the phone.

"Give it to me straight," Jeremy mused, "what's wrong with me doc?"

“Uh, good news,” she chirped half-heartedly, “you’re both perfectly healthy.” and nodded at the phone, “You two have the highest brain activity they have ever recorded.”

“That is good to hear.” he chided, “I’ve been feeling a little paranoid lately.” and looked at her gravely, “Now, it’s kind of obvious that you don’t want to be our friend.”

“And we were playing nice too.” Julie added, raising up from her desk.

Jeremy stood up and stepped to Julie’s side asking, “So, where can we find this director you were sucking up to?”

## Epilogue

A lot can happen in six months' time. The duo bought the confiscated estate on top of the mountain at a government auction. The ambassador didn't need it since he lost his position at the U.N. and now resided in a compound on foreign soil. The place was modified with better security and the pool was used instead of being just for show.

Director Frazer did want to play nice and revoked the termination of Johansson and Schmitz by Healey. Their new assignment was to babysit Jeremy and Julie, or so it seemed, as well as give them their assignments from the bureau. They were their support in the field while the pair played gopher for the government, starting with the list they stole. Of course Julie deleted the video, with much hesitation, of course. Jeremy suspected other videos were in the future.

Healey kept her job even though the director wanted to fire her. Julie relented to Jeremy's reasoning after the officer apologized and explained that government was government. Julie figured she would have to deal with somebody there and it might as well be somebody that had some fear of her. Women tend to create drama about women but men bossing Julie around seemed unpleasant. She suspected that would be the case if Healey was replaced.

Emma was pregnant. The couple promised to make him the god father. His secrets were piling up, keeping things locked in a symbolic closet in his mind. The child was to be a girl and the name Jeri Lyn was being considered. He fabricated the story somewhat as to why he was chosen to be the baby's god father. Amy was recognizing him for saving her.

Jerold Dodd obtained a new job collaborating with NASA using his nanobots to aide astronauts in deep space missions. He and Juniper Dodd had a complete wing of the mansion to themselves, which began to look like home as Jerold started collecting his medical equipment again.

Kathy became a model for a magazine. Her perfect skin and slim figure was a commodity in the business. They only read about her once in a while and saw her in the audience at one of the award shows. It was better that they kept their distance from the rising diva. No sense picking scabs from old wounds. Besides, they didn't want to be around when she found out the details of Steve's death.

Fortunately, Jeremy and Julie didn't have to go by the book of rules the government agents used. That was apparent with the conversations they had with the officer. There was some benefit in being just a citizen instead of touting a badge. *'I don't need no stinking badge.'* crossed Jeremy's mind from time to time.

"Jeremy!" June called, "Phone!" sitting the receiver on the counter.

Picking it up and greeting the caller with, "Start talking, it's your dime." brought the voice of Gladys Healey to his ear.

"Why do you never answer your cell phone?" she asked, making him roll his eyes.

"I told you; that would mean having to carry it around all over the place." he replied.

"Just get a belt clip like everybody else." she huffed. "Now, about the last mission we sent you on..." she started, causing him to sigh, "When we told you to get the blueprints to the nuclear site, we didn't tell you to leave a note saying, 'Fuck you, love America' on it!"

“What’s the problem Healey?” he retorted, “They’re going to know we did it if I just took it. They will never believe it if there’s a note there saying it was the good ole U.S. of A.”

A pause occurred before she spoke, contemplating his logic. “Fine.” she relented, “But I don’t want you pissing on anybody’s chair any more. President Ghazi is still in the hospital over that. Getting worse by the day, I’m told.”

Thinking the officer was calling to give them another favor to do, Julie stepped up beside him and used her super human hearing to listen in. Jeremy wrapped his arm around her and said, “How was I supposed to know he was going to sit there? Besides, he was harboring terrorists in his country.” he pointed out.

