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Calypso Deep

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

in

Creative Writing and Writing for the Performing Arts

by

Matthew Aaron Thompson

December 2015

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I want to thank my grandmother for all her support, love, and understanding during those important creative endeavors of my life, this being one of them.

To my friends and family, who have patiently waited for me to “surface.” You know who you are.

Chapter One

God she was wet! She was the kind of girl you saw on a float at a tournament of flowers parade. Long straight hair, perfectly square cheekbones, and even though she didn't wear any make-up her face was painted in the most luscious colors of beauty.

I pinned her scaly shoulders into the soft sand in an attempt to control her screaming aqualung of a voice. The crevice between my massive pectorals in the center of my chest was bleeding. The mermaid's claws were digging into my flesh. With one hand I grabbed her by the nape of her neck and forced her back down onto the sand.

The half-woman, half-fish wriggled and contorted herself under the moonlight. Ocean waves crashed with thunderous applause each time I thrust myself into her, deeper and deeper into the hybrid's hole. She was slippery as hell, so I began to build up momentum. I flipped her sideways so that I could manage my trajectory and pounded her from behind, hard.

My pubic bone felt as if it was about to snap. The skin around the region burned like hell, but still I kept at it. The fish lady's entrance was expanding and contracting. It took thirty minutes of foreplay to get her to this point. If I didn't push hard enough it would close up and the scales would cover her moist opening.

Deep inside of her I felt a delicate mouth-like part of her insides slowly open and close against my rod. The harder and more intense it got the louder she began to wail. Unintelligible words sprang forth. The notes that she could sing so melodiously under water sounded clipped and jagged in the balmy night air. She sounded like an old record

running backwards. Her vocalizing added to the intensity and excitement of this exchange between our two worlds.

My blue donor card fell out of my pants pocket. It was important that we double checked for the exact landing location of the creatures. I had heard of other guys arriving at the wrong location. One of the fellas in the office told me about how, on his first assignment, he ended up in New Venice in the middle of the day. He was standing buck naked near one of the shallow canal zones. Tourists were snapping pictures of him left and right. Found out he transposed the coordinates. Had a wife and kid to support. His old lady didn't realize what he was doing, selling his sperm to pay the bills. After those Venice pictures went viral his wife filed for divorce.

My jeans were down around my ankles while I held her tail fin high up under the constellation of Aquarius. The land smelled like wild blackberries and pancake syrup. There was a dim light in the cottage.

She was now sitting on top of me looking out at the water. She pounded her scaly body against my thorax. Gasps emanated from her delicate mouth while I jammed my mouth against hers. The mermaid struggled, attempting to free herself from my strong grasp. My tongue crawled into the deep hole of her throat. She tasted like fuck and that's what she was going to get whether she liked it or not.

My tightly wrapped muscular skin pressed against her wet, slippery body. I moved my hands up to her breasts and cupped one in each hand and pressed her budding nipples between my fingers. She struggled again but didn't kick me off. Instead the creature arched back and her body cried out with sexual anguish ready for my cock.

I slid my hands down her luxurious body and held her watery hips strong, pinning them to my waist, stabilizing my prize. With my right arm I pulled her towards me and slowly heaved my swollen brawn deeper than ever inside the brackish-breathing babe.

She gasped at the enormity of my piece.

Under the sea she was elegant and beautiful. Out of the water her liquid beauty was replaced with a splendor of exquisite sexuality. All of her base instincts were exposed. She craved every part of humanity. She needed it. And I was the envoy. The human who made her think of chocolate bars and gearshift factories. Her rainbow colored eyes rolled into the back of her head and then back to my face.

Smiling, she began to slowly drift in and out of consciousness. The sexuality inside her built to such an extreme that if I didn't find that secret area that made her tickle, she would die without purpose. Her crystal pupils began to dilate. She came back into focus. Looking off at the Eucalyptus trees that swayed in the wind, I could see her tiny purple heart beating through the diaphanous skin of her rosy, cream-colored breast. With her pursed lips and squinting eyes she focused on me now with a deep longing.

She was gorgeous. Most mermaids had this inherent physical beauty that drove men practically insane. Was it the devilish smile? Or the massively disproportionate size of most mermaids breasts to their tiny, miniscule waists?

I wanted her.

Covered in crabs I crawled over her drying body and rubbed her with my mouth, kissing her with firm yet delicate kisses. With my teeth, I bit and tore at her scales as the mermaid yelped with sexual hunger.

With her fluke, she kicked me off, sending me flying across the beach. But she knew she needed the beast, my beast.

Testosterone welled up into my veins. I stood up and threw the remnants of my shirt to the ground exposing my sculpted chest. My rock hard six-pack expanded and contracted. I was breathing hard. Crawling over I firmly took hold of the dying breed. She wiggled in the cool sand. Her puckered fish mouth opened and closed, longing for my hungry, hot body. I pinned her down. The briny smell of seaweed filled my nostrils.

I felt as if I was about to sexually explode. With her stringy hair in my large hands I jammed her sparkling face towards my joint. She curled her lips around her pointed teeth then she slowly devoured me inch by inch until she had my entire dick in her delicate little mouth. The moonbeams hit my back and I could feel the warm Mediterranean breeze. I lifted my muscular arms and clasped them over my head as the mermaid glided up and down my shaft, softly and with loving purpose.

She pulled her face away and spit in my face. I knew the fight was on. She began to wiggle back to the sea, but I wouldn't let her. With all my might I picked up her golden fin and smacked her back into the soft sand. She gasped and then smiled while she pulled me down. I massaged the scales of her lower torso and her baby door opened directly once again in the center of her fluke. As before, I teased her with a few inches of my engorged thirteen inches of flesh.

She wailed like a cat caught in a trap. I froze, thinking that something was wrong, but she just smiled at me while wrapping her luscious arms around my back and pushed me deeper inside her fish body, over and over again. With a primordial yell I impaled her,

my elongated appendage reached so far inside of her that I managed to rub against her *labiatric clitornic*. She screamed with pleasure and two pink, sharp fangs began to extrude out of her upper gum line. Her eyes rolled into the back of her head.

I remembered what Marcus told me at the clinic. When she climaxes you must bring something with you so she won't bite you. Mermen have a protective scale to protect themselves while having sex with their females. I did not.

While still deep inside her, I quickly reached over and grabbed a piece of driftwood. It was heavy and large. As soon as I had picked up the piece of wood, her head snapped back and the little coral colored fangs plunged directly towards my face. Her teeth impaled the wood. I breathed a small sigh of relief.

The sound of a mermaid at climax can pierce a human's eardrums. She started to come with yelping moans. At least I thought she was. I didn't know.

So, I dropped the driftwood and immediately fumbled in my pants pocket and unwrapped a pair of RH-600 series earplugs that were given to me by BOMBDD.

I took one plug from the plastic and shoved it in my ear. I reached for the second plug. It fell into the sand. The mermaid was beginning to wail while she continued to ride my fantastic cock. She was about to cum. Her body writhed and snaked with me on top of her. I dug around in the cold sand in the dark and managed to find the plug.

It felt as if she had my cock in a kung fu grip. And for just a moment she released her vaginal pressure and allowed my semen to flow into her cave like millions of excited soliders.

With a deafening sound the high-pitched screams came wailing at my face. The rainbow pupils in her eyes turned a greenish color as they nearly bugged out of their sockets. At the last moment, I managed to push the sandy piece of elastic plastic into my ear while this mermaid reached the climax of her life with the most amazing orgasm ever.

When my load was complete, I slowly pulled myself out and rolled onto the sand. She slowly caressed her face. She dropped to the sand. With her human hand she slapped me across my left cheek. I rubbed it and smiled. I told her to do it again. She did. I told her to do it harder. She did. Then I grabbed her by the pink scaly collar, nearly pulling her up off the ground, and slowly kissed the inside of her singing chords. Her tongue moved like a serpent in my mouth. It was sharp and forked, and I knew I'd just fucked the devil of the underwater.

Man this was great. And it was my job. I was getting paid for it.

The light in the cottage up on the hill quickly went out. The show was over and the residents of Portofino retreated back to their everyday lives. They quibbled about things of no concern over gin martinis and prosciutto finger sandwiches.

This stretch of sand was a common mating ground for the underwater beasties. Praggi Beach was closed off for this very purpose. With soft sand and a picturesque protected cove, it was a hopping tourist attraction in the summer months, but tonight it became an interspecies sex scene.

I looked at her. The area was relatively calm with the exception of the gulls and an occasional crab clapping its pinchers across her body. The bitch's scales were beginning to dry. She was already dying.

She lay there, a fish out of water, breathing hard, the shore a hundred feet away and the only liquid around was my semen in her mouth.

I plopped myself onto the sand, exhausted. I put on my jeans and grabbed my personal C-pod, which had fallen into the sand. I tagged the BOMBDD application on the screen.

I took the device and crawled over to my partner. She was gasping now. Her last breaths were very near. Her mouth hung open and her chest heaved a last and final sigh. It hissed out in a high-pitched whisper. I took my C-pod and ripped a fin from her torso and inserted it into the detection load bay. There was a click and a few beeping sounds. It took a moment to process and then the screen read: COPULATION COMPLETE. HARVEST EGGS.

With all my might I gently caressed the darling creature then I lowered her into the red radio flyer next to me. The wagon sank into the sand, and with all my might, I slowly hauled the dead fish woman back to my apartment.

Chapter Two

Two hours later, the deceased mermaid lay in my bathtub in my little apartment in the Chiesa San Martino district of Portofino, Italy. I couldn't sleep very well. I never had any emotional attachments to my acts of conduct but the experience always left me in a daze, especially those first few times. I needed to clear my head. Reaching into the fridge I downed three beers, one after the other.

In a half drunken stupor I yelled out to my InfoSystem.

“Information on *Mermaidia* species. BOMBDD site.”

The computer beeped and the soft female voice came through the walls,
“Initializing search for all prevalent documents relating to *Mermaidia* species.”

BOMBDD had downloaded loads of information into my Cortex chip. I knew some of the facts. I knew that human beings had been polluting the waters of the oceans for so many years, sucking up shale and plastic and carbon residue, that the mermen had become sterile. Only twenty or so years ago science proved that the species was officially dying out. Either out of guilt or scientific curiosity we stepped in to save them.

“Search Complete,” chimed my InfoSystem. “Loading content.”

A holographic image appeared in vivid detail. An animated image of a generic mermaid appeared. The image swirled around.

A bevy of information listed on the Wiki-BOMBDD navisite popped up:

MERMAIDIA

For other uses, see [Mermaid \(disambiguation\)](#).

Mermaid

Grouping	Former Mythological / Currently Animal Kingdom
Sub grouping	Water spirit
Similar creatures	Merman Siren Undine
Mythology	Old World mythology / Current Species evaluation
Country	Worldwide
Habitat	Ocean, sea, benthic regions

The **mermaidia** was a once legendary aquatic creature with the upper body of a [human](#) and the tail of a [fish](#). Mermaidians appeared in the [folklore](#) of many cultures worldwide,

including the Near East, Europe, Africa and Asia. The first stories appeared in ancient [Assyria](#), in which the goddess [Atargatis](#) transformed herself into a mermaid out of shame for accidentally killing her human lover. Mermaidians are sometimes associated with perilous events such as floods, storms, shipwrecks and drownings. In other folk traditions (or sometimes within the same tradition), they can be benevolent or beneficent, bestowing boons or falling in love with humans. For centuries starting in the 1400s sailors had associated the manatee (extinct) and sea cows (extinct) with mermaids. They were called the sirens of the sea, and lead to their Latin phylum name of Sirenia.

Since the discovery in 2345 of the mermaid Aculun, and the merman Tridontus in 2347 the mythos behind mermaidia culture has moved away from these mythos. All mermaidia species are now a current member of the true animal kingdom and accepted by the scientific community.

Females are associated with the mythological Greek [sirens](#) as well as with [sirenia](#), a biological [order](#) comprising [dugongs](#) and [manatees](#). Some of the historical sightings by sailors may have been misunderstood encounters with these aquatic mammals. Christian Columbus reported seeing mermaids while exploring the Caribbean, and supposed sightings have been reported in the 20th and 21st centuries in Canada, Israel, and Zimbabwe.

Discovery - Myths have been rebuffed when in 2345 the first live mermaid was found in the lower benthic regions of the [Abyssanal Trenches](#) in the [Atlantic Ocean](#). Milos Reddenstorm, a scientist with the [Oceanographic Institute of Iceland](#) first discovered the creatures on a volcanic pumping expedition in February 16, 2345. The creature that humanity once thought of as mythos had proven to be a true member of the Animalia Species and since that time has been classified under the Latin Phylum name Mermaidia Benthicia.

Brain Function – Very little is known about the mermaidia brain, but scientists do know that its size is relative to [homo sapiens](#) and [tursiops](#). Cerebral cortex stimulation is very similar to [bonobos](#) ([Pan paniscus](#)) and [Sei whales](#) ([Balaenoptera borealis](#).) They communicate using echo location and possibly some form of telepathy, similar to many cetaceans.

Mermaid Benthicia

Kingdom: [Animalia](#)

Phylum: [Chordata](#)

Class: [Mammalia](#) /
Ithiontologia

Their origins are currently under constant investigation, evaluation, and future classifications are most probable. Scientists believe that the species developed either separately or was split from the Scientific Classification of Terranian of Mammalia. Many scientific minds are under the impression that human beings evolved from the ocean and formed the three like minded homosapien strains of *Mermaidia* (water based), [*Homo Sampien*](#) (land based) and [*Faeritutus Ionospheria*](#) (atmosphere based). Some believe that the overall mermaid population is the oldest of the three subgenres of humanity.

[Sexuality](#) - The creatures' first sexual experience is also their last. Mermaids are known to spawn only on shore. This fact has eluded human beings since none of the creatures had been spotted on land until 2345.

Mating is a vigorous and arduous process. According to scientists the mating is done on land, formerly on the isles of [Bergonia](#). Mermaidia come ashore on this tiny uninhabited isle in the middle of the Pacific Ocean near the [Hemmingstone Trench](#). On certain days of the years when the Pacific' semi diurnal tides are at their lowest the islands would appear for only hours at a time. During the Arcade VI Wars these islands were decimated, leaving the future of Mermadia breeding in question.

The new solar [gravitational force](#) on the Earth is on average 439 times stronger than the former lunar, but because of the [European and Arcade War](#) and its [bioagents](#) that have managed to populate the ocean atmosphere and its affect on the Sun, tide strength is now on average 489 times farther from the [Earth](#), and its field gradient is weaker. The solar tidal force is 76% as large as the lunar.^[34] More precisely, the [lunar tidal acceleration](#) (along the Moon–Earth axis, at the Earth's surface) is about $1.4 \times 10^{-7} g$, while the solar tidal acceleration (along the Sun–Earth axis, at the Earth's surface) is about $0.32 \times 10^{-7} g$, where g is the [gravitational acceleration](#) at the Earth's surface. This has decimated the mermaid's rookery. [Bergonia Atoll](#) no longer appears at low tides and the animals have been forced into human shores, thereby leading to initial sightings and document of the species.

[Reproduction](#). Intercourse is animalistic. Mermaids have a small opening inside of their vaginas deep inside that consumes the merman's [penis](#). Mermen are exceptionally well endowed in order to perpetuate the species. Mermaids must achieve orgasm in order for their eggs to form. The mermaid's [clitoris](#) is approximately one foot inside of the birth canal. Like Salmon and other spawning fishes mermaids die after mating. When the semidiurnal high tide covers [Bergonia Atoll](#) and the eggs are swept out to sea the two miniscule islands are invisible to tracking systems and probe manipulation.

[Child Rearing](#). There is no child rearing in the Mermaidia population. After the age of ascension the creatures are thought to form pods of some sort but this has not been identified or verified.

[Mermen](#). The merman population has been slowly decreasing due to increased nuclear and [photogenetic war surplus](#) that has been repetitively dumped into the ocean. Scientists are unclear as to how the chemicals directly affect the male species, but several organizations are attempting to reverse the prognosis through [grassroots efforts](#).

[BOMBDD](#): The Benthic Order of Marine Development Department. Founded in 2637 by two cetacean biologists Everlyn and James Detrich in Oslo, Norway the organization developed and achieved 501c3 non-profit organization in 2642. Their mission statement is the temporary zoological containment and eventual reintroduction of the mermaid species. Several captive breeding programs have been devised as a way to repopulate the species which scientists had officially declared endangered.

History of BOMBDD - The Benthic Order of Marine Development Department started as a tiny non-profit organization in the year 2637. This organization has been the longest serving organization dedicated to Mermaidia research. The program and its participants are exceptionally underfunded and still rely on grass roots initiatives. In January of 2637, around the time of the second of the [Great Groundings of the Isles](#), a group of core scientists led by [Zamera Tamlinson](#) confirmed that the Mermaidia population was indeed dying off. Tamlinson and her associates studied the observed the creatures mating rituals through both voluntary and involuntary manners that at times proved to be bordering on scientific research. Many target corporations and even animal rights groups opposed several elements of the research. It was finally revealed that the Mermaidia population was endangered due to non-copulation abilities of its male species. Several years passed until, [Bond D](#) was put before EU voters in an effort to preserve the aquatic species. With this initiative, the voters of EU Corp opted to push government tax dollars into the program to keep the species afloat.

I clicked on the BOMBDD site with my pointer. It brought me to the home screen. There was a 3-D hand drawn picture of a cute mermaid that had been produced by a kid or something.

Below it, written to look like a child's handwriting in a dozen different languages was the following: "The salmon swim upstream in their final flight of life. The bee stings its victim as it sacrifices its own being to protect itself. The grunion females bury themselves in the sand against all natural cause to lay their eggs and then pass. A mermaid's life is not complete until a human male has handled her. It is a harsh reminder

of how the land folks and fish people need each other to survive. Consider donating today!”

With their males dying off the mermaids found that they needed mates, human mates. I was one of those human males that had “volunteered” to assist in the repopulation of the Mermaidia species. I was being paid a great deal of money to do so, as were several other young studs.

I scrolled through the various online pages of BOMBDD and stopped at the volunteer page. The volunteers are men like me who have sex with the mermaids for money. I think that they just list it as a “volunteer” so as not to appear creepy. On the site there is a tab where volunteers can sign up. There is certain criteria that we must meet in order to do so. The BOMBDD page lists these attributes that they are looking for in human males.

- At least three meters standing height (six feet).
- Age 21-40.
- Lift at least two hundred-fifty free pounds and pass a rigorous fitness test.
- Must not be sterile. Healthy and excellent sperm flow necessary.
- Exceptionally virile.
- Exceptionally fit with a body mass index of no more than 23.5.
- Erect penis length must not be less than 10.75 inches from base.
- Must have CNAVY SEAL-33 or Combat 7-Reg Certificate.
- Must have completed Scan 4 and Bionic Lab McCoy Training.
- Minimum of 4 years prior military experience necessary.
- Looking for those with exceptionally strong mental capabilities.
- Payment upon individual performance.
- Non-smoker.
- Non-biased political thinking.

The last comment is interesting to me. As a former soldier, I never really thought about politics or how it might affect what I do in my life. And honestly I’m pretty

indifferent to whether the creatures live or die. I'm just out to make a buck. I get paid to fuck mermaids. I live in a beautiful section of Italy on a government sponsored military pension and I'm thirty-two years old.

Having never even seen a mermaid up close before I started "volunteering," I can say that I'm still fairly indifferent to their struggles. No one wants to see a species extinguished, but I'm not gonna go marching for anyone's causes. I'm doing my part and hopefully that's enough. *Isn't it?* The world is a cruel and unusual place and I've been fighting against it tooth and nail my entire life.

Not everyone feels that way, though. There are many in the human community who wouldn't mind watching the mer-population die out. Many people remember that the Mermaidians didn't help with any of the wars, even though the CPAK and EU begged them to do so. Some felt that that they should die out because of their reluctance to get involved in human affairs. They didn't help us, so why should we help them? As I said though, I'm indifferent, but I did fight in the war. Six tours of duty for the United States AirSeg Corp. I've done my bit for king and country.

Born in Iowa, raised in Durance, Indiana I enrolled into AirSeg at eighteen. I've practically seen the entire world on the government's dime. And I've put my life on the line countless times. Now it's my turn to enjoy the fruits of my hard struggles. So why shouldn't I have a government sponsored apartment in Italy and a few extra credits in my account? I might as well use my strong back, enormous dick and wonderful sperm flow in order to live a little fat for a while. Why not?

Outside my apartment I could hear the protestors. They didn't bother me, but occasionally they would show up with signs and their squawk boxes when they found out where one of the volunteers lived. My place is pretty sound proof so I couldn't hear what they were saying exactly but when I peeked outside the window I spotted one of them, a guy named Andrew Wordolf. He fought four tours. I served with him on three of them. A couple of years ago we ironically got in a huge bar fight about something related to the mermaids that I don't even remember, to be honest. All about honor and justice. Human beings sacrificed themselves but the mermaids stood by and did nothing when they were asked to help us. I get his grievance. But the war is over and if war does anything at all it makes people money.

I looked up at the green and yellow-colored water stains that painted the ceiling. I walked into the bathroom. The creature was floating in the tub with her flippers hanging over the side. The greenish egg bubbles had already started to grow around her stomach area on top of the dead scales. It was up to me now. I had to nurture the new creatures until BOMBDD arrived. I was patient.

#

It had been three hours and no one from the agency showed up. Then I got a message from Marcus that it had been a very busy evening and that they would arrive around 5am. After the three-hour mark the little mermaids would release from their eggs and start to swim. A few had already done that. BOMBDD told me I needed to feed them. Anything. Raisin Bran. Lasagna. Anything of substance or else they'll start eating each other.

I jogged back into the kitchen and opened the pantry wall. I didn't have much in the house. I grabbed a box of salt crackers and electronic aerosol cheese. I laid the crackers on the water and squirted the liquid cheese product onto the floating little snacks. The little things ate it up. Watching them eat they looked like tiny sea monsters. There was definitely a ferocious side the animals.

After they ate, the tiny mermaids just look content to swim around the tub. I took this as a moment to go and make myself some dinner. And just like that, I was a parent.

Chapter Three

A few months later I was still at it. I was averaging between four to six mermaids per week. I mostly worked between the hours of thirteen and twenty-two hundred hours.

I had just finished with my latest assignment. She was a tall skinny specimen. I was afraid I was going to break her upon entry, but she had a lot of pep between her fins.

She was a bit of a screamer to be honest about it and when she sunk her teeth down into my plank board it was with some force. So much that she got stuck. Try as I might I couldn't remove her teeth from it and had to take the dead mermaid with the board stuck in her mouth back home.

By the time I reached my front door I was exhausted. I'd hardly slept the last couple of nights and I was hitting a wall. I slowly pulled the wagon over the entrance to my place. When I first started I was very cautious about pulling the wagon through the living room in order to not get anything wet, but tonight I didn't care as water started to splash all over.

The rug near the entrance had bundled up and the wagon was stuck for a moment. I gave the wagon a good firm tug and eventually tugged the dead creature into my bachelor nest.

After months of hauling mermaids into my apartment, the carpet reeked of mildew. After the third or fourth encounter, I would have thought to put something down on the ground so as not to get the carpet soaked. I forgot to do this, every single time.

I pulled the mermaid through the living room and into the hallway. It was pitch black. The light sensor didn't kick on.

"Dammit," I muttered to myself.

I forgot to pay the solar bill. These were the little times that I missed my wife. Not only the affection and the compassion and the beauty, but the little things as well. She was exceptionally good at the details. And she was a gem at keeping both of us together, emotionally, financially. She had taught me how to manage so many areas of my life including my heart. Damn, I missed her.

My cat meowed. I forgot to feed her. Dropping the handle of the wagon I fumbled my way into the kitchen, found a couple of candles, and lit them.

Kes meowed obsessively for food. I grabbed a can of cheap cat food out of the fridge and opened it up and set it down for her. She gobbled it up.

With the light shimmering in the dark my silhouette cast odd shadows against the blank eggshell colored walls. Leaving the mermaid at the front of the hallway, I took one of the candles and trekked to the bathroom, placing the candle on the edge of the sink. I plugged the drain of the bathtub and filled it with some fresh water.

I walked back and grabbed the wagon and pulled the mermaid into the bathroom. With all my strength, I flipped the slippery fish over my shoulder and flopped her down into the tub. Displacement did most of the work and within a few minutes the tub was nearly full. I poured some Kosher salt into the tub and let the water run over her in an effort to preserve her offspring.

After a few minutes I reached for the hot water faucet to turn it off. The handle was scalding.

“Fucking hell!”

I grabbed a towel, and turned off the faucet. Nursing my sore hand I walked into the kitchen with one of the candles.

I opened the fridge and pulled out a beer. With a lighter I popped the cap and sat back down on the beaten brown pleather couch and took a deep breath.

My C-pod popped on with a ringing sound. I hit the visual button and a holographic image of Marcus appeared.

“How’s it going, soldier?” he beamed with a smile. He was always smiling. Nice guy.

“Not bad. She’s in the tub now.”

“Cool. Cool. We’ll have a team out there in a while. We’re all tied up right now down at Pylos. Weird shit, man. I’ll tell ya about it later.”

I took a sip of beer. “Alright, just lemme know. I’ll be around.”

“Great. Anything unusual happen out there tonight? Anything vocal?”

“Vocal?” I inquired.

“Yeah, weird speech patterns or anything like that?”

I thought about the screamer tonight. All the mermaids vocalized but it wasn't any type of language that human beings could understand or decipher.

“She spoke a bit in their own language, but nothing that I could understand.”

He nodded as if he was in thought. Then he finally said, “Any special physicality issues?”

“Like what?”

He shifted a bit in his chair. “Oh, I don't know. Unusual strength or appearance or anything?”

“Nothing I couldn't handle. Pretty routine. Why?”

He paused and looked down at some files or something on his desk. My previous as a sniper, and I became pretty adept at studying facial expressions. He was fishing for something.

“Um... Nothing. No biggie. Nothing out of the usual, man. I'll keep you in the loop if anything comes up though.”

I didn't have any reason not to trust him. He had been straight as an arrow with me about everything since I started working for the organization. I downed the rest of my beer.

“Cool.” I was about to swipe off the C-pod when Marcus said something.

“Hey, pal?”

“Yeah?”

He smiled that goofy grin of his. We had gotten to be not quite friends over the months, but fairly good co-workers. I respected what he was doing even though I wasn't a scientist or even knew anything about what they really did over in the office.

"Don't overexert yourself," he said. "You're one of our prime guys out there, ya know. You're money soldier!"

Of the 2,344 human males on the BOMBDD encounter list, I was number one. In the months since I started I had inseminated ninety-six mermaids on the elegant and normally peaceful shores in and around Portofino.

I smiled. "I know." Then I flicked off the C-pod and the holograph dissolved.

Soldier.

The war came back in my head for a moment. I left home at seventeen to join the first Neopolitan Skirmish. The military always seemed like a good fit for me. As a kid I got into fights and wore my jackets inside out. I was a promiscuous teenager and drank too much. When my father died when I was fifteen, I swore vengeance on the Orinti Traders that had him killed. I was never able to find those traders. My father was operating on a dangerous level. He knew that there was no reward without extreme risk. I suppose I learned that axiom from him.

Two years later I left my mother and went into the military. I still send money home to her in Indianapolis but other than that we have very little contact. It's probably best considering that she really wouldn't approve of what I was doing now anyhow. What mother would?

Regardless, here I was. Fucking mermaids for cash. If they had Trident Awards for the best inseminator of mermaids, I'd have a wall of accolades no doubt at this point. I was beginning to feel like the man whore of the sea and to honest, I felt hot as hell for the experience.

With a beer in one hand and the candle in the other, I walked back into the bathroom. I looked at the dead mermaid. She was a beauty. Her glimmering, aquamarine dorsal fin still glowed brightly.

After an hour or so her fins turned brown, but her dorsal was still full of color. Her eyes were black now. Despite her colorful fin she was definitely dead. Her mouth was gaping open and her upper lip had a deep bruise from where I bit her. It looked as if a ginormous fishhook yanked her out of the sea. I worked the plank board from out of her mouth and dropped it on the bathroom floor.

I peered into her mouth. I could see her little incisors sticking out of her front teeth. She left quite a mark. I lifted up my t-shirt and rubbed the massive red welts that spread across the right side of my pectorals. The blood had dried. The bites hadn't dug too deep into my muscles, but it still hurt like hell.

I wanted a cigarette. I needed a cigarette, bad. My goal was twenty-one days without a puff. I was only on day six. I wasn't gonna make it.

I walked back into the living room and put the candle on the coffee table. Why the fuck is it called a coffee table? People do everything else on that little thing but sip coffee. I finished my beer and lay down on the couch. With the smell of mildew, dead mermaid, and candle wax I fell asleep.

Chapter Four

There was a pounding at the door. I bolted up and rolled off the couch and onto the floor.

The carpet was soaked. What the...!

Dammit all to hell! I forgot to turn off the faucet.

I jumped up and splashed into the bathroom. The mermaid was floating near the top of the water. In the tub were several thousand tadpoles swimming in and around their dead mother.

Shit! I was supposed to extract the egg sack from her before she expired. Marcus told me that I'd have to watch the little buggers myself until they could get here. I ran into the kitchen and opened the utility shed and pulled out a special pair of tongs and an egg incubator with instructions on how to wrangle the little things.

I grabbed a towel and turned off the water. It took me a good twenty minutes but I managed to coral as many tiny mermaids as I could find and placed them into the special BOMBDD incubator.

Reaching down behind the dead mermaid's head I pulled the drain plug. Water slowly began to curl down the drain, but there must have been a good inch of water in my apartment.

How long was I asleep? The pounding at the door continued. I ignored it. I walked into the bedroom. Kes was on my bed meowing. I looked at her and I began to take off my water-logged jeans.

"I know. Daddy's a fuck up. You said it."

The banging at the front door continued. I walked towards the entrance in my underwear and opened the front door just a crack. Mrs. Halcyon, my landlord stood a few feet away from the entrance in sandals. I opened the door a little bit more and water trickled out. Taking a step back, her massive meaty thighs seemed to boom.

“Che cosa sta succedendo là dentro?”

“It’s just a water leak. I’ll take care of it so...”

“Stai uccidendo qualcuno? Che diavolo sta succedendo in là!”

Not quite understanding what she said, I waved her off without another word and stepped outside. I left the door open in order to let the early morning sun dry out my apartment. It was a hot day and the sunrays felt good on my bare skin. She didn’t know about the mermaid thing.

She kept yelling at me but I tried to ignore her. As a Commando sniper I could have taken her down in a matter of moments and the thought had occurred to me every now and again. “Che diavolo stai facendo? C’è acqua nel mio appartamento e ... perché sono nudo ! Ay!”

Man, I needed a cigarette!

She then took a step towards my apartment but I backed up and stopped her. Putting my hands on her shoulders I turned her around in an attempt to calm her down a bit. “I’ll clean it up. I’ll take care of it, don’t worry.”

She spat some more words in Italian and with her massive thighs she stormed off back to her apartment onto the other side of the building.

I knew I had to clean up the mess quickly or else she'd come in and start poking around. I wasn't quite sure what the rental agreement said but if she found a dead mermaid floating in the bathtub I'm pretty sure that'd be grounds for eviction.

Pulling out my phone I called BOMDD. I told them there was a water problem and that they needed to come by right away with the pumpers. Top priority. *Where were they? Should they have been here by now?*

Minutes turned into hours until the van finally arrived. By the veil of the setting sun they hauled the dead mermaid away in a special van and attempted to extract as many egg sacks as they could find throughout my water logged apartment.

Just as the pumpers started work drying out the apartment Mrs. Halcylon returned and started yelling some more. She was smoking a cigarette. I couldn't decide if I wanted to grab the cigarette out of her mouth and burn her cheek with it or smoke it myself.

Standing outside I chewed on a piece of ostrich jerky and then sat down in the old lawn chair outside near the front window. Mrs. Halcylon hovered over me babbling away. It took a shit ton of effort but I managed not to say a thing. She must have been an opera singer or something because my obese landlady never shut the fuck up.

It had been a long day. The humming of the water pumpers purred a pleasant sound. Staring off into nothing I let my fat landlady rant and rave but I was hardly listening. I gazed off at the mid morning sun and drowned out the babbling of Mrs. Halcylon. After a few minutes my chin lay on my chest and was fast asleep.

I dreamt that I was flying inside of a shopping mall. The dream was maddening. I was being chased by something or someone but I couldn't decipher what the impending

danger was. As I drifted through this enclosed mall, the gravity slowly pulled me down but all I had to do was push off along the railings of the upper stories and I could fly. It felt exhilarating. If someone had asked me if I wanted a superpower I always said that I wished I could fly. But flying was only in my dreams.

There was also something else in my dreams. It was a sound, or a voice. A melodic beautiful voice that was familiar to me but not. At first it sounded like my ex-wife. The tone and speech pattern was the way that she would speak to me after we made love. It was calm and soothing but I couldn't decipher exactly whom it was that was speaking in my head. Her voice became more and more soothing and I found myself in a subconscious layer that I had never felt before. I was asleep but awake at the same time.

I didn't wake until late that afternoon just as the sun was setting. I walked back into my abode with a disoriented feeling that I could not place. I flicked on the *entertainment unit* and watched a program about crime in the twenty-first century.

I did nothing productive the rest of the evening but the feeling that I had when I was outside stuck with me. I didn't have any appointments that evening and so I hydrated some macaroni and cheese didn't leave my apartment the rest of the night.

Chapter Five

I awoke to Kes on my chest meowing as loud as she could. This was just her way of being affectionate. I stroked her back and kissed her on the head. I never liked cats until my wife brought her home from the shelter. Now the half Tabby, half Tortoise Shell little girl was my full responsibility.

My C-pod alarm chirped. I had thirty minutes to get to my physical. Tonight was big. I had two mermaids to deal with on Preggi Beach with only an hour between. But first things first. It was required that all volunteers get a physical every two months on BOMBDD's dime to ensure our virility. And no one really knew what kind of diseases the creatures carried but they were taking no chances.

The sun had just risen and the birds chirped. Daylight brought picture postcard images from the hills of Portofino.

Attempting to focus on the beauty of the day I walked outside and inhaled. Mrs. Halcyon was there ready to ruin the moment. She was yelling at me in Italian. I tried to ignore her, occasionally giving her the satisfaction that I was listening to her by nodding my head every now and again but soon I grew tired of it. I still needed a cigarette.

I jumped into the shower. That's when I felt it. A weird sound in my head, almost like a radar ping. It sounded three times and echoed. I had no idea what it was. I hadn't drank last night so I wasn't hung over. *Was it the entertainment unit?* The fresh water from the shower splashed in my face. The pinging got louder and louder. It sounded like someone whispering in my ear.

Turning off the shower I stood dripping wet for a moment, attempting to analyze the words. *Who was speaking? Was this in my head or were the voices coming from far away and it only sounded like it was in my head?*

Reaching for a towel I looked out the small window. There were a gaggle of young girls laughing and yelling. It was a kid's birthday party or something. That must

have been it. There were high-pitched yells and screams and words that I could not decipher.

I waited for the sounds and voices to come back but there was nothing. Drying off I picked up my C-pod and tapped it a few times. The directions to the clinic popped up. Giving Kes a nice pat on the back I then locked up, grabbed my helmet, jumped on my hooverbike, and headed down to doctor's office for my physical.

Chapter Six

The clinic was about a twenty-minute drive inland. The waiting room was empty, but the clinic smelled of perfume and raspberries. It wasn't a medical clinic in the normal sense. The slide door opened and a lovely redheaded woman entered with a huge smile.

"Mr. Remy?"

"Yes."

"Follow me please."

I followed her, watching her move. I couldn't help myself. The creature was darling. Probably a few years younger than myself with legs that wouldn't quit. I watched her politely with every step. We stopped at a door and she turned around and smiled again. She wore bright red lipstick that augmented her light skin tone.

Another slidedoor opened and she gestured. "If you'll step inside please. We'll take your vitals."

I stopped before entering the room. "Are you going to take my vitals?"

She smiled but kept her hands to herself. She gestured again. Our eyes locked and didn't release until the slidedoor shut behind me.

I stood in the room for about a minute until the door opened and a brunette walked in.

“Mr. Remy?”

“That’s what they call me,” I said with a smile. She smiled back. It was on. And man, I needed to give it to her. This woman before me was stunning.

“We’re going to check your vitals first.”

The door slide open and the redhead walked in and punched a few buttons on the pad behind her, locking the door.

The two girls smiled at me.

“We’re going to give you the first few tests,” the redhead said. Her voice was sultry and seductive. Not the professional voice from the waiting area.

“We’re going to check you reactions,” said the brown haired beauty.

She then slapped me across my left cheek. Hard.

“Response?” she asked.

I said nothing.

“Good.”

The redhead went on writing all the while I could see her snatching glimpses of my swollen beef bayonet bulging from my pants. She wet her mouth. Her eyes darted up to see if I was looking at her. I was. She wasn’t embarrassed. She smiled.

The dark haired girl meanwhile went on to check my vitals. Everything was normal. The brunette nurse was gorgeous. Long, straight, brown hair. Lips that pursed every time she opened her mouth. Eyes that twinkled with gold around the center of her

bright blue eyes. Nearly six feet tall, the girl could have been a model. I saw the sinews of her legs flex in her six-inch pumps.

“Remove your shirt,” she said in a gravelly voice.

I lifted the t-shirt off of my hulking frame. My Scandinavian background was apparent by my deep blue eyes and shock white blond hair. My body was nearly hairless. My forearms and biceps bulged and flexed. She turned her head as if to check her C-pod Sensor but my eyes never left hers. Out of her peripheral vision she continued to scan my amazing body. Every flex of my muscles made both nurses cry a little bit in pain and a little bit with joy. I knew it. My body was in excellent shape.

“I need to record muscle tone,” she said her voice nearly cracking.

“Whatever you need to do.”

I felt her cold hands against my hardened abdomen. She swallowed and let out a small sigh. She couldn't help herself. With the t-shirt still caught around my neck, unable to see, I felt her hand press firmly against my massive pectorals and then over to my undulating biceps. Against my bare legs she contorted her lower half between my thighs and pressed in against my giant package. Her hands glided around my back as an erection began to form. Her left hand slid down from the back of my shoulder muscles and across my abdomen again. The redhead simply watched all of this.

“New?”

“Pardon me?” she said.

“Have the two of you worked here very long?”

“Long enough.” She smiled at me. The redhead still said nothing but watched me.

“Take off your pants,” said the brunette.

I slid off my jeans and sat there in my boxers.

“Your boxers too,” the redhead finally spoke.

The redheaded nurse lowered the lighting. I slid my boxers off and immediately produced an erection. The brunette then squatted down and wrapped her fingers around my shaft. She had me right where she wanted me. My head was throbbing with anticipation. I could hear her every breath.

“How big are you?” she whispered.

I smiled.

“Hmmm,” was all that she could mutter. A small lightpix ruler appeared in redhead’s right hand as she quickly held the device next to my scrotum and measured my appendage.

“Measurement please,” the brunette said to the redhead. The redhead knelt down. Both of the girls mouths’ must have been no further than a few inches from my cock. She measured me, shaking her head. “Just a tad over thirteen inches. Impressive.” She pulled away with pure professionalism.

I gave her a rogue smile.

“Girth?”

The redhead gasped while she measured.

“I don’t know if I’ve ever seen this.” The brunette stood up while the redhead slowly drifted down between my legs. I could feel her cool fingertips glide down my tip

and slowly rest at my shaft. “Nearly three inches wide. Impressive Mr. Remy. Very impressive.”

The redhead’s mouth remained open. At any second she could put her pursed lips around me. I closed my eyes, waiting for the taste of her cotton candy tongue against my rod of corrugated flesh.

“Minimum length is ten inches in order to reach the *labiatic clitornic*. The girls have to be stimulated or the eggs won’t surface. But, you already know that or you wouldn’t be here, would you?”

I said nothing but looked at her and her companion with complete lust. God, they were both so hot.

“You have amazing girth and your length is, uh... more than sufficient. You have no problems in this department,” the brunnete tapped something down on her computerized clipboard.

Both girls then reacquainted themselves to their professional nurse-like exteriors.

“The doctor will attend to you in a moment.”

“Must he?”

“*She* will be in to check you out.” The nurses smiled. I smiled. The brunette exited but the redhead stopped.