“It was his throne!” she screamed, “Besides, that doesn’t give you the right to... to disassemble his ass!” she fumed, and dropped the subject all together with a sigh. “Now, somebody has been able to rob jewelry stores in Beverly Hills, literally right in front of their eyes. I mean, even the gems themselves up and disappear. Trinkets and jewelry has vanished right out of witness’ hands. So, if it wasn’t one of you two, who the hell else could have done that?”

Jeremy looked at Julie while she looked back at him. Both, astonished by the new information, exclaimed at the same time, “Kathy Ferguson!”

“I want that national security threat removed immediately!” she demanded

Off they went, on their next assignment, to capture the now known mastermind, Kat Kaper.

**The End**

## **About the Author**

Born in Monticello, Kentucky, Wayne Stewart and his twin brother were adopted and eventually raised in West Virginia. Both city and country life fed into his upbringing and gave him a unique perspective on social interaction in the diverse environments.

Wearing many hats, he started off doing manual labor, farming tobacco, and construction. Later on, he drove a taxi and progressed to chauffeuring high profile clients and then dispatching. That led to a general managing position where he maintains that position today. Among other adventures, he spends much of his spare time repairing and upgrading various systems for his own technology assistance company. He currently resides in the Greater Cincinnati area.

Frustrated with the “Dear Penthouse” format from most erotic authors he had read on the web, he sat down and wrote a fictional fantasy, in storyline format, to post in stark contrast to the campfire tales of other authors. Intended to show as an example of proper authoring, it had the surprising effect of readers encouraging him, through comments posted on his fantastical tale, to continue the humorous erotica. That tale of erotic humor, that started as an example for a short story and ended up as a complete novel, caught the eye of a publisher and, in May of 2013, was published by Abby Adams Publishing. The reader will find a link to it, titled *Another Yard*, on the following page.

The subjugation of women is not in the author’s creed and he supports equal rights among the genders. His written work shows examples of empowered women, regardless of their race or class, on an even level of societal standard. The intent of the author is to bring entertainment to any gender and race without bias.

## Other Books by this Author

**Another Yard-** <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/316887>

Zach is a very enterprising young man, who was raised in a very religious family. His parents thought it was evil to discuss anything sexual, or watch mild rated TV programs, and most especially, pornographic material. He managed to learn a little of the rudimentary basics in health class, but that was about it. Since his parents felt he should earn all of his own spending money, he had created year around jobs for himself -- taking care of neighbor's yards, and anything else they wanted done. Consequently, he had no time for entertainment, he was just too busy earning candy and soda money. His life changes when Mother Nature throws him a curve.

**Driven Lust-** <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/340966>

This is a humor filled story of a hunky college student (James) working his way through college as a chauffeur, trying very hard to avoid serious relationships with the opposite sex as he had grades to maintain and devoted his life to a promising career. But, a wedding run changes his life as an heiress recruits him for her own. He then finds the companionship of a little china doll named Ying. She brings forth the antics with her driven lust. So, James becomes a reluctant master as Ying becomes a very demanding slave. A twisted tale of love and lust.

**Driven Lust II & III-** <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/346565>

This is a double book, of over 430 pages

This unique continuing series of Driven Lust may cause you to forget all about past year's best sellers of erotica... because this story has it all – erotic adventure, all the luxury that \$billions can bring, and romantic sex and lust galore. All served up in hilarious story lines, and a most eclectic, lusty and loveable cast of characters!

**Blithe-** <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/576475>

A city boy is relocated to the country. The lack of entertainment has him down but things change. Whether it is new patrons to his father's bed and breakfast or local country folk, he finds more excitement and mayhem in the poorly populated community than he could ever have imagined. Join Jake and his travels through coming of age in this tale from the back woods.

## Connect with Wayne Stewart

Perhaps you have a recommendation, a trivial revelation, or an amusing post. Maybe you want to write a review of the book and looking for some place to put it; you can find a place for it online. I'd love to hear from you!

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