“Just hang out for a few minutes.” She gave me one last look over, smiled and then exited. My erection was still stiff when there was a knock at the door.

“Mister Remy?” the voice inquired.

I didn't say anything. The door opened and the doctor sauntered in. She was amazingly fit. She looked to be from the Napoleon Suburbs perhaps. Dark featured. Olive colored skin. Perfect teeth and a tiny streak of grey in her hair. Wearing a short black skirt and a lab coat that didn't fit around her massive breasts, she looked to be in her late thirties, early forties.

She began to take off her clothes.

"Are you ready for your test?"

I was a little puzzled. "Test," I inquired simply.

"Yes," she said while she unfastened her skirt. They dropped to the floor. She unbuttoned her dress shirt. "Your endurance test."

I smiled. She stood there in her string like panties and her bra that was too small for her massive mammary glands. Walking over to me she slid her hand up my leg and groped my cock. She dropped her jaw and purred a little. With her other hand she put her hand around the back of my neck and pulled me in close to her face.

She blew on my mouth for a moment and slowly chewed on my lower lip. I didn't move, but didn't offer any resistance either.

"Any special instructions, Doctor?"

"Yes. Fuck me. Fuck me as hard and as long as you can."

I took my hand and wrapped it around her neck and pulled her into me.

Chapter Seven

It was no surprise that I cleared my physical with flying colors. I practically lived at the gym. I could feel myself getting stronger and stronger. It was a physical workout perpetuating another species. I woke up around ten in the morning, got up and made myself some eggs whites and cream of corn for breakfast. It was another gorgeous July day in Portofino. Outside I could hear the hustle and bustle of the tourists climbing up and down the cobblestones of the ancient Italian hamlet.

I reached down and rubbed my private part. The tip was sore as hell. As strong as I was, there was an occasional mermaid that produced a super amount of strength which required me to push in hard and tight.

#

12:04am. On the nose the latest mermaid flopped onto shore hungry for my cock. I sized her up quickly. She was a big girl, the largest one so far. Big boned I'd say and damn she looked was strong!

I took her by the arm and immediately she began to struggle. It took everything I had to hold her down. If she were to stand on land, from tail to head, she would have measured around seven feet. We struggled on the beach, her strength challenging my testosterone. Foreplay was minimal. Just as I began to get erect and shove my member into the fish's hole, the miniature teeth of her labia closed in on my shaft. I kicked her off.

"Knock it off, bitch," I yelled.

She didn't say anything else as she processed what I had said to her. Then she began to moan. Every mermaid on the beach knew that I was that creature's only hope at continuing the bloodline.

It was a fucked up situation, and I wasn't trying to be chauvinistic, but I needed to simply do my job. Then she smiled, the way a crazy girl at the bar smiles, just as she's about to stab you in the neck with a screwdriver.

The mermaid sighed and closed her eyes. She was sexy. She wanted it. She needed it. Then, she attacked me and the ride was on! She was quick to cum and I reached over and held up my protection board.

Slowly her vaginal teeth retracted and I kept giving it to her in the sand. Jesus, she wouldn't come. For nearly two hours I kept at it, pumping the mermaid, slapping her, rolling her over, and grazing her erogenous zone along the lower backside near her spine.

A female mermaid was aroused when her scales turned a light yellow color. Under the moonlight, it was difficult to discern if I was getting her off. She whined and squealed but it was important that she had an orgasm.

Nearly three hours later, when my stamina was reaching the point of burn out, she flopped and screamed at the top of her lungs and with a blood curdling scream she came. I pumped every last ounce of semen into her, until she was dead. I pulled out, collapsed on the sand for nearly twenty minutes, practically falling asleep under the hot summer night. I could hear the small crowd up on the boardwalk begin to murmur and disperse.

#

My bathtub was infested with little merfolk. They swam around, clamoring for a piece of land to crawl up onto. They would be okay for a few hours, floating in the water.

BOMBDD was busy and I was left to take care of the little beasties.

I needed a smoke, but I remained strong. Sixteen days without a puff. I'd given up cigarettes, but not booze. Throwing a thin green t-shirt on, I pulled up a pair of corduroy shorts and slipped into a pair of flip flops. I grabbed my keys and left the apartment and walked over to my local watering hole -- The Siren's Tavern.

The place looked like the olden pub from Shakespeare's era of seven hundred years ago. Like most dive bars, the place held a small stench of cleaning solution and rotten food. The place was adorned with the Bard's poetry and plays. Part coffee shop, part library, part saloon, it housed a variety of customers.

I sidled up to the bar. I looked up at the massive aquarium that was the centerpiece of the entire establishment. Algae covered the sides of the big tank. It hadn't been cleaned for what looked to be about a year. Inside were a few tangs, a giant parrotfish, a butterfly fish, a couple of wrasse and a baby Giant Pacific Octopus that everyone called Charlie. A tall woman played some old school Italian music on the violin off in the corner.

Ritchie was an overweight guy with glittery white teeth. He had a handlebar mustache and rakish derby. "What do you need, Jack?"

"Give me a Conquest I.P.A. and a double shot of Praetor Bison."

"You got it." He turned and poured the beer first. I looked around the bar. A man in his fifties with thick black hair was staring at me. We made eye contact, and he

glanced away. Over by the window a twenty-something couple was laughing. With two straws, they were sipping some kind of fruity concoction out of a giant pineapple.

Tourists.

Over the last few months, the southern shores of Portofino had become something of a tourist attraction. Although it was off the beaten track, away from the main metropolises, more and more people had begun to come to witness the mermaids reproduce. Since there were no longer any public exposure or obscenity laws, observers could watch the mating ritual as long as they stayed fifty yards away from the action. There were also jackasses that would make a weekend of it. Rent a bungalow, have some drinks, party, and watch the mermaids have sex.

The only law was no interference. That meant photo imaging of any sort, drone interception, anything. If someone was to interfere with the mating ritual, it was a federal offense. Also, there could be no man-made light within fifty feet while the action was happening. So, if tourists wanted to view the pornography on the beach, it had to be under the natural moonlight. That saved me a small amount of dignity. I didn't mind showing off my thick physique, and I wasn't shy, but I wasn't into doing porn. I was doing my civic duty.

The bartender dropped the beer and the shot in front of me. I took a sip of the brew and downed the shot. Sitting on the bar stool made my thighs ache. I had two appointments later that night on the beach. The mermaids were very punctual and the creatures received exact times through their responder tags. Those time codes were

directed through BOMBDD, I assumed. I should have taken a break from the duties on the sand, but I needed the money, so I agreed to a twilight double header.

The first mermaid was due to flop up on the shore sometime around twenty-one hundred hours. Around twenty-three hundred the second was due.

Pulling out my C-pod I checked the info that Marcus had sent me two days earlier. The first encounter that night was routine, but the second encounter was filled with exceptionally specific instructions on how to handle her.

Marcus kept calling her Amethyst. I didn't think too much of it at the time, and I was only mildly curious why she was given a name. None of the other mermaids had a name. I was told that she was called an Amethyst because she survived the first childbirth. She had orgasmed, gave birth and survived. It was exceptionally rare, but she was tagged and legit. Number 577487-DDJ. She had mated with a rare fertile merman twelve years prior on the isles of Bergonia and had lived to swim another day. But this was her first mating encounter with a human being.

I didn't think that this Amethyst creature was going to be any different than the rest of them. When I plunged deep into her and make her scales stand on end, just before midnight tonight, she'll be dead. Just like the rest of them. You can bet on that.

I downed the beer while the man in the suit stepped up to the bar to my left. The bartender dropped two more shots in front of me. On the house, I supposed. Ritchie and I had a good rapport. We both served in the wars. I downed one of them.

"Jack Remy," the man said.

I looked at him then shot the second glass of whiskey.

“Who are you?”

The man reached into his suit pocket and pulled out a business card. “Steven Ferreira. Operations Manager of Rare Biotic Exports. You may have heard of our organization?”

“Yeah, I’ve heard of you.” The organization was a massive corporate entity that controlled most of the underground exotic animal trade. Although they were technically legit, like any corporations they had tax shelters and broke the law until someone caught them.

Mr. Ferreira looked around. I felt that the guy was a little nervous. The bartender was staring right at him.

“Why don’t we go somewhere we can talk,” Ferreira said with a proper South African accent.

I signaled for a couple more shots then turned to him. “We can talk here, Mr. Ferreira.”

Ferreira smiled. “But perhaps a little privacy would be best.”

The bartender dropped two more shots down on the bar.

“Thanks, Ritchie.” I shot one after another.

“Cinquanta,” Ritchie chimed.

I pushed my wrist towards Jay in order to pay but Ferreira already had his wrist out. “It’s on me.”

The bartender scanned the microchip under his wrist and my drinks were paid for. I turned and studied the businessman for a moment. He swallowed, smiled, and stood up.

A few shots in I was already a little tipsy. I felt like I wanted to slap him across the face. I had been itching for a fight for weeks. I knew this pasty, bloated man was not going to give me any sort of contest, but I simply wanted to beat the hell out of him. He was the kind of guy that most people wanted to beat the hell out of. You could just tell.

The younger couple sipping on the pineapple drink laughed loudly. Ritchie and the rest of the bar kept to their business. This guy, Ferreira, wasn't physical. He probably carried a moniker like Steven Ferreira Jr. or Steven Ferreira III or some kind of bullshit like that.

I knew he was trying to bribe me before he even said a word. And I knew exactly what he wanted. This whole bribing thing wasn't his doing or his idea. I could see that. Someone else sent him, some executive above him who was responsible to the stockholders. I had an idea of what they would tell their stockholders. They would say that they found some legal way to replicate mermaids for pet trading or something, when in actuality they were breaking the law, straight and simple.

I chuckled and stood up then pushed him back down onto a barstool. He wasn't smiling. I licked my lips. "My apologies, Mr. Ferreira. As you may or may not know I was hired by our government to be physical. I'm not too smart. I'm just an old soldier. Now, what do you want to talk about?"

"Well, Mr. Remy, that's up to you." He felt out of place. I think he was used to doing business while dining on eight hundred dollar plates of food in upper class restaurants with a French maître d' and wine sommeliers at his beck and call. This was not easy for him. He knew my name and probably my entire rap sheet. I felt sorry for the

sap in a weird way like this was the entire meaning behind his life. But I didn't want to get too cerebral on him.

I pointed to the massive fish tank behind the bar. "You see that, Mr. Ferreira?"

Ferreira squinted. "What?"

"In the tank. You see the little thing near the green sea anemone?"

His eyes began to widen. "Is that..." he whispered, "Is that a mermaid?"

I smiled but didn't answer him. "Now, I'm assuming that you are in the market for perhaps three or four hundred of the little buggers. Am I correct?"

In a hushed voice, the businessman said, "Actually, Mr. Remy, my company is looking for around ten to twelve million mermaids. Newborns and juveniles."

Ten million, I thought to myself. My god, I could live for five years on that kind of dough. It would be black market money, though.

The trading and selling of mermaid eggs and fetuses was a huge business. It was illegal of course. Mermaids were generally not poached but used for a variety of other purposes. Private collectors wanted them for aquariums. Some pharmaceutical companies would raise the babies until they reached about the age of ten years and then drain their blue blood. Supposedly the mermaids have a special coagulate in their bloodstream that fends off certain cancer cells. Although the practice was banned long ago, there are still pharmaceuticals that use the mermaid blood, but call it something else, rabbit blood or elk genomes. Who knows?

What I do know is that the government didn't have enough inspectors to go around and inspect all of the drug companies and so like most of the corporations on Earth, they operated outside the law.

The pharmaceuticals owned the country. They owned the world. They made more money than the government a thousand times over. So, as illegal as it was, the government very rarely busted the drug companies. They had better protection and better lawyers.

Then there were those Asiatic chefs who think they can serve mermaid as a seafood dish. Again, it was illegal but there was always someone ready to pay for the ultimate delicacy.

I knew that I had to handle this situation delicately so as not to look as though I was in cahoots with this guy in front of the patrons at the bar. I didn't want anything to get back to me. Mermaid piracy on the black market carried a heavy sentence. If I was found to be participating, I could end up back in jail, and not for some petty misdemeanor like joyriding EU hovercopters.

I had come a long way in the last three years since I hit the bottom. I pulled myself up out of the dirt and was at least making a living for myself, but the money was tempting. And I knew that this guy was here to bargain with me.

So why me? Of all the guys in BOMBDD why did this guy pick me out. Or maybe he didn't. Perhaps he had a few of us on the hook.

"Why me," I simply asked him.

"Because, Mr. Remy. You're the best."

Fererra smiled and it was probably the only honest thing he'd said to me. *I was the best wasn't I?* And I had managed to produce more mermaid eggs than anyone. Dammit, I was a mating machine.

Why shouldn't I be compensated for my skills and talents? Besides it'd be the off-season in a few weeks and I'd be out of work again. I'm thirty-two years old and I'm not getting any younger. I looked at him squarely into his silvery blue eyes that seemed to tremble a bit with fear. He was scared of me. I could see that. I could use that to my advantage.

I stood up and whispered to him as I crossed to the exit. "Follow me."

Chapter Eight

Three days had passed since my conversation with Mr. Ferreira. I had agreed to sell a portion of the mermaid eggs that I harvested for a hefty sum. They weren't pure breed mermaids, but his buyers didn't seem to care. He talked about how they might be able to use the DNA from the eggs to create test tube mermaids, something along those lines. I didn't really understand the science of it all. All I knew was that I was going to make a lot of money and I didn't feel too guilty about it. *Or did I?*

I lay on my bed. A hand came up and caressed my face. I pulled away. The girl's smooth, silky body lay entangled in my dirty bed sheets. The Sargasso Surge had moved the cooler water back out into the depths of the Mediterranean. I had a few days of down time before the maidens started flopping up on shore again and so this was as good a time as any to get my rocks off with some females of my own kind.

Sitting naked on the edge of my bed I touched the girl's calf, out of instinct. She cooed a little. She was a good lay. Not great, but alright.

I sat up and stroked my rod a little while the girl bent down and began to suck me off again. But I wasn't into it anymore. I gently pulled her head away from my chinksicle and she fell back onto the pillows with a giggle.

"Not now," I said.

"Thank god. You already came four times last night and this morning. How much stuff have you got in there?"

I didn't answer and got up off of my bed.

"I think I have lockjaw," she exclaimed in that annoying high-pitched voice of hers.

I looked at myself in the mirror. My left eye had a small scar that started at the top of my eyebrow and graced my forehead. It was only about three inches in length, but it was noticeable.

I kept a rigid schedule to keep in shape. Several hours in the gym every day had sculpted my body. I hadn't been since yesterday and I never miss a day. Women love to feel the area around my abdomen. She was no different. Even though I had ruined her the night before she still reached over and caressed my lower parts.

Jenica was the girl's name, and she giggled while she sprawled out on my bed. With her smooth little hand she reached over and stroked me some more. *Jenica, right?* Was that her name? Or was it Jenny? I already forgot.

I pulled her hand away and looked at her and smiled, flashing her my near perfect teeth. I didn't say anything, just walked into the bathroom and turned on the shower. Through the bathroom door I could hear her in that unsexy voice of hers.

“It's time to get Billini Blitzed! I'll be back,” she clamored.

Through the closed bathroom door I heard her gather herself and walk into the living room. Even though the sex was good and she had a rocking body and beautiful face I hoped she would walk out the front door and not come back. Honestly she bored me to tears. And I'm a pretty simple guy, so that's saying something.

With the hot water spraying across my sculpted frame, I heard her fumble around in the kitchen and then she shut the front door.

As soon as she was gone, I stepped out of the shower. My body was dripping, glistening with water and sweat. The high little window in the bathroom afforded me a peek outside. The air was saturated with humidity. A few clouds drifted in and about. Tourists were running around everywhere.

I could hear my info pad beep on my bed. There was an incoming message. I quickly dried off and wrapped the towel around my waist. I opened the bathroom door and grabbed my pad that lay on the bed. It was text only.

Francine Goldberg

8:50 AM (2 minutes ago)

(CC)

Aquaticseminar@MALDROM.orn.eej.nm, Marcus2722Klatu@MALDROM.orn.eej.nm, SireniaRescueOp@MALDROM.orn.eej.jd.forest1

Mr. Remy,

(CC) Volunteer list.

Cuerva Beach – Amethyst – CHANGE IN TIME - 12:08am – sharp. = Standard Time Zone DELTA.

Marcus has forwarded me your email. He is currently unavailable and on special assignment. As you may or may not know, Amethyst is coming to shore. This is an exceptionally rare occurrence and we have selected you as the volunteer. We are so fortunate to have you working with us. You have been making quite a difference.

*** CAUTION *** I know that Marcus had already sent you specific instruction about her but I need to reiterate to you that this specimen is unique. She will be nothing that you have ever dealt with before. We believe that this is her first mating with a human. We also know that she has survived pregnancy with mermen but details are incomplete. Other than that we know very little about her. From all the data we have gathered we here at BOMDD know that you are the right man for this assignment!

We received sonar response from the Spanish sub Zeeka late last night. Her tracking signal indicates that she passed the Strait of Gibraltar two days ago and is near your area. She received our transponder signal and returned signal with the usual language. She is ready. Do not be alarmed by her size. She is a powerful creature and as I have mentioned she has survived one, possibly more mating rituals already with her own species. Her dispensation will be very high in terms of affection. We are told that this specimen will have an exceptionally high sexual discharge. Use extreme caution and protection. Bring extra planking boards and rubber handcuffs. Please inform us of all activities. We will have an extraction team out to your area soon.

It is vital that we take control of the eggs immediately so please remember to chime in after your assignment. Any questions, please feel free to ask. We are compensating you an extra 60,000 credits for this very special assignment.

Thank you for all of your hard work.

Best,

Fran

Francine Goldberg
Administrative Director
Underwater and Intertidal Sub Leader for Echinodermata, Bi-valve and Sirenia Life
Functions Operations
44732-B Blue Falls Way
Palermo IT 0577

Earth

[893.444.5588.44832](tel:893.444.5588.44832). Ext 487-4.4



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I closed the info pad and put it back on the wall unit. It was heating up in my apartment. The humidity was starting to swell. I put on a pair of boxer underwear, went into the kitchen and chugged some orange juice from the container. I looked at Kes. She meowed.

Marcus Bendmeyer was sort of my direct supervisor, keeping tabs on me and the other volunteers. I had only met this Francine woman once. Marcus had already told me that the strength of this mermaid when she comes ashore would be enormous. Needing to mate at all costs, the half-women, half-fish creatures will do practically anything in order to produce eggs to perpetuate the species. When those underwater beasties wriggle up on the shore with their sexuality foaming at the gills, nothing will stop them.

I sat and thought about this Amethyst. Marcus had casually talked about her to me when I started the program. It's with a bit of irony that I am on this assignment, I suppose. No one had seen the likes of this particular mermaid for over a decade and no one expected her to arrive on the shores of Preggi Beach anytime soon. Even the

scientists at BOMBDD didn't know how many of her kind there were, or if she was the only one.

All I knew was that if I could mate with her she'd produce a mother lode of tadpoles and I'd make a bit of cheese. And then if I could steal away a few hundred of her eggs before the BOMBDD extraction team showed up, they'd be worth gold on the Black Market. They wouldn't miss a few hundred little half-mermaid babies, would they? I twinged a little, hesitant at going back to my old ways of conning and cheating. But these weren't purebreds anyhow. Many of the corporations find a way to purchase regular eggs whether I was in the game or not. At least that's what I kept telling myself. Recently I had made a few business deals that went a little south and now I needed the credits.

Chapter Nine

Around 2300 hours that night I pulled my wagon across the Calata Marconi. The shops and restaurants were shut up. The moonlight glimmered off the colored walls of the building.

I continued to walk eastward towards Baia Cannone. Music trickled down from the hills. Someone was having a little party and the music was bleeding out into the open areas of the town. It was the opera singer Barccelli Astonimere. My ex-wife loved his voice. Twice we went to the opera in Rome. I knew nothing about the art form but my wife adored it. Pausing to listen to the music my body shifted and I lapsed into the past for a moment remembering the way that she smiled, the manner in which she touched me on the arm when we sat side by side. When we would go out to eat and we sat on the same side of the table we always had to orchestrate it perfectly because I was right

handed and she was left handed. It's those small things that I miss. It's also the big things that left a hole in my heart that I've never been able to fill. It's been eight years since she passed and each day has been a challenge at times.

I stopped and let the wagon handle fall to the cobblestone pathway, then looked out at the water for a moment.

#

I laid down on the sand for over an hour. The lights at the restaurants along the boardwalk were dark. It was a quarter past one in the morning. Even on the northern coast of the Mediterranean in summer it was getting cold. Four to five foot waves crashed onto the shore. Where was this creature? Normally these fish women were exceptionally punctual. Their internal clocks worked perfectly.

Across the sea bobbed a big harvest type moon, the kind that looked perfect for Halloween. The orange glow bounced off the ocean. The water twinkled. A tiny hummingbird swung low and hovered in front of me for a moment. I swatted it away and it flew off up into the clouds.

I watched the little bird sail off into the night sky until I spied a couple getting high. A couple of fairies were chasing each other throughout the clouds. It was summer time and it was these months that they mated. They made excellent soldiers during the wars. Quick and practically silent, the fairy creatures could intrude nearly anywhere undetected. The Axis Strand managed to turn a few of them to their side but the majority of the Fairy population fought with the Allies. Without their help the EU and SA may not have survived and, for all I know, I'd be dead.

The fairy woman was laughing. It echoed all the way back down to Earth. The man had a rich voice. I couldn't make out what the fairies were saying but they seemed to be enjoying each other's company. I could barely see them as they dove straight down toward the shoreline and skimmed the water with their wings, then, fluttered back out over the open water. From across the way I could hear the beating of their wings. They sounded like wasps, talking and fluttering their appendages. The woman laughed and raced up towards the heavens. The man followed and then they were gone out over the open sea like jet liner streaks.

I was afraid of heights. Good thing I wasn't a fairy.

I laid my towel out on the sand and stretched out. I put my hands on my stomach and waited. The sound of the crashing waves never left my ears. My body was calm. There was a slight breeze. Even though it was cool, the air felt nice. I began to drift off.

#

My skin bristled and I felt the light touch of a fingernail brush against the scar on my cheek. I opened my eyes. As soon as I was conscious, my military training kicked in. I bolted up and grabbed the wrist that was touching me. In a split of a second I flipped the person over and threw him into the sand. With one hand balled in a fist and the other gripped around the creature, I stopped.

Laying there next to me was a woman. No, it was a mermaid. It was both.

"Hello."

I gently let go of her arm. She didn't wince or seem to notice any pain. Her face was somewhat expressionless, yet behind her eyes something I had not yet known was stirring. She sat up and looked at my quizzically.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"You *are* waiting for me, aren't you?"

I backed up a little from her. Was I still asleep?

"Mermaids don't talk," I said.

"I'm talking aren't I?"

"Maybe you are and maybe you aren't."

She crawled a little closer to me, reaching out one of her hands. I shifted in the sand and pushed myself away from her. On one of her fingers there was a thin band of silver. It twinkled under the moonlight.

Was it jewelry? Was it something else? I had never seen this on any of the girls before. It wasn't organic, or maybe it was. I just couldn't tell.

The creature had the greenish tail of a mermaid, all right. When she spoke, I could see her forked tongue, but there was something different about her entire mouth. Her lips were a little thinner but very smooth and rich, almost like human lips, and her tongue was thick and softer looking than the other mermaids I had been with. Her hair was a very light chestnut brown, not the reddish or greenish hue of the other mermaids. Her arms were a silvery color. Scales only covered part of her shoulders down to her elbows. Her forearms and hands were human.

She took her hand and placed it on my scar.

“What happened,” she asked.

I slowly pulled my face away from her. Her hand remained in the space where my face had been. I stared at her long, thin, bony fingers. The fingers resembled my ex-wife’s. It took me aback for a moment.

She was petite. Not tiny, but small in nature. Scales covered her legs that turned into two fins. She had legs and fins that sort of acted like feet.

If she was Amethyst, I expected her to be large; a beast of physical force. I had imagined that’s why I was chosen, because of my size.

She lowered her hand and placed it on her lap. She grinned. She looked like a kid’s doll or action figure sitting there. “Good evening,” she said.

“Who are you?”

“I’m not sure that you could pronounce my name.”

There was a short silence. I looked around the beach. It was deserted.

“Are you Amethyst?”

She cocked her head with that grin she wore but didn’t answer me.

“You talk. You can speak,” I said.

“Yes,” she answered.

“How?”

She didn’t answer this either but instead she simply said, “Come here.” It wasn’t a command.

I didn’t move.

“Come here.” It still was not a command. She sat there in the sand, silently for a bit. She was alluring. Her beauty was captivating. I stood up and took a few steps towards her.

“Please sit directly in front of me.”

I did as I was told. The grin on her face faded a little. She surveyed my body and then looked me in the eyes. We stood there staring at each other for some time. I tried to look down, look away, but I couldn’t. She began to breathe heavy, deep breaths in and out. Tears began to well up in her eyes, but her facial expressions remained stoic. I began to breathe heavy as well, panting almost, all the while staring into Amethyst.

Even though I was a good meter away from her it felt as if she took her arm and placed it around the back of my neck. All of this happened quickly yet in what felt like slow motion or underwater. I immediately yanked my head away, breaking the mental connection that she was building. I stood up.

“Where are you going?” she simply asked.

I took a moment to catch my breath. *Had she touched me and I didn’t know it?* No. She was still a few feet away from me.

I didn’t like this power, or whatever it was, that she seemed to hold over me. I was supposed to be the dominant one. Every other mermaid I impregnated flopped up onto the shore. They spit and cursed in their native tongue. After I handled them, they died. That was it. Simple. Concise. No surprises. None of these mermaids had ever spoken a word that I could understand or looked me in the eyes like this.

“Do they know you can talk?”

“Who?” she asked.

“The institute?”

“I don’t know.”

I hesitated. Maybe she wasn’t talking. “Are you speaking or using telepathy or what?”

“You see my mouth moving don’t you?”

I paused. “Maybe I do, maybe I don’t.”

She giggled. Her vocal inflections sounded like that of a sorority girl after chugging a keg of beer. If she were completely human, she looked to have been around twenty-two or twenty-three. She had an exceptionally thin body with beautiful white teeth and a fine symmetrical face. Her ears poked through her disheveled light brown hair.

Slowly twisting her gorgeous body I could see her luscious legs spin around while she sat on the shore. Then to my surprise she slowly split her legs apart, not sexually, just to get comfortable. With her hands in the sands she twisted some more, kicking sand with her left foot. No mermaid could spread her legs. Or so I thought.

“You look so strong. Can you pull me up?” she asked.

I stood up and took her hands. She clasped onto me with fierce strength. She was stronger than she looked. As I slowly pulled her up out of the sand she exhaled into my face. Her breath smelled of some type of sickly sweet type of flower. It was delicious. I pulled her body up until she was standing on the tips of her foot fins. I held her hands so she wouldn’t fall over.

“Let go.”

“But you’ll fall.”

“Let go,” she repeated.

I did as she ordered and she didn’t fall. She stood there as gracefully as any woman. She probably stood around five and a half feet or so. She smiled and opened her mouth. Her juicy forked tongue licked her thick delicious red lips. She giggled.

“There. Now, I’m almost at your height.”

“Don’t you need to rejuvenate?”

“Oh, I can stay out of water for hours at a time,” she said.

Most mermaids would drown out of water. That’s why I fucked them so quickly. If I didn’t, they would die without purpose. All of this was confusing to me. *Was I still asleep on the sand? Did Jenica slip something into my gin and tonic before I left my apartment this afternoon? What was happening? Who was this mermaid?* If that’s what she really was.

“You’re a soldier,” she said.

“How do you know that?”

“Your eyes told me.”

I didn’t say anything, but looked off at the ocean.

“You’re punctual,” she said again with the same flat delivery.

“You’re late.”

She turned her full attention towards me. Glimmering through the moonlight her eyes lit up with flecks of gold and green. I was purely captivated now. Then she did the college girl laugh again.

She wrinkled her nose a little. "I'm sorry I was late." She didn't sound like she was apologizing. "I had several matters that needed my attention."

She took two steps with her fin-like feet. She elegantly moved like she was in a long evening gown, with one foot directly in front of the other. She took about ten or twelve steps until she tripped and cascaded towards the ground. I caught her in my arms before she fell. I looked at her arms. The silvery scales began to turn a greenish color. She wrapped her arms around my massive frame and laughed. She had tripped on purpose.

There was more silence. We stared at each other. She was so light that I could have held her with one arm. With my free hand, I slowly caressed her face. She closed her eyes and smiled. I pulled my hand away. She licked her lips again. Then, she gently licked the side of my face. Her tongue was salty and rough, like an underwater cat. I was getting aroused. She licked my face again. I was getting hard. She touched my cheek and kissed my forehead. I couldn't tell if she was ready for me, because for once, I didn't feel in control of the situation. I felt vulnerable and awkward. As a soldier I ensure that these types of feelings do not control me, but this was unlike any experience I had ever encountered before.

"Should we get started?" I whispered somewhat awkwardly.

I gently placed her down and began to take off my bathing suit. She wiggled in the sand and began to lament, not like an organismic moan or anything, just a soft cooing sound. With her hand she stopped me from removing my suit. “We already have.”

Then, with an odd type of grace she shimmied her way back to the sea. When she was in the intertidal zone she popped her head up. I saw her eyes and her white teeth glowing. She smiled at me. Then she nodded and plopped down under the water and was gone.

I half expected her to drive herself back onto the shore in a wild fit of passion ready to fuck, as if this had been some sort of foreplay, but she never did. I waited another forty-five minutes. My erection never left me. Then I wrapped myself up with my robe and walked through the rough sea shells and rocky sand up to the boardwalk. When I had hopped the concrete breakwater, I turned to look out one last time at the ocean. There was nothing but the crashing surf.

I grabbed my empty wagon and slowly strolled back towards my apartment, all the while thinking about the beautiful mermaid, the beautiful creature known as Amethyst.

Chapter Ten

I couldn't sleep. The thought of her wouldn't leave my mind. I kept thinking about the eyes, the flicker of gold in the center of her eyes just burned into my mind. There was something so familiar about the crystalized multi-colored eyes to me.

I sat up and briskly wrote an email to Marcus at BOMBDD.

Jack Remy

3:33 AM

REPLY(CC)

Aquaticseminar@MALDROM.orn.eej.nn, Marcus2422@MALDROM.orn.eej.nn,
SireniaRescueOp@MALDROM.orn.eej.jd.forestl

Marcus...

Last night

Cuerva Beach – Amethyst – 12:04am (pre-date marker I-V)– sharp. Standard Time Zone

I have made contact with the little mermaid you call Amethyst. The mermaid came ashore as scheduled but did not spawn. I attempted to mate with her, but she slipped away. When do you expect her to come back? I need to make another attempt at contact.

Independent Contractor
Via Paraggi a Mare, 8, 16038 S. Margherita Ligure GE, Italy
Comm link:[+43 0185 289961](tel:+390185289961)-8885
Slot 6a – section 44
[...Coordinates 44.3039° N, 9.2078° E](#)



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I finished the email as fast as my fingers would allow me and hit “send.”

Immediately, there came a ringing in my head. Almost like the ringing that I heard a few days earlier in the shower.

The voice was faint. “Climb the steps. You must climb the steps, Jack. Climb the steps,” the voice whispered in my head. My nose filled with saltwater. Water flooded my lungs. I was gasping to breath. I dropped the C-pod and ran into the restroom, feeling as though I might get sick. *What was wrong with me?*

I looked into the mirror. My skin was beginning to melt. The wrinkles were thinning. My hair began to morph into eels that tried to bite my face. I attempted to close my eyes but some force was keeping them open. The stinging salt of ocean water poured into the rim of my sclera and then filled the corner of my eye sockets until the water punctured my epithelium. Water bled into my nasal cavity.

“Climb the steps,” the feminine voice said again.

I began to go blind. My teeth began to blacken to corrode. The salt was eating away at my bone. The water tunneled down my throat and into my stomach. I vomited and coughed but more and more salt water soaked my body. I couldn’t get it out. Quickly my blood began to thin as waves of water stretched the limits of my corpuscles. My veins were about ready to burst. I tried to scream, but no sound came from my mouth, only bubbles.

“Climb the steps,” the voice said over and over again.

My body became bloated and I gasped one last time before I felt the life drain out of my soul.

“You must climb the steps, Jack. Jack!”

Finally I screamed as loud as I could. My head snapped off the couch and my C-pod slid off my lap and onto the carpet. My heart was beating as fast as a jackrabbit and I was drenched in sweat.

Kes meowed and jumped up onto the end of the couch. My hands were shaking. I could swear that had been Amethyst's voice. She was communicating with me. I knew it. Her sweet voice echoed in my head. "Climb the steps?" *Climb the steps to where?*

I pulled myself up and picked up the C-pod off the floor. The screen flashed and the cyber mail message zipped on screen.. I jumped up and wrote another e-mail

Jack Remy

4:33 AM

REPLY(CC)

Aquaticseminar@MALDROM.orn.eej.nn, Marcus2422@MALDROM.orn.orn.eej.nn,
SireniaRescueOp@MALDROM.orn.eej.jd.forest1

Marcus...

Last night

Cuerva Beach – Amethyst – 12:05am (adjustment of time sensor in operation) – sharp.
Standard Time Zone

Did you receive my first email? I have made contact with the little mermaid you call Amethyst. The mermaid come ashore and I attempted to mate with her, but she slipped away. When do you expect her to come back? I'd be willing to make another attempt at contact. No extra payment is necessary past my initial payment. Please let me know where and when the best possible place would be to make contact. I am eager to assist.

Thanks,

J

Independent Contractor

Via Paraggi a Mare, 8, 33038 S. Margherita Ligure GE, Italy

Comm link:[+43 0185 289961](tel:+430185289961)-8885

Slot 6a – section 44



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I re-read the e-mail and then deleted it. *Did I seem desperate to see her again?*

The thought of her wouldn't leave my head. *How could she walk? Why did she have feet?*

The people at BOMDD didn't tell me these things. *Did they know her anatomy? Or was I the first human to make contact with her?*

I put the C-pod down on the coffee table and chugged the rest of the beer I was drinking and put the bottle in between the cushions of the couch. Kes jumped up on my lap. I stroked her. She meowed and curled up on my lap and sat for a moment. Down the hill I heard a couple screaming at each other. I patted her on the rump a couple of times and she jumped down.

Throwing my flip-flops on the ground I slid my feet into them and stepped outside. The smell of coffee and grilled fish filtered through the air. I wondered sometimes how a vet like me ended up in such a picturesque town. It was tiny. Only a couple of thousand people or so. Most of the small hamlet went untouched in the war and Italy remained mostly intact. Before the war I had never even been to the Mediterranean or Italy, let alone thought about retiring here after my tour of duty was complete. I was a Midwestern boy from the New United States. After so much of my home was destroyed

those years ago I thought that the change would do me good. Against my mother's protests I had moved to the other side of the planet.

My apartment was shoddy, old and run down, but the area around it wasn't too bad. I stepped across the smooth cobblestone driveway. Across the hillside and along the winding pathways that led between Portofino and Praggi Beach I saw the butterflies and the cyber flags off in the distance. The flags are like arm bands. People from the Axis that had been assimilated into Allied territory would sometimes wear the band just to signify their neutrality, in case there were still some rebels who didn't think the war was officially over.

Another tiny blue and red hummingbird flew up to me and hovered in front of my face. They were everywhere this time of year. It moved swift and fast. Its wings beat exceptionally fast. I smiled. Another day in paradise.

My phone rang and I walked back inside. There was no recognition signal but I recognized the cyber codes from the bar. It was Fererria. I let it ring for a number of times and then reluctantly picked up, voice only.

"Yeah," I answered.

"Mr. Remy. Good morning. I have been chatting with several of my associates and we would like to discuss some additional numbers with you."

Amethyst's voice came shattering into my head. *Climbs the steps, Jack!* I nearly fell down. It was like a massive hammer pounding into my skull. There was silence on the other end of the line.

"Mr. Remy, are you there?"

I recovered a bit. “Uh... okay... Uh...” There was a pause on the other end of the line.

“Would you do me the courtesy of turning on your image projector. I don’t deal with disembodied voices.”

“Uh... I’m actually just out of the shower.” I tried to be as quiet as I could while I put on a shirt and some shoes and socks.

“Climb the steps!” Her voice was louder now.

“Look, Fererria, I have a meeting with one of the BOMBDD reps in a few minutes so I should get going right now. Can I contact you afterwards?”

“I’m sorry you feel that way, but we do have a detail headed out to you as I speak.”

“Detail?”

“To work out the particulars,” Fererria said. The voice was calm and assuring and exceptionally confident. He hardly sounded like the man I had met at the bar. Now, he was safe and secure back in his emotional compound. “Mr. Remy, please switch on your image.”

I sat on the words for a moment before it struck me. They were sending muscle my way. I was going to have to give up the eggs whether I was going to do it consciously or not. There was a crackle of static. *But why now? Why are they coming for me today?* I kept my cards close to my chest.

Fererria continued, “If you’ll check your account you’ll see that we have already deposited a large amount of credits for you.”

“How did you get my account number?”

“We have our ways.”

There was a long pause at the other end as neither of us spoke, but knew each other's thoughts. He spoke first.

“You will be at Praggi Beach again tonight, yes?” he inquired.

Long pause. “I'll be working tonight.”

“Excellent. Then perhaps my extraction team will be able to help facilitate with the specialty eggs tonight.”

I bit my lip. They knew about Amethyst. Fererria continued, “Jack, we know you have made contact.”

“I'm not sure I know what you're talking about...”

“Come now, Mr. Remy. You were on the beach with her last night.”

“With who? It was just another job that-”

“Please do not toy with us Mr. Remy. We know that you were with a very special specimen last night.”

I didn't see anyone around. Even my pulse sensor didn't detect any human activity around the area. And then I thought. The hummingbird! It must be some kind of security probe. On the beach I felt something was out of balance but I couldn't place it.

“Her eggs will open up a new standard of wealth on the market. You will be considered the father of Sirenitec Technology. Think of it.”

He shifted and sighed. “How many of them do you have? We are willing to pay an additional gold fee for them, per our agreement.”

“I don’t know if I can do that right now,” I said.

“Climb the steps Jack!” The voice was screaming at me now. She was getting to me. *If Amethyst could somehow communicate with me, did she realize the deal that I was making with Fererria?*

“The only item that we will need is your assimilation password. We know that the chip must be encoded after the eggs hatch. What is the code, please?”

I didn’t answer. Amethyst’s voice screeched in my head. *You must climb the steps Jack! Climb the steps! Come to us!*

“Mr. Remy, you have been rewarded handsomely. Your account is full.”

Shaking her voice out of my head I answered Fererria. “Mr. Fererria, we talked about this. We had agreed that negotiations were ongoing.”

“Mr. Remy... Jack, I am just sweetening your end of the bargain. You deserve this. You know that. It’s your payment in advance... soldier... for a job well done.”

“It’s against the law.”

Fererria voice stiffened on the other end of the line, “Mr. Remy... *we* are the law. And you are part of this now, so please do not grow a conscience all of a sudden. That’s not your reputation.”

Reputation? *Did they speak with someone about me?* It’s easy to find out my rap sheet, but who could have spoken to them?

Fererria’s voice took another level of authority, “Take your payment, please, and let’s not press this matter. Business is business.”

I should have seen this coming. I couldn't pretend to be smarter than a corporate army of poachers and black market investors. How stupid of me!

"Mr. Remy, you will deliver the Amethyst eggs. You have been paid and we do expect you to deliver, with your encoding chip cycled into the eggs during reproduction. Simply do exactly what you have been doing and our working agreement will continue with no ill effects. Now, I assume you still have the eggs, correct?"

I shifted my feet and looked down. "I have them in the bathtub."

"Thank you. We'd hoped that you would say that."

He cut the communication. I pocketed the phone and grabbed my cat. They were coming. Now! There were some mermaid eggs in my bathtub, but not hers. With any luck they would break into my place and steal the eggs, thinking that they might even be Amethyst's own children. It might buy me some time. I can't go to the authorities or else they'll know what's up. I can't contact BOMBDD since I know that they've jacked my transmission to them. If I told them anything they would contact Fererria's company who would simply throw me to the sharks.

Marcus! I can contact Marcus. But could I trust him? With any luck he won't turn me in and he might be able to help. Then again, maybe he sold me out? How did they know about me? My personality? My reputation? Where I was? All of that was supposed to be under lock and key due to Level 55 Military Security Clearance. Not even corporate yahoos can break into that level of security.

I tapped my C-pod and attempted to send a message to Marcus anyhow even if it was just to get some answers. A feedback loop prevented transmissions. They were

blocking all communications. I tried voice recognition but received the same error message. That hummingbird probe must have been blocking all transmissions. I was compromised. *Damn!*

Without missing a beat I grabbed a backpack and snuggled Kes into it, snatched the dirty grey windbreaker from the closet, and tied it around my waist. Slipping the backpack on I quickly moved to the front door. Amethyst was calling to me again, but I couldn't make out the words. My head got dizzy and my vision blurred. An underwater bubbling sound seemed to be streaming in my head. And then there was Amethyst again.

“Jack. Now! You must ascend!”

I wasn't sure exactly what I was doing, but I felt that I was following Amethyst's voice somehow and I sure as hell had to get out of my apartment if they were coming for me.

Stepping out the front door, I locked the door with a wave of my hand. When I turned I saw an expensive silver hover car pulling up into the alleyway. Four large men and a slender woman immediately opened their doors and came walking towards me. They were dressed in six layer suits and black SC 4-glasses, the kind that feed information. They were walking towards me. Kes meowed from my backpack. I started jogging towards my hover scooter. As soon as I did this, they began to run towards me.

In the opposite direction I saw Jenica, wearing a halter skirt bikini. She was waving at me looking a little inebriated. “Hey, Jack! Where's the party?” Without answering her I hopped on the cycle and sped off in the opposite direction down the hill towards the shore.

In my rear view projection I could see the quintet arguing as they made their way back to the car. My cycle flew down towards the beach. I should have gone the other way up towards the mountains, but instinct told me to simply get out of there and there was also Amethyst. *Was she guiding me?*

They were following me now. Within a kilometer I'd picked up the probe. The electronic hummingbird was over my right shoulder. I swatted it away but it came right back.

I cranked up the power. The red little scooter darted down the main piazza straight through the Piazza Martiri del Olivetta, past the tourists sipping Bellini's and nibbling on seafood quiche. I darted through a series of tables and umbrellas. People scattered about, screaming and yelling. The black sedan wasn't too far behind. They were careful not to run anyone over, but they were persistent.

My head began to feel pressure on my left side. While my scooter whistled down a narrow corridor of multicolored appartamenti, Amethyst's voice came alive in my head loud and crystal clear now: "Ascend, Jack. Ascend!"

The voice was so sharp and shrill-like that I nearly fell off my bike, but I hung a sharp left at Salita de San Giorgio Road. She was guiding me now. I don't know how, but she was doing it. I could feel Kes moving around in the backpack. She meowed very loudly, nearly screeching, eager to bust out.

I managed a sharp corner and blew past an orange construction sign that read: *Pericolo – Costruzione!* My Italian sucked but I knew that any sign with an exclamation point at the end of it meant there must be something intense ahead. And there was.

Off to the side the roadway was a ginormous unmanned crane truck. Its arm stretched out across the highway. I swerved to avoid it. The steam-like sound of the air brakes hit a crescendo while the scooter tumbled out from under me. We slid under the crane and then began to roll. Kes and the backpack stayed with me. I was careful not to roll over her. I bounced and rolled twice and then finally landed with a massive facedown thud.

I immediately picked myself up, blood dripping from my face. I removed the tiny roadway pieces of fresh asphalt that had become embedded in my left cheek.

Kes was all right. She managed to stick her head out of the zipped area. With one of her paws she pushed the zipper to the side. The hummingbird probe hovered just over my head, recording the entire accident. They'd be on me soon. I stared at the glass eyes of the hummingbird tracer. Then from out of nowhere Kes leapt up, grabbed the bird in her mouth, crushing the delicate construct of nanotechnology. With a few sparks the mechanical ornithological beast gently imploded in her mouth. My heroic cat stood there for a moment, confused. Then she brought it to me and dropped the tattered bits of technology in my lap.

"Good girl," I whispered to her. With true affection I scooped her up and put her back in my pack and slung it over my shoulder.

I picked up the scooter. It was dead. The hyper drive was ripped apart and the hover pad over the front cycle valve was shot. Other than the sounds of the waves down on the shore it was quiet. I had taken narrow streets to get here but I still expected my visitors very soon. I scurried away across the rocky cliffs into the wooded area.

I thought about the GPS chip that was embedded in my wrist, put there during the war. After I left the service it was deactivated but I had a sneaking suspicion that Ferreira and friends might have found a way to reactivate it. If they could get into my banking account and all of my military encoded software systems, it was a good bet that they could access the Government Global Satellite System and track me even without hummingbird probes. They probably bribed some low paying government official in order to get the transponder signal. It wasn't uncommon. I dug into my backpack and grabbed my Rothco Swiss Army Knife.

During the war I had extracted a grenade bullet from my left leg using the same knife. If I was going to lose my aggressors I knew that I had to pull out my transponder GPS chip. Pulling out that grenade from my skin years ago hurt like hell but I had to do it. If those goons catch up with me now who knows what the parameters and limits they would go to for a buck.

My C-pod chimed. Hurriedly I took the pad out of my backpack. It was Marcus. I was about to answer when a thought struck me. Maybe they really had gotten to Marcus. He didn't make that much working for the non-profit. Ferreira's goons could have offered him some credits very easily. I didn't know him well enough to know whether he was a guy that could be bought.

I didn't answer the ringing. It stopped and after a moment a text message appeared on the screen: "Priority Alert. Jack, you must come to BOMBDD immediately! What is your location?"

The timing was very suspicious. Why should I go to BOMBDD? I never go to the office except on rare occasions. Maybe Marcus really had sold out, or worse he was actually working for Fererria this entire time. I couldn't trust him. I had to keep moving.

I tossed the phone back into my pack and flipped open the knife. I took off my belt and put it into my mouth and bit down. Anticipating the pain, I took three deep breaths and then thrust the knife into my wrist. I let out a muffled yell. If I cut the blue veins, it was all over. It hurt like fuck. I dug into my own skin twisting the knife in an attempt to feel around for the tiny bit of plastic and microfiber that was implanted inside me more than ten years earlier.

Kes meowed and jumped out of the backpack and bumped her head against my leg. I silently screamed as I jammed the pointed piece of metal deeper into my flesh. I flicked the tiny credit card chip out my skin. It was just under the surface. That's not what I was after. Now I dug even deeper. Bright red blood oozed down my hand. I kept digging. Over the hill I heard the sound of a hover car slow down. The tip of the knife hit something. I hoped it wasn't my bone. The smell of my own blood sickened me and I couldn't tell if I had dug deep enough into my skin to retrieve the chip.

On the other side of the embankment I heard the muffled voices. My pursuers had found my hover scooter. The knife bumped against a vein and my hand clenched and shook. I slowly twisted the knife back the other way. With the tip of the knife I could sense the edges of the locator chip. Breathly heavy, I twisted the knife, moving the chip up through my squishy flesh and web of veins. It scraped against my Ulna bone. I winced in pain. The voices on the other side of the rocks must have heard me.

They were coming. Finally I flicked the chip up and out of my wrist. It landed, with small pieces of my flesh, in a small bloody mess on the dirt. I quickly tore a piece of my t-shirt and wrapped my wrist to stop the hemorrhaging.

I heard the strato-clip humming sound of the stunner as he pulled the trigger. The nimble fella in the black suit came bounding up and over the rocky area. He was no more than ten feet in front of me. I froze. He pulled the trigger. With a loud hiss Kes ran and jumped onto his face. The stun ray shot up into the air. That gave me just enough time to slip down the other side of the pine needle covered hill.

I put my feet to the ground as soon as I stopped sliding. I turned back to watch my little girl scratch and claw at him. I kept moving down the path towards the old church.

My wrist was bleeding pretty bad. My lower body wanted to work hard but I was losing blood and endurance because of it. I slowed down to a brisk jog. My hand was going numb. It was hot and very humid.

I reached Punta del Coppo Cliffs and scurried behind the steps of the old yellow church. Leaning against the wall I took a few deep breaths and then crept inside from the rear entrance. It was cool and refreshing. Several tourists were milling about, lighting candles and gazing at the artwork on the ceiling and walls.

Blood dripped from my wrist and began to crust all around my arm. I must have hit a vein of some sort because I was getting light headed. I leaned up against the cinder block wall near a darkened corner. Exhausted I slid my body down onto the wood floor. I also hadn't eaten a thing today. If I weren't careful, I'd pass out.

The sound of the ocean reverberated in my head and I heard her again. It was Amethyst. I couldn't make out what she was saying now, but the telepathy was very strong. She was calling out to me. I could sense she was closer than before.

One of the side doors of the church opened to reveal the ragtag crew of Ferreira's underlings. Tired and out of breath, I attempted to slink back the way I came. The short guy spotted me.

"He's there! Right there," he yelled out.

He lined up his stunner and fired. The echoing sound of the reverberation of the stun ray caught a fat French tourist. He dropped to the ground with an accented moan. People screamed and scattered. I threw the wooden doors open and ran out. The sun was blinding and hot and I ran as fast as I could.

Jack. Jack! Amethyst continued to call to me. I couldn't tell where she was now. I ran as hard as I could towards the open sunshine, but my body was starting to deteriorate. I was losing too much blood. The world started to slow. The sky changed colors. My lids were getting heavy. Panting and nearly out of breath I reached the edge of the massive cliffs that fell into the Mediterranean. Jumping off was not an option. It would be certain death. I stopped, clutching my wrist. My hand began to twitch uncontrollably. I coughed. Blood and phlegm sprayed onto the dusty ground. And then they were there.

All five of them surrounded me. Their boss had wanted the eggs. They had processed payment and I owed them. A lot. *How do I get myself into these messes?*

"Remy," yelled the short fat one. "Stay where you are! Please don't move. We're here to help."

I couldn't move even if I wanted to. I slowly stood up. *They weren't going to kill me... were they? They were just going to rough me up a bit.* That was a best-case scenario.

Amethyst called out to me again. "Come to the bower!" This time the sound was everywhere. It wasn't coming from the ocean or up in the sky, but it seemed to pervade my entire body. *Jack! Jack! To the bower! Come to the bower! We're all waiting for you. Jack, come to us. Jack, we need you. JACK!*

The voice crippled my ears, my heart, my lungs. Fererria's thugs slowly walked towards me in a semi-circle. From behind the group I saw Marcus. He was jogging up the path behind them. So he was getting a cut of this after all. Damn!

My heart beat faster and faster, attempting to pump more blood into the limbs of my body. But I was losing a lot of blood and I was getting dizzy.

"Jack," Marcus yelled out. The Fererria group didn't hesitate. When they were about fifty meters from me, the woman took out a Tazliner and pointed it in my direction. Backed up against the cliff, I peered down at the crashing waves and the ocean below.

Amethyst called again, but it wasn't just her voice. Hundreds, maybe thousands of voices turned into a high pitched scream so piercing that my eyes rolled into the back of my head, like so many of the mermaids I've seen die before me.

The woman fired the Tazliner gun. I managed to duck. The next shot would not miss because the group was coming closer, moving in, inch by inch. I could see Marcus waving his hands behind them yelling my name over and over again. A small group of tourists began to crowd around as well.

The chick put her Tazliner back inside of her jacket pocket. They needed me. I was a product to them. A product that could build an overabundance of wealth for Fererria and those that worked there. And the group had already made a scene. They didn't need a massive hullabaloo to go viral with tourists watching.

The screaming of Amethyst reached an unruly crescendo in my head. Much like a migraine headache, my brain felt as though it was going to slip out from my nose, ears and eye sockets. The pain was simply overwhelming. In all the years of war I had never felt so much pain as I had felt in this moment.

"Jump! Jump, Jack and we will catch you," Amethyst's voice echoed in my skull.

The taller man in the suit stepped forward, in an attempt to calm the situation, including the crowd of tourists that had begun to form around the incident that was now unspooling

"Mr. Remy," he said. I could barely hear him. "We are here to assist you in your agreement with Mr. Fererria. You have nothing to fear from us. Nothing at all. We simply want to talk with you."

Jump Jack! Amethyst called out.

The ringing got louder.

Jack!

The piercing sound of whatever it was that was calling me made me cock my head in utter pain. The line between what was really being spoken and what was in my head began to blur more and more.

JACK!

“Mr. Remy...”

JACK! JUMP! Amethyst’s voice was screeching through the pain.

Marcus stepped in front of the group. “Jack, stop!” He turned to the suit clad group. “Wait, just wait will you?”

The five ignored him while the tall man stepped out in front of the group, “Mr. Remy, please come with us.”

JACK! COME TO US. THE BOWER IS READY. JUMP!

The pain in my head was beginning to paralyze me. The sunlight was beating down on my sweaty frame. The blood continued to drip from my wrist. The screeching. The heat. The blood.

JUMP!

I collapsed to one knee and then with every last ounce of energy I had left I awkwardly jumped backwards over the cliff.

The world went black. The voices, the screaming, the high pitched sounds all felt amplified now, but the cool air felt somewhat soothing as I plummeted towards the ocean below, down towards what was sure to be my ultimate demise.

Chapter Eleven

The blood within my veins began to harden and freeze with the infusion of salt from the water. The surface of my skin began to expand. Each pore turned into a hardened fish scale. My lungs began to perforate. It felt as if they filled with the salty liquid. I gnashed at the water with my teeth in an attempt to gulp down oxygen, but none was available, only the oncoming flood of rushing salt crystals. Waves crashed in my mouth. Spinal

fluid drained from my body. It was being sucked out through the pores of my skin. I was caught in a massive whirlpool that was pulling my near lifeless body further and further down. My feet began to dig into the benthic surface. Shells, rocks, pebbles, the bones of dead whales, the teeth of dead shark, the calcified tentacles of octopi, all of it cut into my ankles, ripped into my legs, slashed across my eyes, stabbed my torso. The pressure of the whirlpool continued to push me further and further down into the ocean floor. I was gasping for breath, not even sure how I was still alive.

With outstretched arms I attempted to reach for the surface, attempted to escape the tempest that was enveloping my body. Harder and harder the pressure squeezed around my skull. My eyes began to leak *aqueous humour*. The blue in my eyes felt as if they were being sucked out by the storm of the sea. My entire body was driven further and further, closer and closer to the Earth's core. The gravity was enormous the closer I plummeted to the center of the planet. I tried to fight, tried to swim upwards, but my arms and legs were ripping from my torso. I opened my mouth and began to drown. I shook and fought like hell but it did no good. I was drowning, dying.

Where was I?

Chapter Twelve

The bower was strung together with long strands of *Macrocystis pyrifera*, a type of giant kelp. Beneath my feet I felt the tickling sensation of green sea anemones. Then there were the soft caresses of the underwater pixies. Hovering above me they stroked my hair with their delicate white hands.

My eyes were closed when I attempted to take my first breath. It was shaky and inconsistent, like I was snorkeling. The breath was shallow and light. I took another breath and I felt an odd pulsation in my chest as if a balloon was filling up in my lungs. My body felt airy and fluid. I took yet another breath but my eyes still would not open. The caresses that I felt a moment ago were now gone.

Finally blood flowed into the veins of my eyelids. I slowly opened my eyes to a stupendous sight before me. Outside of the bower was a city of colors, a city of illumination. Bioluminescent towers of green, purple, orange, red and yellow swirled about. Giant sea fans of every color and other underwater flora and fauna swayed in the currents.

Time now seemed to be moving forward. I fully regained consciousness. The world around me was now fluid and streaming. My head seemed to bob and I knew I was weightless. Still cautious about breathing I took short hiccups of oxygen into my lungs. I didn't understand how I was able to breathe under the water. Instinctively I closed my mouth until I couldn't hold it any longer and then, on a pillow of faith, I took a very deep breath in, expecting the salt water to suffocate my lungs but instead it was like breathing air on the land. I twisted a little in my bed. My body moved very slowly, like in slow motion.

I was also naked. Seaweed bandages tied my wrists and ankles to the end of the edges of the bower. I was spread eagle. I immediately looked between my legs. There was no bandage there. All thirteen inches of my flaccid member floated calmly above the rest of me. At least that wasn't damaged!

Turning my head and glancing beneath me as best I could I saw strong, warm, inviting bubbles, almost like a sauna bath. The water should have been freezing but it wasn't. It felt like a hot bath. The rise was therapeutic I was sure but the bubbles themselves were green and purple. They felt soothing, even medicinal under me.

While I lay there spread eagle, and ultimately vulnerable, I attempted to twist at my damaged wrist. To my surprise I saw that it was mostly healed. Where I had cut into my skin with my knife, a seaweed type bandage had been applied. I felt no pain.

Looking out the other side of the hospital room "window" I spied massive structures made of dead coral, massive stone, and a plethora of different kinds of seaweed. There were buildings and skyscrapers made of sponges and abalone shells, all of them brightly illuminated like the ones on the other side of the room. I was in the middle of some sort of under water city.

Off along several "streets" there were streams of bubbles that emanated from the ocean floor. Up along the hillside, what looked like dark red lava streams poured out of one section of the city, slowly. They were building some sort of structure. Lobster-like individuals were moving the cooling lava around with gigantic shells in an attempt to contort the magma before it cooled. There were several fountains that seemed to be made of fine sand. The transparent dome that covered the "hospital room" was not organic, though. It appeared as though it was made of some type of synthetic force field.

Giant squid-like creatures pushed through the water with tranquility. They appeared to act like any normal citizens of a large city, simply minding their own business as they strolled along. Animals that resembled Nautilus Chambers with massive

curled shells slowly pushed their awkward bodies through the atmosphere of this *terra incognita* world.

It was an entire city underwater! And somehow I was here strapped down on all fours in the dead center of this brave new world, a new world under the ocean. What was curious was that the city seemed to sprawl out all around me, everywhere. I didn't know if there were other "rooms" or not but it looked like I was the only patient in this microscopic bubble that was set down in the dead center of the city. Beneath me was a giant, circular stone tablet with engravings of some sort of language.

No one seemed to bother with me. Creatures simply looked my way and then continued on their way. It was as if I was a statue or something.

The last feeling that I had felt before I passed out after falling over the cliff was that of a burning pain in my chest. There was a massive organic bandage directly under my right pectoral. It didn't sting at all, but it felt different in some way that was completely foreign to me.

I blinked my eyes and admired the underwater city. It felt like it was night, but I couldn't be sure. If this was a real world, deep in the benthic trenches of the Earth, then day and night had no meaning here.

The dome was open at the top and I could see all around me. Off in the distance over the tops of the massive buildings there was movement. It looked to be a school of fish of some sort. Or were they sharks? I didn't know, but they were coming towards me now and I was exposed and naked. I wasn't sure if the dome kept things in or out. I was still disoriented and there was no one around me inside the bower.

As they came closer I recognized their shape and figures. The flowing hair, the scales and skin, the glowing florescence of their eyes indicated that they were mermaids.

They passed right through the electric dome and swarmed the bower in every direction. There must have been thousands of them! All of them were smiling with a type of perennial grin. The attractive girls varied in every shape, size and color. They were tall and short. Their hair was red, green, yellow and violet with sparkles in them. The only thing that all of them had in common was their brilliant set of white teeth. Even without the sunlight I had to squint from the glimmer of all of the beautiful fish women smiling at me.

They hovered around me for a moment or two as I got used to my new habit of breathing underwater. I was still a little groggy.

“Where am I...” my voice trailed off.

The voices that I had heard earlier were no longer there. Amethyst’s voice was not present.

They didn’t answer me. My stomach growled. I was hungry and so were they. Arching my back I looked up at the gorgeous swarm of flowing creatures. They came closer to me, hovering above in the water, moving slowly until I felt the warmest sensation between my legs.

One of the mermaids wrapped her lips around my flaccid cock. It began to immediately grow and stretch inside of her mouth until it became a turgid pole. Every nerve ending seemed to burst with energy.

She gave my rod a last lick. And without missing a beat the next mermaid was deep throating my fleshy manhood. The girls took turns around the tip of my massive penis. Each mermaid curled her lips around my stiffness, kissing it, stroking it, paying homage to it while another mermaid kissed me on the mouth. Yet another mermaid licked the tips of my left finger. She sucked on them slowly. Her partner gently twisted my wrist, unwrapped my seaweed bandage and slowly licked the area around the wound.

I wouldn't have thought that I could feel as much as I could because I was underwater, but somehow the sensations were all heightened. The fluid around me, in and around my lungs, my spinal cord, sifting through my brain had brought me to some sort of absolute orgasm. Then I realized it.

They were all here for me. There were hundreds, thousands of them coming to pleasure me. But the irony was that these were the same mermaids that had come ashore earlier. How was this possible? They were dead? Weren't they?

That last mermaid that sucked me off laughed as she came up from my erect cock. The other girls laughed and then they smiled and kissed each other as a long red head and a shorter brunette took separate sides of my shaft and rode their forked tongues up and down my long dick.

An exceptionally well-endowed mermaid with blue hair, gently shoved the other two mermaids aside. I remember her from a few weeks early on Preggi Beach. She gave a good loud scream before she died. Wait! But she was dead. *How could she be here?*

A look of defiance was painted across her face. She swam right above me and put her silvery hands around my throat and simulated a choking motion. She kissed me,

biting my lower lip. Red blood drifted through the water like ink. Her baby door opened and slowly sat down on me. I had never felt anything so physically pleasurable. The feeling under the water was different; it was enhanced in some way. My eyes rolled back and my breathing softened until I slipped into a sort of unconscious euphoric high.

This went on for what seemed like hours, although time seemed to skip beats down below the ocean's surface. I closed my eyes and attempted to distinguish between reality and fantasy until my body went dull and limp and I fell back asleep.

Chapter Thirteen

When I awoke again the mermaids were gone. *Had it been hours? Had it been days? Had the mermaids actually been there at all or did I imagine all of it?* I couldn't tell.

I was still in the bower but it was now rather closed, like some sort of pupa. I couldn't see outside of it any longer. Reaching my hand out in front me I touched the inside layer of my soft prison. It was soft yet firm, like the hair of a peach.

A reddish type of light shone through. I felt that the pod wasn't meant to imprison me. The outer layer was sturdy, but not impenetrable to keep me in.

My wrist now ached and my breathing under water was slow and painful. I looked over a scar that ran down the left side of my chest. There was something mechanical inside of me, forcing me to take breath after breath, like a balloon inflating in my chest. I felt as though I couldn't breath on my own without it, which would be a logical assumption since I was underwater. My wrists and ankles were still tied down with long strands of some sort of sea plant. And I was naked still.

Through the thin skin of the organic medical bed I could hear whispers, female voices. My eyes had begun to adjust to the massive saline content of the sea, but even so I would not have been able to see as clearly as I had above ground. Around the rims of my eyes I wore a pair of lenses of some sort that protected my eyes from the water. The voices stopped and then the pupa was beginning to tear open. I looked up and saw a pair of mermaid hands peel away the translucent skin of my cocoon.

Chapter Fourteen

I was no longer outside in the underwater city. The buildings were gone. It was dark all around me and the water surrounding me was like a milky cloud of varying colors. Light emanated from below the giant bubbling geysers and within the bubbles there were more small milky clouds within these bubbles. They were filled with pockets of colored clouds that seemed to move and twist as if they were alive.

Between the clouds one single mermaid floated overhead.

“Lord Remy, look into my eyes, please.”

I did as I was told. Without any physicality the floating fish woman was taking my vitals. She looked directly into my eyes while something purged from my brain. It was some sort of telepathy.

She spoke upwards as if to a nurse, “Punctured left lung. Retinal replacement Series R-45, both oracles. Tonslation Replacement is complete. Abrasion repair of the left wrist. Scale grafting commencing. Inject seven CC’s of Hyndrabenzenoid, please.”

My wrist felt a shooting pain for a moment as the Hyndrabenzenoid coursed through my blood stream.

“Just relax, my Lord.”

I was taking short breaths. My brain could still not fully accept that I was capable of breathing underwater. I had a dreadful feeling that sea water could rush into my body at any breath.

“Please look at me, My Lord.”

Why was she calling me that?

“Deep breaths, please.”

I did as I was told and then I had no trouble breathing under the water.

“Robinstanic 7 lung and transparent aluminum eyes for you,” she said. “Nearly good as new. You took quite a tumble.”

“Where *is* here,” I barely was able to ask.

The doctor mermaid smiled and swam away. I felt a presence behind me and turned. There was Amethyst. Glowing. Gorgeous. Radiant.

“You are now with us, Jack.”

The voice belonged to Amethyst. All the screams in my head, all the mystery surrounding her and now here she was. Right in front of me.

“You.”

She cocked her head and smiled.

“Yes. It is I. Your queen.”

I didn't know how to respond to that, so I didn't. When she saw that I wasn't going to answer she continued, "We need you Jack. I need you."

I was still groggy but was beginning to assemble the pieces together.

"Need me for what?"

Amethyst turned to the doctor mermaid who nodded and swam away.

"Jack Remy, there are moments when the chemicals blend just right. Your blood, your strength, your masculinity is a perfect biological match."

"For you?"

She smiled gently. "For me."

Then she turned away and looked out. Even under the water, with thousands of pounds of pressure per square inch Amethyst managed to elicit a single thick golden tear. As it dropped from her eye it dissipated into the surrounded atmosphere. The tear floated in space until she captured it in her hand.

"Drink this."

"What?"

"It is nourishment for you Jack. Trust me."

She placed her hand out and I consumed the golden tear. I didn't feel any effects of consuming it. When I finished the awkward consumption she continued to speak.

"The moon has cycled one-thousand, fifty-seven times. I have ruled my world in that amount of time since the last Lord passed," she said with a hint of sorrow.

"Surely there are some mermen left? Even with all of the sterility problems that you have had?"

“Some, yes, but none that match my body’s blood chemistry. You know very little about our people, Jack. We are private and intimate. I can only mate with those that physically mirror myself.”

“But I’m only... a man.”

Here she reached out her hand and touched my cheek. “My Lord Jack Remy, you are so much more than that. You are more than you are even capable of understanding. Only under the veil of the deep ocean can your true self come to light.”

I fell into her trance for a moment and then pulled away. With a harsher tone I said, “Then why are you flopping up on the shore and allowing human males to have sex with you on the beach?”

She pulled her hand away from me. “Normally our mating occurs on the isle of Bergonia.”

“Bergonia,” I said, twisting my wrists around in the seaweed. “I’ve heard of that place.”

“Human beings unknowingly destroyed it before the war. They had used it as a testing ground for your destructive weapons. The area was bombed out. Decimated.”

“I’m sure the human government didn’t know that it was your mating place. IF we had know...”

“That is inconsequential. Human beings are prone to destruction. They have destroyed the land, the air, even into space. The only place on Earth that humans have not learned to destroy is deep under the water. But I fear that that too may change.”

With her fingernails she grazed my thighs. “We need you. I need you.”

“This Bergonia. What was it exactly?” I asked, aroused at her touch.

“For thousands of years the island was where we came ashore to breed. The animals in that small reef system held a special probiotic that was inherent to our survival. It cannot be artificially created. The islands are dead. As are my people. Unless you help us.”

It was true that humans had obliterated South Berkingshire and decimated the isles of Rouge in an historic war with Canada Prime years ago. I’m not up on my history but I do remember that this was the point when Mermaidians began to turn their backs on any type of alliance with human beings. I can’t blame them. It would explain why they remained neutral during the wars.

She continued, “Now we are forced to copulate on the public shores. It’s a spectacle for your human population, like a game or sporting event or something. This is not our way and it is utterly embarrassing. But we must survive.”

“Your mermen. Surely they...”

She stopped running her fingernails along my legs. “As you know our males are dying out. There are less than one hundred males left on the planet. They are feeble, weak, and honestly not very attractive anymore. And those who have survived do not have the physical or mental endurance to reproduce. They are not you, Jack.

“Isn’t there a way to artificially inseminate...”

She cut me off, “We are an endangered species, Jack Remy. Hundreds of years of leaking Tilogen radiation from your people has done irreparable damage to our race. Our males are all but dead and our females will be soon if you don’t help us.”

“The energy reactors,” I whispered.

“They have leaked into our oceans. Our females are immune to it, but our males are not.”

The gorgeous creature turned away from me and lifted her face to the heavens of the ocean. The purple and yellow and orange colored mists began to move rapidly, swirling around.

“What are those clouds?”

She turned to me. “Those are the souls of the mermaids that you have made love to.”

“I don’t understand...”

“Jack, you are repopulating the species. I implore you to continue to do so. Each soul is unique and is brought back to the water after death. You have made love to thousands of my women. And they want to repay their gratitude.”

“Gratitude?”

Amethyst cocked her head with a playful smile. The fin below her neck began to change colors from silver to blue to red to yellow. “They have gifted upon you... something special.”

I thought about the dreamlike state that I was in when I first woke up. Maybe the dream I had about all of those mermaids pleasuring me wasn’t a dream at all.

“All those mermaids on the beach. You mean they really aren’t... dead?”

She giggled a little, like the college girl that laughed on the shore days ago. “Only the body dies, Jack. Our *sly’trik*, our living spirit survives after the shell is discarded.”

“How long do you live?”

She did not answer me. “Stay with us. Stay with me. And you will become our king, our lord, my concubine. It is the only way for our population to survive. I implore you with every fiber of my being. You’re our only hope.”

This was a flood of information to take in. Only hours earlier I was in my apartment in Portofino chugging beer and now I was what I assumed to be miles underneath the ocean’s surface and a mermaid was telling me that I am the only savior of their race. Hell of a day.

Guilt flooded me in a way that I had not felt before. Guilt on behalf of my race, my humanity. The thought of killing human beings was such an empty thought in my mind at times. I was a soldier. The military’s motto of “kill or be killed” had been ingrained in me since I was seventeen. There were bad people in the world and I didn’t feel so bad about killing them, but these people were innocent. They were simply trying to survive and all of humanity had been slowly destroying them.

There was something else, something deeper. I felt something towards Amethyst that I had not felt in a long time. I hardly knew her, but from the land and under the water and the prosthetic applications to the way that she tilted her head, I knew that I was falling for her.

She looked at me. She felt vulnerable and she carried the collective weight of her species. Her glowing eyes were enormous. They seemed to long for me, to help her, to guide her. My body lay naked, exposed to her touch. I felt that everything I had, my body, my heart, my soul, was hers for the taking if she wanted.

“How long do you need me to be under the water?” I asked simply.

“Jack... you cannot go back to the surface. As long as you carry the gift you will be as alive as you have ever been on the surface.”

“The gift?”

“The gift of immortality.”

She ran her fingers up and down the length of my torso, over my abdomen and down to the base of my joint. It began to slowly swell again. There was something dangerous about her, yet alluring, not only in a sexual way, but also in the way she spoke, the way she smiled, the way that she explained herself. I swallowed and shifted my naked body a little.

I suddenly felt that I was a prisoner. The way that Amethyst was hovering over me made me suspicious. Naked and exposed, spread eagle on the seaweed bower had left me physically vulnerable. The manner in which she had touched my inner thigh with her nails I had felt there might be a small sense of menace in her actions. Then again she was the queen.

She continued, “Your prosthetics will not work in the air, only in the water.”

“What would happen if I returned to the surface?”

“You would die.”

She was silent, still.

“You lured me here. You called out to me.”

“Yes.”

“You summoned me to the top of the cliff and forced me into the water.”

“Yes.” She giggled. This small amount of madness made me erect. She grabbed me at the base of my penis.

I was excited and angry at the same time. “You shouldn’t have done that,” I told her.

“You’re wrong, Jack. So very wrong about that.”

“I could have died.”

She giggled again. “Death is not in our vocabulary.”

With her tiny hands she began to stroke my rod. I was helpless to stop her. My hand and arms were still tied down.

“Do you want me to fuck you, is that it? Like all the others?”

She took her hand away from me. The smile evaporated from her face. And with a voice that was fit for a queen she spoke with regality, “I am not like the others.”

I was pissed. “Aren’t you?”

Her face began to swell and pout while her skin began to fluctuate between gold and silver. With a quick swipe of her hand the bower was enclosed again with the organic plantlike compound. With another swipe of her hand the bower was cast free. We were no longer tethered and the bulbous pod began to drift through the water.

My heart skipped and I wasn’t quite sure what she was going to do. I had riled her up all right and it excited me to no end. She began to slowly pant and I knew that this was going to go one of two ways.

My hands and arms were still restrained but blood and virility began to course roughly through my body. I snapped my arms free of the plant like restraints and grabbed her head and forced her mouth down to the base of my dick.

My ankles were still tethered while she slapped my hands away from her head as she devoured me whole, gasping and gagging on my enormity. I put my hands through her floating hair with gentle passion. She pulled herself off of me and then took her hands and slowly wrapped them around my frame.

Her eyes glowed with intimate affection. Twinkling deep inside of her irises was a longing, and also a bit of vulnerability. I took her face in my hands and kissed her passionately. Her fangs protruded but she did not bite, for if they did I would die. There was nothing hard in the bower to block her venom, except my throbbing cock.

Smiling, she slid down the length of my frame until she was upon my erection again. There, her tongue rolled out of her mouth longer than I had seen any mermaid before. She wrapped the entire girth of my turgid cock with it like a snake curled around a tree branch several times. With her tongue practically tied around my dick she slid up and down my thirteen inches of manhood, along the shaft, all the way to the tip.

Just before I came she pulled her tongue away and hovered above me in the water. With a sinister smile Amethyst floated above me. Her purple little heart was beating beneath her skin and I was solid and as stiff as could be, but something was different. Something softer, something more serene. Through all of the hard sexual feelings, there was a flicker of something deeper, a stronger connection. The bond that was growing,

developing between the two of us, it went both ways. We began to trust each other, began to believe each other's thoughts and feelings. It was the beginning of true affection.

I had managed to pull myself loose from the seaweed around my ankles and now the two of us were floating in inner space, almost dancing. I took her in my arms and gently placed my mouth across her erect nipples that popped through the scales on her chest. She lightly pulled my hair from my scalp, moving my head from one breast to the other. My beautiful creature below the waves moaned with sexual energy.

I gently took my hand and rubbed the area between her leg-fins. The scales that protected her clitoris slowly retracted. I took her delicate membrane in my massive hands and gently rubbed it from side to side. We looked at each other in the eyes, penetrating each other's hearts, minds, bodies.

I was hesitant at first, having never gone down on a mermaid, but Amethyst gently guided my head between her legs-fins and I slowly consumed her beautifully delicate collection of skin and scales. Her breathing quickened while she floated upside down and began to consume my engorged rod. Floating through the water we were pleasuring the most sensitive areas of our bodies with the ripeness of our mouths.

Outside, the organic bubble drifted through inner space, the multitudes of city lights penetrated the shell of our cage like a hover car moving under streetlights. The souls of all the mermaids that I impregnated hovered outside of us, using their energy to move the seaweed cage, protecting the contents of the bower, their queen, and now their king.

I glided myself into my regal partner and slowly entered my lady. We held each other in a loving embrace while I penetrated her slowly. My fleshy extension mined deeper and deeper into the buxom babe. The first seven inches made her cry out and sob with both affection and pain. She whined in the most romantic and obsessive manner then dug her claws into my back, careful not to damage my reconstructed frame. I continued to push into her, inch by inch. With each movement I dug myself deeper and deeper into her tiny body.

I could feel her *batrinic etheikos*, the little delicate mouth, on the tip of my penis. That physical part of her then began to consume me while I was inside of her. The feeling was euphoric and electric both physically and mentally. I pushed into my sea nymph with a final thrust of manhood. She bit into my neck just hard enough that she broke the skin. Traces of my blood floated throughout the bower. Still, we made love.

We gazed deep into each other's eyes. I nearly pulled all the way out of her. My tip hovered near her opening for a moment. She grabbed me, wanting me to thrust inside her tantalizing frame, but I did not. I just held her firm and looked at her desperate mouth that hung open. With her arms still against my backside she attempted to coax me to thrust inside of her again, but I refused.

Her head fell back and that's when I gently slide all the way back inside her, gently kissing the walls of her femininity. I did it again, and again. She moaned a beautiful siren of a song.

The strength, the control, the beauty. I had managed to capture it all down below the surface, and I felt like a god. With a final thrust of Poseidon's pole I had buried all

thirteen inches inside of her. She took quick little breaths in an effort to control the pain of my massive member. We were physically connected and I took her hands in my face and we kissed, hard and long. I grunted with sexual and emotional satisfaction. She sighed with a sensual cooing sound that seemed to stiffen me even more.

Looking me in the face she bit down on her lower lip and through the panting pain she whispered, “Your cock is enormous.”

At this I smiled knowingly and then thrust myself into her again as we locked eyes and she began to cry once again with pleasure.

Our rhythms began to grow faster and harder. I was fucking the saline queen quick and strong. We tumbled in the near weightlessness of the bower, rolling over and over as we fucked. I pressed her up against the green sea anemones that littered the floor of the bower and dug my dick deep inside her. Playfully she slapped me across the face and I did the same to her. She smiled and we kissed. I thrust again and again and again.

Time was elusive. We made love for days, weeks. I couldn’t tell and I didn’t want it ever to end. I would have thought that I would have lost much of my endurance due to the physical state of my body but I felt stronger than ever.

She kept at me. When we slowed down it was intimate, when we sped up it was fast and furious. All the while there was this connection, this feeling towards her that I could not shake. It was a feeling I had not felt in a long time and I wasn’t sure that I would ever experience it again. It felt like a dream within a dream.

What was real was that feeling. A feeling of something I had not felt in a long time. Here, under the water the feeling of pure intimacy was beginning to surface. And I wanted it to last forever.

She glided herself around me and rode my strong frame from the front. My sculpted biceps and strong hands wrapped around her while she looked straight into me once again. I continued to shove my swollen sea sausage into her.

Then the orgasm started. Her moaning had reached a high-pitched scream, but underwater this didn't seem to affect me the same way that it would have on land. Her scales shuddered and brilliant flashes of color stretched across her body while her scales continued to change color from blue to green to orange to red.

The color changes were rapid. Her scales literally seemed to slap against her human skin. Her eyes began to roll back into her head and her breathing became syncopated and for a moment I had thought I had destroyed my lovely mermaid.

It is all a part of how they finish the act of sexuality. With her breath somewhat displaced she was still in control. Amethyst grabbed me by the throat with her mouth open and her eyes rolled back just far enough for me to catch a glimpse of the lower iris.

“Bite me, Jack! FUCKING BITE ME!”

She was getting kinky. Obeying the queen's command I immediately sunk my teeth into her thin delicate neck. Her saline skin tasted sultry and sweet like dark chocolate.

Her entire body writhed and twisted within the bower while we bounced across from one end of the small enclosure to the next. For a moment we separated. Our bodies

lay near motionless. Her eyes rolled back but her fangs still protruded. The moment was not lost.

I swam over to her, grabbed her just hard enough around the throat and I speared my trident of love back into the benthic creature.

She wailed like a werewolf that had just been shot and thrown down a water slide. My queen moaned and screamed, and her fangs protruded further now, further than I had ever seen.

I pulled her head out in order for us to look at each other. For a moment she seemed as if she would bite into my flesh with her incredible incisors but instead she wailed and screamed.

This was enough. She was cuming and she was cuming hard. But there was nothing for her to bite, except myself! And in a split second I had come to the momentous decision that if I should die by her sting, by her fangs, by this creature that I loved, then that, as they say, is that.

But she did not bite me, she threw her head back and continued to wail while she produced an incredible orgasm. Simultaneously with a giant groan that sounded like a Grizzly Bear driving a semi over a cliff, I came inside of her, pumping enormous amounts of my semen into the delicate creature known as Amethyst for what seemed like forever.

My semen flow was always incredibly potent, but on this occasion it must have been at least two cups of juice or more. I continued pumping my liquid into her canal. Her baby door began to squeeze my dick in pulsing sensations. This finished me off. The

flood doors opened and my load was complete. Every last ounce of seed juice had been drained from my body. All of my reserves were exhausted and after nearly three minutes or so of cuming inside her, she floated away while I lay there in a gravity free environment and breathed heavily. I was exhausted.

After the session was complete I took the tiny mermaid and held her in my colossal arms. She curled her head into my biceps and looked up at me. I caressed her face with my hand and she kissed the inside of my damaged wrist and placed it around her head.

While we fell asleep I thought about the wealth, the war, the multitude of choices I had made above the sea that seemed so inconsequential now. The world above no longer mattered. On the surface I was simple, I was insignificant, I was no one. Under the water I had Amethyst and all that came with it, and for once in my life, I was the king.

Chapter Fifteen

Time was fluid here. Under the surface everything moved slower. Not just the near weightlessness of our bodies. It felt like the order of business of the underwater world moved at a relaxed and patient manner.

Looking down the scope of the enormously tall tower I couldn't see the bottom of the sea. Furniture floated and was tied to the corners of the rooms. There were no chairs or desks or tables but everything was flowing. Adorning the walls, carved into the ancient looking stone were several massive portraits of mermen. Some held tridents, others had crowns, some were adorned with their families at their side.

Amethyst had been living alone in the Royal Quarters for decades. It was ornately constructed, much like in the old Victorian style with dark rich colors and heavy ornamentation. The bower was ripe with colorful thick fabric and the lighting was illuminated by some sort of live animal or animals that seemed trapped in a fish-like bowl above the room. The colors of the creatures changed consistently, giving off whatever color of light that they transformed into. I had no idea what kind of beings they were or even how they were feed, but I knew that the lighting system was definitely alive!

Across from the bower was a round chamber of some sort. In the hours that I was resting here I hadn't been able to determine what it was used for, but Amethyst had instructed me that if I was to enter the pod it could kill me. It looked to be completely sealed off with no way to enter it anyhow.

The strength that I had felt when Amethyst and I last made love had left me. In fact I felt weak and feeble. When we arrived at the castle, Amethyst had taken me to this room. And for several hours I waited. The morning turned to afternoon and then to evening. Soon I found myself asleep and awake the next morning without a trace of her.

The door partition slide open. Hoping it was my queen I jumped to my feet as fast as the liquid world would allow me. But it was not Amethyst. A mermaid looking to be around Amethyst's age carried a tray of food. Without muttering a word she placed the tray on the bower.

Looking down I saw a bowl of syrupy sustenance. I couldn't determine what it was.

"Thank you," I uttered.

But other than a smile, she said nothing. The curves of her body spoke more than words as she wiggled out of the room with an enormous smile, her pearl white teeth glimmering.

The entire day was spent inside the quarters without any other visitors. I began to grow restless. In the corner was a pod with some electronic stuff hooked up to it with an organic tube. I hadn't a clue what that was. I figured out how to work the communication center where I watch holographic recreations of Mermadia history. Much like a child I stumbled over the history of the species and its place under the water. I learned about their politics and social structure. For instance it was made clear to me that Mermen leave their mates after the sixth year in order for them to perpetuate the species. I also learned that females are able to have over a million children at once, but many mermaids are only able to produce a hundred or so eggs due to the industrial factors that have changed over the years from human run off.

It was lonely in the room all by myself and I was becoming increasingly bored. I tried to exit the room but the force fields were in place. The only person I saw each day was my food servant, who never spoke.

Going to sleep that evening, I felt more and more like a prisoner. The next morning when I awoke, the mermaid servant was already in the room, staring at me. Her fangs were protruding just a little, enough to make me jump.

"Lord Remy, your breakfast." She smiled and took her hand and gently caressed my arm. She floated above me, staring me in the eyes. I reached out to touch her hand. It felt warm and sensual.

“I’ve never been touched by a male before,” she said.

“Not even a member of your own race?” I asked groggily.

“No one. You will be the first. You are the lord of the sea, and will be the lord of my body as well.”

Heavier breaths emanated from her delicate little mouth. She smiled and then swayed in the water above me like a cheap stripper around her money pole. I took the concentrated bowl of breakfast and let it cascade to the floor. Perhaps if I made love to her she would help me to leave the room.

I was hungry. I reached out to the sensual babe. Her nipples were already erect. With both hands I reached out with the tips of my fingers and gently rubbed them.

Her mouth opened while her head swayed from side to side, never taking her eyes off me. I rose up from my bower. I hadn’t yet achieved the graceful maneuvering of the inhabitants of my underwater beauties but I was beginning to move more and more easily through the water after watching holographic films about physiognomic dynamics.

I pushed myself up towards her and gently kissed her delicate little rose bud breasts. Her nipples firmed up even more. With one hand I rubbed the left nipple and delicately sucked the other. Her hand reached down between my legs and she wrapped her little fingers around the base of my swollen member. She began to slowly stroke my stilted cock. Pulling my hands through her hair, I pulled at the scalp ever so firmly. Her head pulled back and the eyes of the creature fell backwards. Her second and third lids closed. I was about to kiss her mouth.

“All in good time, Delany.”

Upon hearing Amethyst's voice, my servant Delany released her dick hold, pulled back, and swam off to my side.

"My queen," she hushed as apologetically as possible. "Forgive me."

"You'll have your turn soon, my cousin. When the water-mark is high and your eggs are ready then you shall make love with the king. He is mine to share but only on my authority. Remember that."

The richer, robust tone in her voice was completely authoritative, with a slice of menace in the message as well. Delany nodded and then swam straight up to the small opening on the ceiling and quickly out of the cavernous room.

"You like her?"

"She's okay."

There was a small silence.

"Jack, how do you feel?"

I was a little peeved. "Why have you kept me prisoner in here?"

She smiled again, "You are never a prisoner. I thought that this might allow you to recuperate. After intercourse Mermadians require at least seventy-hours of rest. Do humans?"

"No." I paused, unsure of whether she was being sincere or not. "Where am I?"

"You are in the Great Hall. This area was once the room for where we received diplomatic envoys."

"I was reading up on your history. You mean magma creatures and other water borne societies?"

“You’ve been studying up on us, Jack. Impressive.” She stopped and swam around the room. “But now...”

I sat up and dog paddled off the bed until my feet landed on the cold stone flooring. “What is this area now?”

“Now, it a relic of the past. A reminder of our near extinction.”

“Why are there so many bowers?”

Amethyst smiled and giggled once again like that college girl that I had first met on shore weeks ago. She took my hand and kissed it and then slowly led me to the main doorway.

“Follow me,” she said.

We walked to the main entrance area. She swiped her hand over an area on the wall and the force field evaporated.

We entered a long corridor. From the the ceiling there appeared to be several hundred long thin strands of live jellyfish tentacles that moved and swayed in the water. They bristled with bioluminescence. I couldn’t make out what the tentacles were used for. She gently brushed them aside. The corridor was surprisingly bright and we glided down the hallway for some time without speaking a word between us.

Half-walking and half-jumping through the water, I was attempting to keep up with the queen. She turned back to me and giggled. And with a playful energy she jerked my hand and she began to swim. She pulled me through the water with no effort at all. Her strength surprised me since I was able to physically handle her so well both on land.

When we had reached the end of the hall there was a massive scallop shell. From the other side of the shell there was a sound, voices I thought, but wasn't sure. It sounded like a buzzing like a rock concert.

"Are you ready, my Lord?"

I nodded but wasn't sure what she was talking about.

"Close your eyes," Amethyst said.

She hovered her hand over a side panel and the scallop door retracted upwards.

I did as I was instructed. We had stopped moving and my feet curled against the edges of stone.

"Now stay here. Careful now."

I stood at attention.

"Jack, they're going to love this. They have to."

"Where are we?"

With my eyes closed I heard the queen take a deep breath and let it out.

"At the edge of the world. Okay, are you ready?"

"That depends. Amethyst, what is all this?"

"You'll find out soon enough. You'll see. Now... take a deep breath and open your eyes."

I took a deep underwater breath and opened my eyes.

There before me was a cavernous garden of unbelievable color and imagination. The strangest and most unique plant life I had ever seen filled the entire cave. A waterfall

made out of sand flowed from a precipice high above. The natural rock enclosure was stunning because there seemed to be life in every corner. It was like an underwater arboretum. Even on land in some of the most densely populated tropical jungles on Earth I had never seen so much richness of life. Some sort of organic solar panels illuminated the entire cavern.

I could only see sections of the top of the cave due to the undergrowth that adorned the top part of the cave. Gigantic fruit blossoms clung to the twisted vines that plastered the roof. Brilliant orange and red colored flowers the size of skyscrapers adorned the vines and off of these flowers tiny creatures seemed to be sucking some sort of nectar. Much like bees above ground, the animals scurried from one flower to the next.

Off in the distance, giant trees that looked like palms leaked something from the tips of their fronds. The substance was gooey and golden and looked rich like honey. Thousands of the various marine animals seemed to be hovering underneath waiting for the nectar to drop off and dissipate in the water before they consumed it. They looked like mermaid children, playing under the fronds.

The cave extended outwards below us and looked to be miles long. Huge cloud-like mists of tiny creatures came swimming towards us in schools. The whole place looked like heaven. I was not a religious man but it looked like someplace that Adam and Eve might have appeared from.

Amethyst took my hand and hovered in front of my view. She kissed me gently on the lips.

Several giant hives of some sort dangled from the ceiling of the cave and were slowly lowered in front of me, perhaps twenty feet or so. The walls were transparent and there were millions of little creatures swimming about inside. In a hushed whisper I asked the tiny little queen, “What are those creatures?”

She smiled. Her eyes glowed with a calm resolve.

“Those creatures... are your children.”

She took my hand.

“Welcome to your kingdom, my Lord. Welcome to Calypso Deep.”

Chapter Sixteen

Ferrieria’s shoes squeaked against the black and white mosaic tile. Twisting his hands he paced back and forth next to the massive tower window to the office that looked out over the Piazza Guglielmo in the heart of Rome. The woman who had fired the Tazliner stun gun weeks earlier sat on the black leather couch while they watched the stock exchange on the monitor.

“This is killing us,” Ferrieria said. “Stock has already dropped twelve percent. The S trader chips are out of control. We’re in free fall here.”

“It’ll come back up,” she said.

“What are results of the tests?” he asked impatiently. He pulled up a holographic email and enlarged the image to half the size of the room. They both scanned the document.

Time Stamp: 4:34pm

Recipient: Kevin Ferrieria <KFerrieria2@FirstSymptoms.GoogleVenus.Blue-marble.sys.

From: LABCORPIVV293@FirstSymptoms.Google.Venus.RingPlanetmoon.sys.

Results of FGH-LCAP request below,

All corresponding blood types are near matches. Chromium shell supplicant offers negative ionic control over new eggs. Negative proliferation rate. <57.6 grams per square inch.

All blood palates are malleable. Non-corrosive. Transferability – range of .4%-2.1%

Skipjack Defense Systems Results

Reproduction of genome is negative below one-fourth corrosion. Possible coagulate verification. Non-Remon. 11.5 trioxide rate BELOW 57<

Stimulation of Legarc Meter is negative.

Cloning quad is off. Cloning transport is negative <.45 in range of .2-2.4

KettleCorp Laboratory Kronos Station
3777 Toggle Pirse Rd, Orwellian, Atlas Moon
Comm link:+33 9473 333392-8449 43
Area 6 – Quadrant H-44
Secure Benton Tube- Carbonite Phase II Dilution



Click here to Reply, Reply to all, Stellarfie, or Forward

2.11 KMB (2%) of 2 SNB used

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Last account activity: 12 minutes ago

“The eggs are C grade. The cloning quad is practically non-existent. And we don’t even know if we can extract the blood until the creatures are at least a certain age. This entire process is turning sour,” he said.

“Calm yourself.”

“Those aren’t her eggs.”

She swiped the holographic image away and the room was once again filled with light.

“Those are the eggs that were in his bathtub when we went back,” she said.

“Maybe. But those are not the eggs of Amethyst. I know this creature. I’ve studied her for years. This Remy fellow is the only one that can produce those eggs.”

“We didn’t force him off that cliff, Kevin.”

“No, but you forced him into a corner where he had no options.”

Cynthia Soltanos stood up and smoothed out her business suit. Without smiling she walked over to the mini bar and took out two tumblers and then poured a pair of whiskies, neat. She shot the first one and left the second one on the counter.

The chime rung softly through the sound system. The female Officewear spoke, “Incoming message from Dewey Chevalier. Shall you answer the call?”

Fererria glanced at Cynthia. She didn’t say anything.

The Officewear waited and then spoke again. “Shall you answer the call?”

He was trepidations but tried not to show it. After a moment he barked to the computer, “Pipe it down.”

The Officewear computer spoke, “Dewey Chavalier calling from Istanbul, New Drigonia.”

A complete readout of his professional and personal history appeared next to the live holographic feed of a man tying his shoes in an outdoor coffee shop. When he was finished with his laces his head popped up and he smiled at Cynthia and Kevin.

The man was about thirty-five to forty with strong cheek bones and sharp jagged looking teeth. He was good looking in a boyish manner with thin cut eyebrows, dark brown hair and deep set brown eyes with the exception of his pointy teeth.

“Hope we are not disturbing the vacation, Mr. Chevalier.”

The CEO smiled. “Not at all, not at all. I was just checking in about our little situation. How are things progressing?”

Ferrieria swallowed and looked to Cynthia, who didn’t turn her head but continued to stare at the holographic image. She picked up the second whisky and took a sip. Kevin wanted her to say something, but she didn’t.

Finally he spoke, “Fine, Mr. Chevalier. Things are progressing slower than expected but we are still on track with our time line.”

“Good. Mind the R Reactor stocks. The rest I don’t care about. I have some work to do on those Tenescran insulin injectors so I’m here for now with this working vacation, but should be returning home next Tuesday. We should have this wrapped up by then, correct?”

Ferrieria squinted a little, “We’ll have it under lock and key, sir.”

“Good!” He smiled cheerfully. A boy around eight or so ran into view. He picked up his son and put him on his lap.

“That’s good to hear. I’d hate to go to Garrison Mode. None of us wants that,” Chevalier said. He turned to his son. “We wouldn’t want to fire Mr. Ferrieria, would we, Thomas?” The child nodded his head and then he gave his son a kiss on the cheek.

Ferrieria looked pained as he said, “We’ll take care of it, sir.”

Through the projector Cynthia made eye contact with Dewey Chevalier. His face grew a knowing smile. She smiled back. “That’s all for now. I hope to hear good news from you very soon, Kevin.”

“Yes sir,” he said.

Another one of Chevalier’s children came into view. She was about six or seven with sandy blond hair and called out to him to pick her up as well. He did so. With both kids in his arms and his wife playing in the sand behind him the CEO slanted his eyes and looked directly into the image finder.

“Cynthia,” Chevalier said in a low voice.

“Mr. Chevalier.”

“If you need Meledrone, use it.”

“Yes sir.”

He tossed his daughter up in the air while they both laughed. The holographic image snapped off and the lights automatically rose back to work level.

Kevin Fererria scratched his cheek. “We are taking a hit here.”

He pounded the back of the chair. “Dammit! Those eggs have to be around here somewhere. Remy was on that beach. We know that.” He took a breathe and spread both of his hands flat on the desk in an attempt to control his frustration.

“Maybe we should review the hummingfeed footage,” Cynthia said.

“It’s too dark. Even with infrared. All we saw was movment. But he spent considerable time with her. We know that.”

“Kevin, we don’t even know if he fucked her.”

“Why the hell would he be down there then?”

She looked him up and down, “You tell me. You’re the expert on this... Amethyst creature.”

He smiled and crossed over to her. Taking the half full glass of whisky from her he downed the rest then moved away.

“Jack Remy was a Type VI Commando Sniper. He was precise and somewhat calculating. What he lacks upstairs he makes up on the streets. That’s why you lost him.”

Cynthia’s gritted her teeth. “We didn’t lose him. He jumped.”

“And the body?”

“Still no trace. But with that massive undercurrent it’s unlikely he survived.”

Fererria whipped around. “But it’s possible.”

They stared at each other. A moment of silence. “It’s possible.” Cynthia relented.

Fererria stuck his hands in the pockets of his \$1500 pair of slacks. He opened his mouth as if to speak but said nothing.

“We checked BOMBDD’s delivery schedule. They hadn’t been to his home for nearly a week.”

“So Remy’s got to be hiding those eggs someplace. And he didn’t have any of them on his person when we went off that cliff.”

“Not to our knowledge.”

Fererria stroked his chin and hit the Identifier. A holographic image of Marcus appeared, complete with his entire employment history and family genealogy. “What did Bendmeyer say?” He picked at his front buck teeth with his long pinky finger nail.

Cynthia stood up. “He provided enough information for now. He doesn’t need to know anything else. You should speak with him again.”

“That would be unwise. I shouldn’t have revealed myself to him at all.”

“Perhaps, but you’re the connection. That’s why we’re moving forward with this deal, isn’t it? You convinced Dewey this was a doable situation.”

“I made a proposal. He accepted. It is business.”

“I love it when you talk business,” she purred.

“Marcus’ people have a tracking dart on this Amethyst creature, don’t they?”

“He wouldn’t say.”

“He wouldn’t say or he *couldn’t* say?”

She turned to look out over the window. “BOMBDD tracks the creatures but there is a limit. When they dive beneath two-thousand leagues or so we lose the signal.”

“So the creatures dive deep. We’ll find them.”

“They could be anywhere on the planet, Kevin. They live in the ocean. There are thousands of underwater environments and caverns. The Mariana’s, Tonga’s, Kermadec, any of those trenches. There’s no way of telling.”

Kevin Fererria turned and looked out the window at the people hustling to and fro. “The creatures live deep underwater. They need nutrients from oxygen. And that oxygen must be able to reach the benthic regions or else their food supply will perish.”

“How do you know that?”

He shrugged his shoulders. “Just a hunch.”

“We have some eggs. Let’s just package and market them as the real deal.”

“Come on, Cynthia, you’re smarter than that. We promised millions of grade A to our board, our investors. We get a report back from the lab telling us that all of the C grades that we did recover had minimal life spans. The genome in those eggs split in half when they hit the air, meaning that every one of those eggs are docile creatures. The lab even said they may not even survive puberty. That’s when we extract the blood. Worst of all they can’t reproduce, so there is no way to raise them even if they do survive.”

“We’ll find a way,” she said calmly once again.

“I don’t know. What I do know is that the board is pissed as Knossos and they are not used to being disappointed. This will be not only my ass but yours as well if we cannot harvest that blood.”

“What about diluting the C grade blood with horseshoe crabs or sea lions or some other animal? Find a coagulate species. We’ve done it in the past,” she said.

“The FDTA has already fined us three times for improper coagulate manipulation. We do that again, they shut us down. I made a promise. Those eggs are paramount to the success of this project.”

Cynthia sidled up to the balding executive twelve years her senior. “Don’t worry, we’ll find them. It might take a while but we’ll find them. I sent O’Carlton and Donnelly back to BOMBDD and Chovick is all over the cove.” With her hand she stroked his thinning hair and began to loosen his tie.

She swiped her hand over a sensor pad and the autocurtain blackened out the windows to the hallway. It was midday and the heat was burning the black leather power chair behind the desk. She gently lowered him into it and unbuttoned her dress shirt. He

fumbled with the back of her brassiere then took the front of it and pushed it forward away from her chest, snapping it off. With his long boney fingers he cupped her cream whipped breasts and licked her bubble gum areolas. The sun was hot against her face and she began to sweat. She grabbed his suspenders and snapped them off, removing his over priced slacks.

“If there was a way to manipulate the riboflavin count of the...” Fererria said, his mind still on the real business at hand.

“Shut up,” she said, his middle aged dick already half in her mouth.

“Cynthia...”

She stroked his inner thigh. That was their signal for him to push himself into her mouth. He jammed inside of her a few times. It didn’t take long. He came in less than a minute. She swallowed his cum and dressed herself sans the disposable bra, which she threw into the incinerator. He sat in the chair, half naked, panting like an old water buffalo, wheezing through his nose.

She stood up, tapped the sensor for the climate control module, and poured herself a glass of pure Olfater Water. Cool air began to circulate down into the room.

“Now... get dressed and down to work.”

He pulled up his pants and fixed his suspenders. Still wheezing from physical exertion he sat down in the power chair and tilted his head back in order to catch his breath. The leather stuck to the pale white skin along his arms and the back of his neck.

She walked herself to the door that led out to the main hallway. It slid open. The hallways were filled with employees and activity. There was a clear picture into the office of what just happened. No one stopped to look though.

Cynthia paused in the doorway. “And get the fuck out of my office.”

Chapter Seventeen

Amethyst took my hand and we jumped off the edge of the cliff that we were standing on. Of course we simply drifted through the water.

While we ascended towards the middle of the cavern, clouds of creatures floated past us. I smiled.

Swimming through the tiny mermaids we headed towards a majestic temple-like structure down on the valley of the cavern. Brittle Stars perhaps twelve feet across moved lazily up and down the walls of the palatial estate. Squid like creatures circled the compound, almost like guards. Their eyes glowed red and their tentacles squished through the water while they criss-crossed each other's paths.

An enormous floral bed of sea lettuce encircled the structure. A veritable garden of parochial colors grew in and around the castle. Towering sea anemones of phosphorescent hues illuminated brightly. Flowering buds of some underwater type glowed and shimmied through the water, nearly blinding me as I ascended deeper and deeper.

“What do you mean these are my children? The eggs are on the surface.”

“The eggs are, yes, but our living spirits are released immediately after intercourse.”

“What do you mean,” I inquired. “Are you saying that the eggs are empty?”

“In a sense. The eggs are filled with bio-fluid and small mermaids will hatch, but they will carry no soul. These creatures here, Jack, these mermaids are your offspring. Special sweat ducts were released into the sand and carried back into the water after sex on the shore. The true, immortal creatures that you helped to harvest are all here.”

“Then these are all the animals that the men had sex with on all the various beaches?”

“No, these children are only yours. This is why you were chosen. Your DNA is the only human match that we have found for pure reproductive qualities. These tiny beings are your offspring and yours alone, my king.”

“And where are we? What is this place?”

“This cavern, this is the genesis of our people. This microscopic environment is where we come from. All of Mermaidia was hatched here. This natural wonder is where life sprang forth for us. Eons ago, we were peaceful and enjoyments were plentiful. We never ventured to the surface for we did not know it existed. And then your people began to trouble us and for thousands of years we were incubated and made a difficult decision to stay mostly within the realm of Calypso Deep.

“Calypso Deep?”

In our language it is pronounced *Gyronos'tyh Hortara* but in your language it is translated as Calypso Deep. Millions of years ago, here within the deepest section of the Mediterranean Sea, my people have built The Tethys Cave and Sea Foam Towers.”

“Who is it that lives in these Sea Foam Towers?”

“The gods once resided here.”

“Gods?”

“We sprang from a multitude of gods. The god of the swim. The goddess of the hunt. The god of the fresh water springs. The god of the land. They all resided here in this castle. Much like your pyramids of New Mesopotamia, or Old Egypt, or even the ancient deities of your Aztec culture. These are temples reserved only for the elite.”

“So, who resides there now?”

She winked and licked her lips. “You do.”

Amethyst spun her flukes around and paddled hard down to the tower, leaving me in a state of curiosity. I watched her move through the water with perfect precision. Her strong torso had developed excellent abdomen muscles that flowed down into her scaly lower portion.

I followed as best I could. She reached a outcropping of rock near the entrance. She turned and continued to swim downward towards the castle.

With wonder I swam as hard as I could to keep pace with Amethyst. I was clumsy and awkward swimming through the water, although I held no buoyancy. If I held my breath I did not float to the surface, my body simply floated still in the water. I managed to keep pace with her, although she turned back to check on me several times.

The squid-like animals that appeared to guard The Sea Foam Towers parted when we neared the entrance. We stopped on a drawbridge of some sort in front of the castle.

Far off down the side of the structure there was only darkness and twinkling of lights of some sort. I couldn't see how far down the moat extended but there looked to be some sort of flames or something way down there.

The entrance of the castle was enormous, adorned with glittering jewels that gave off a type of illumination that extended into the main courtyard. Amethyst and myself were greeted by a massive creature that looked like a cross between a lobster and a giraffe. His shiny red shell was encrusted with medallions and he wore a type of hat. Beady crustacean eyes tracked my movements. Amethyst spoke.

“Good afternoon, Retriani,” Amethyst said.

“Good afternoon, my queen. What services can I provide you with tonight?”

Up to this point I had never heard a male voice of any kind in the underwater kingdom. His voice seemed to reverberate. He looked at me with utter suspicion.

Amethyst smiled and turned back to me as if she had never seen him before, like we were on vacation and we had just met a colorful local. Even on land her attitude and likeness seemed divided. On one hand she was this wide-eyed girl and on the other hand she seemed to be able to wear a regal veneer without any issues. I would often wonder, which one of these two differing personalities was the real Amethyst, and was I ever going to find out?

I was hypnotized by the aurora of colorful spiny sea urchins that lined the walls of the structure. Jellyfish with bulbous pink heads and white dots the size of T-77 Heliicopters floated through the water. I kept my distance, not sure if I was impervious

to their stings or not. More of the bright green sea grass blanketed most of the floor. The entire courtyard looked like a garden of some sort, but teeming with life.

Two animals that resembled Nautilus Chambers stood guard across one of the doorways just past the entrance where we stood. While Amethyst spoke with Retriani I innocently floated near this doorway. There was a type of force field that stood out several meters from this door.

There was something worth defending in there I felt but I hadn't the faintest clue as to what it was. I drifted towards the door, but Amethyst lightly pulled at my arm.

"What's in there?" I asked.

"That chamber holds our most sacred scribes about the history of our people. Many millions of years ago the founders learned a type of cuneiform and using tools they documented the history of who we are and where we came from. One day I will show it to you. But now, know we are safe from the outside."

"What part of the outside do you fear?"

"Human beings," she said.

Retriani looked at me through cold eyes. His vibrissae twittered while he stared me down. He didn't like me.

She then pulled on my arm and we drifted down a main corridor. I looked back while we descended the rotunda. Retriani took a couple of steps towards me with his multiple legs and gave me a last stare.

While we glided deeper into the bowels of the Tethys Towers she continued. "Your people have forced us to retreat, back to the only world that we know. Where once

we roamed the entire planet we are now dying. With the beginning of your industrial revolution the oceans became warmer, forcing us to retreat back to our home, our origin.”

“Why didn’t you ask for our help?”

“We did. In many ways, but your people, all of your land governments spurned us, some even hunted us for prize sports. You know that.”

I nodded.

“And so for the last few hundred of your years we have remained here, in the depths where our life began. The only true, sacred environment, free from war, free from politics, free from the pollution that mankind has created above the water.”

“How did BOMBDD contact you?”

“They didn’t. We contacted them.”

“How,” I asked.

“We have our ways.”

“Telepathy,” I said.

“That is one of our ways. We needed help. And as hard as it was to ask for it, we needed to, or else we would perish.”

“Telepathy is how you communicated with me, isn’t it?”

“Yes,” Amethyst said. “But it only travels one way. Thoughts can be projected onto the surface. We are able to communicate with varying individuals that have special Telchotic fibers. Many of your people are born with this insight but have never used it or even aware of its existence when they were here.”

“When they were here?”

“Yes, Jack. Don’t you know?”

“Know what?”

She stopped and looked at me. “Both human beings and the faeries evolved from our race, from Mermaidia.”

Human beings came from the same evolutionary chain as Mermaidia? Could this be true?

“Come, I will show you more.” I stewed on this for a moment. We continued to glide down the corridors into several antechambers. I pulled on her arm a little to stop her.

“Amethyst, that cannot be true. Science tells us that the land, air and water terrans evolved separated.”

“No. All sentient Terrans sprang from here. From this cave. From this environment. When the Earth began to dry, some of our people moved onto land and stayed there. They evolved into your people. Later the fairies took flight from the land.”

It would have made more sense, that’s for sure. How the Faerias, the Mermaidias, and Sapians all evolved independently was incredible to me. I’m no scientist, so I believed what she had said, to a point. As an old soldier does, I managed to keep just enough room for doubt in case I needed it later.

We approached the entrance of some area that had a sort of artificial sound. It was like the pumping of massive engines.

“What’s in there?”

She looked inside. “A generator.”

“What does it generate?”

I took a step towards it, accidentally setting off the force field alarm. It shocked me and threw me back against the wall with a mighty force. The piercing sound of the alarm was magnified through the water.

Two Nautilus Chamber guards came out of nowhere and immediately extended their tentacles and wrapped me up. I couldn't budge. One of the tentacles slid around my face, blinding me. I wiggled my arms free, but my legs were still tethered to the security guards.

Amethyst cried out, “Jack, stop!”

My adrenaline kept pumping and I didn't stop. I managed to kick one of the creatures on their shells, while the other animal released some sort of toxin.

Amethyst and Retriani swam up above the cloud of poison. I continued to struggle until the effects of the sleeping gas knocked me out. While I lost consciousness I could see Amethyst continuing to call my name, but not in the way that she had done before. Her words did not come from a place of love or yearning but more like a stranger, or shall I say that it felt like an owner talking down to its pet. Perhaps the effects of the gas were affecting my judgment and I couldn't quite be clear about this, but there was a side of her that I had never seen.

What was clear was that there was something behind that doorway that the people of this underworld guarded very closely. Something special, something that all of Mermaidia was willing to guard with their lives.

My old soldier instincts started to come around once again. I had been lulled into the sense of sexual and intimate escapism down here. On the surface, I thrived on those gut feelings and quick judgments. This palace, this castle held some sort of secret, that was for sure.

I turned and looked at the queen. Her eyes were somewhat smaller, more beady, and black. She did not smile but simply looked dead into me while her tail wagged back and forth. She was defensive, that was for certain, but of what I could not be certain.

While half conscious from the toxin I felt four pairs of claws wrap around my body. Retriani then took hold of me himself and slammed me against his exoskeleton.

Amethyst cried out, “Wait! No!”

Before I could react the sentinel creature swam with me upwards. Using his muscular abdomen muscles the being began to shoot straight up past the decorated cave of wonderful sights and up through a tiny passageway through the roof of the cave. I hadn’t seen the entranceway when Amethyst and I descended from the precipice of the initial housing unit I was kept in. It was dark in the stone tube and he said nothing but held my entire body so my arms and legs were pressed together.

We cleared the stone and we were in open water. Retriani then huffed and puffed. The speed increased dramatically and I could feel his body pulsate as he pulled me up, up, up towards the surface!

Even with my new aqualungs I had difficulty breathing. Seawater was gushing into my cybernetic body at an accelerated rate. I wasn’t quite drowning but I couldn’t speak as I focused on simply attempting to breathe.

The higher and faster we ascended the more light-headed I became. I knew that I would get decompression sickness if we didn't slow our pace. I tried to signify this to my multi-legged captor by struggling but he continued to glide towards the upper light.

Something was happening to my body. As the density of the water decreased I found it harder and more difficult to breathe. Whatever it was that the Mermaidia culture had done, however they had assimilated my body to the ocean depths, did not work well near the surface. My blood began to boil as air pockets formed in my veins. My eyes felt as if they were about to explode while my skin began to tear and stretch. My heart, liver, kidneys, all of my organs were expanding, exploding.

The closer to the surface we got the more I began to see the moments of my life tick away at a rapid pace. Each second of time was a moment of fire for me. My mother's smile. School kids bullying me. My father abandoning us. And then Stephania, my ex-wife. Her face was so clear to me, so pure, full of honesty and beauty. Even though my body was blowing apart my memories of her became more vivid and almost real as if I was nearly there with her in death.

#

Stephania slid into my arms. I unwrapped her billowy silk wrap. She touched my face then moved her mouth to the scar behind my neck. Blowing lightly on the open sore I closed my eyes while she maneuvered around my head and lightly touched my right eyelid with her plump lips. She smelled of lavender and raspberries. Smooth, delicate kisses continued to trickled down my face until I could taste her breath on my tongue.

The white sand was so fine that it enveloped the two of us on the shore, pulling us towards the Earth. The aquamarine water was hot and inviting. It lapped against our ankles while the sun-soaked sky teemed with brilliant shades of blue.

I created an imprint in the sand while my wife kissed my neck and my pectorals. The salty air penetrated my skin with a richness of life that I hadn't known in so many years.

A smile stretched across my sunburnt face. My grin was wide and real. I took my wife of six years in my arms. I was strong enough to hold her above my frame and slowly lowered her onto my body. She twisted and contorted herself in and around my thighs, wrapped her hands around my backside, digging through the soft sand that seemed to exfoliate our skin. She kissed my neck. Taking her delicate head in my hands I stared into her brilliant green eyes and gently kissed her mouth. I rolled over and on top of her. She cooed and clawed at me. At first her hands grabbed my chest then moved to my abdomen area where she gently trailed her fingers across my stomach. Sliding off of me she took my cock in her hand and lovingly grabbed my Cyclops with both hands. Stroking me up and down a few times she then bent over and kissed my tip before another gentle wave rolled in.

My erection stood tall as a yardarm and I was ready to set sail. The wave receded and I rolled to my side and slid my hands down between her luscious, long, saturated legs. I was about to turn my wife over in my arms when the flashback went black.

Chapter Eighteen

Aqua tubes filled with purplish matter bubbled at the top of the ditropot. Dressed in a chemsuit, Kevin Fererria looked over the main laboratory of Rare Biotic Exports. A cast of twenty scientists milled about checking sensors and decontamination levels.

The lead scientist, Renlo Norris, placed two-cyber tubes of synthetic material together. The violet hue of the glowing liquid that mixed with the grey organic matter made the experiment look like a small mountain top. The C-100 Laboratory Droid chirped.

“Doctor Norris, we are now steady at 758 degrees Calvin. Santurni Simulation now in progress.”

“Thank you Melvin.”

Fererria watched the overweight, socially awkward scientist chat with his Lab Droid as if he was his best friend. He very well might have been.

“Marvin, how many microtones per second is the revolution?”

“657,988.”

“We need to push that to one point three million.”

“Not advisable, Sir.”

“We must.”

“Without additive LK-875-M we cannot achieve maximum balance.”

The whirling sound of the mixing computer reached a critical point. Blue sensor lights began to flash in rapid succession.

“Move the mixture to seventy-seven degrees and add a tenth of an ounce of Meledrone C.”

“Doctor Norris, this is not advisable.”

“Just do it. If we reach within five points of unbalance, shut it down.”

“Acknowledged.”

The mixing computer combined the elements as Renlo Norris had requested. With Fererria over his shoulder, the two monitored the slatboard schematics while simultaneously they watched the live progress through a Tritanium pressure chamber. The experiment was happening outside of the chamber. Most often the technician is *outside* manipulating the results that are occurring *inside* the contained chamber, but this was very special research. The rest of the tech lab manned the consoles behind the sensor monitoring units.

From within the chamber pod a large red and yellow rock began to grow very rapidly. It twinkled with an iridescent glow as the “volcano” began to stretch and grow, crystalizing as it moved upwards towards the ceiling. It was approximately two to three feet tall, rapidly growing out of the dish.

“Marvin, reduce the Delemetrium content and slowly move the injection to every six seconds.”

Marvin chirped with a sign of acknowledgment.

Immediately the computer hummed in a lower resonance as the mound of minerals began to grow even larger. It began to knock down items in the laboratory.

“Sir, shall I shut the experiment down?”

“No! Add five hundred Gert’ii stimulators. Now!”

From across the hydrospanner bay a young lab tech named Diro shouted over the intercom, “Doctor, we cannot confirm containment.”

“Acknowledged. Continue with the operation.”

A hissing sound filled the lab. Within a fraction of a second the mound of rock grew to a height of around eleven or twelve feet. A sparkling glow emanated from behind the transparent crystals of the small mountain that was forming in the laboratory. Red, orange, blue, green. They were all the colors of a mermaid’s physiognomy. The experiment continued to grow to over twenty feet tall, bumping up against the ceiling.

“Simulation complete, Sir,” Marvin announced.

“Good, now, I want to...”

A massive series of warning sounds chimed at once. The mountainous blob began to bubble in and out as the colors reeled off like a rainbow. A low rumbling filled the intercom system.

“Shall I shut the experiment down, sir?” asked Diro.

“No, dilute the tissue component to point seven.”

“Sir, containment is not secure,” the nervous lab tech said.

“It has to form a construct. Marvin, dilute the tissue component to point seven.”

“Acknowledged,” the computer said.

Another series of warning signs.

Doctor Norris pressed a series of tiny buttons from inside the hyperbolic chamber.

“Configuring the angle.”

Amid the emergency noises and the whirling of sounds, Norris punched a series of buttons and did some mad mixing on the computer.

“What’s happening?” Fererria asked.

“The material is still malleable. It’s not holding,” Norris said.

“What is it that you need to ensure stability?” Fererria asked again.

“A more stable composite figure. Excuse me, sir.”

The mound of material transformed into a gelatinous looking heap. It looked about ready to collapse.

Norris boosted the Clomdit aluminum shell of the structure from his c-pad station. With his hand on the sensor probe, Norris spoke to Milton. “Stand by for configuration projector. Move four-hundred Wilton Nods to sections 7B, 91F and...”

The wall exploded, sending the colored gelatinous experiment across every corner of the laboratory including the window that Fererria and Norris were looking out from. The alarm bells were now silent and the blinking lights from within the hyperbolic chamber were dark.

“I’m sorry, sir,” the droid said in a sympathetic computerized voice.

“It’s not your fault, Marvin.”

The main lab door opened with an automatic hiss. All the labs techs hustled into the area, taking final configurations. Some of them started to clean up the mess.

“You got the thing to stage three at least,” Diro said.

Kevin took off his facemask and spoke directly to Norris. “I can’t do anything with level three. I need this experiment to be complete. We’ve already got clearance to start this thing. Now I need to finish it.”

Kenlo pressed a large green button that opened the hyperbolic chamber up to the open air directly above them. A panoramic skyscape of the Italian Alps opened up. Mont Blanc towered off in the distance. Over thousands of years, the tectonic plates had shifted giant masses of land around the globe, but the mountains of Northern Italy had remained perfectly pristine. The cool November air flooded the laboratory sending a chill down Fererria’s spine.

Kevin looked up into the open air. “You said it was possible to control the negative proton mater. That’s how Chevalier pitched it to the board, remember?”

“I said it was a *possibility*. I never said that we could do it. He told the board that before we even began testing. I warned him not to.”

“Doctor Norris. Kenlo, we need this. If this project doesn’t come to together then we may be sunk and I’m not just talking about our jobs, I’m talking about the organization. Now, I know that’s a shitty thing to say, but this entire company may be resting on your shoulders.”

Doctor Norris turned to his superior. “Sir, using Meledrone is an unstable element. If you give me ten months I know that we can use Balriunium 4. With that stable a compound the microfactors will hold all of the soil elements together and leave those air pockets for the eggs. We’ll be able to harvest whatever you want.”

“I don’t have ten months,” Fererria echoed in Norris’ ear. He took off his chemlab revealing a six piece suit. “I need this done now.”

“Sir.” Norris stopped. He took a deep breath and spoke in a more whispered tone. “Kevin, we must be patient with this. If we take the time to mine the Balriumium 4 we can use the...”

“I don’t have time to send a probe to The Sea of Tranquility and spend months mining. Chevalier and the board wants this now. So, I need your recommendation. Can we do this?”

Norris punched the intercom. “Clear the room please. Lab techs, please clear the room.” One by the one the lab techs filtered out of the area.

Norris moved to a large computer system with a scan interface. “Marvin, scan the material for negative fabric cells within the ionic cortex.”

A yellow beam of light penetrated the block where the mini volcano once stood. Avoiding Fererria, Doctor Norris got back to work. He called out on the intercom to Diro, “If we block the corto-neuro sensory output we might be able to put a safety lock into the system so that the Meledrone will shift its dynamics.”

“Sir, the entire substructure will fail. We’ve already gone over that, twice.”

“Fine.” Renlo snapped off the intercom and took a few steps. He looked at the read out screens. “Kevin, I can’t do it. The possibility of using Meledrone is just not a plausible factor right now. Fire me if you want. I’m sorry.”

The CEO licked his lips and put his hand on Renlo Norris’ shoulder. “Can any of these lab techs do what you can do?”

“No, most of them are graduate students,” Renlo said. “But they are picking all of this up damn quick.”

“Then I can’t fire you...yet.”

Ferria picked up a Bunsen Burner and lit a cigarette. Without turning away from his work Kenlo said to the CEO, “Don’t smoke in here.”

Aggravated, Kevin Ferria put down the burner and left the lab.