

AMALIA REY



General's
BRIDE

ALIEN MATCHMAKING APP SERIES

General's Bride

(Men Are From Mars App)

Alien Matchmaking App Series #3

Amalia Rey

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All stories are fictional and any similarities to a human or other creature are strictly coincidental. There are no known apps that can currently transport a human female to outer space, but it's possible that someone out there is currently working on it...

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Dedication

*To L.R.,
Give in to that lover-boy of yours.*

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1

Naomi

“Get the hell out of my house,” I groan. My ridiculous ex-boyfriend found his way to my front door unannounced, again. As if he had any right to be a part in my life after he’d cheated on me with my ex-best friend. As if he hadn’t already given up any chance to be a part of my past, present, or future.

I have a lot of “ex’s” all of a sudden.

“Naomi, please,” Cameron pleads as I slam the door shut and fasten the lock. I really don’t have time for another one of his escapades.

The last one brought the police, and this is not the kind of neighborhood where you want police showing up at your front door.

I latched all four door locks and the dead bolt. Like I said, not a great neighborhood.

“Someday, Naomi, you’re gonna get out of this place,” I murmur to myself as I walk away from the Fort Knox doorway.

Away from the ex-lover who’s screaming my name from the front porch. Away from a life that used to make sense.

We were Cameron and Naomi. Naomi and Cameron. Best friends since childhood. Girlfriend and boyfriend since high school. On the one-way track to fiancé-dom. Until somebody decided to sleep with Rita, the ex-college roommate, ex-BFF that I would’ve picked as my maid of honor.

There is no honor in a foolish girl like that.

Ugh.

I stroll across the room and pop open the fridge. With Cameron wailing my name, going outside is out of the question. I take inventory of my last four bottles of liquor. One is bright blue, like an abnormal seascape. Another has gold flecks at the bottom. Best when warm, I think with a smile. Another is pink, and the last one is a tall bottle of vodka.

Vodka it is.

I grab the tall bottle and a few lonely limes from the bottom of my nearly empty fridge. I place the limes on my fancy wooden cutting board from that designer chef store at the mall.

I may have overindulged when I needed some retail therapy. After Cameron and Rita. I sigh as I pull out my sharp steak knife that the cute little salesman said could cut through anything.

Hmm. That's a thought, I realize. I could shred up the photos and his remaining shirts in my closet with my handy new steak knife.

Maybe after I finish bottle number one.

"Naomi, please!"

I slice six limes in half and douse them with some of those fancy salt crystals from my new restaurant grade saltshaker. Next, I lick the skin right between my thumb and index finger, then sprinkle more salt into the area. Mmm.

I might have a problem, because I'm getting quite good at drinking my drama away.

"Naomi!" Cameron is still calling out. I remind myself that I don't care about that ugly gross cheater and pour a shot of vodka into each of my six European shot glasses.

"For London," I say, one hand holding the lime and the other holding my shot glass. I lick the lime, then toss back my first spicy shot of liquor.

Oh, the head rush. Cameron's whiny little voice sounds less annoying.

Nope, next shot. "For Rome," I add, downing another shot. I don't care about that jerk, and his voice is fading away as my vision focuses on the remaining shot glasses.

"Naomiiiiii!"

Mmm. I lick the lime again, savoring its sour flavor. The salt ran out already, but that's okay. "For Edinburgh," I chide, then "For Madrid."

My head is already spinning. "For Paris."

"Nachami!" I think that awful voice says. Meh. He can't figure out my name, or maybe I'm a bit tipsy already. I grab the last one. "For Lisbon and all the beautiful sea people," I laugh, downing the last one.

Why did I cut so many limes?

And why am I wasting my time with shot glasses?

I shrug and toss my lime on the counter. I grab the vodka bottle and head back to the living room.

I settle into a comfortable spot on the sofa and hug the bottle against my chest. My life is disintegrating, so I might as well drink.

Who cares if I'm all alone? Who cares if I had never pictured that my life would end up like this?

"Namamioh!" that groveling disaster calls from somewhere outside. "Fine, you stupid bitch!"

I shrug. I don't want anything to do with him, and right now, the only man I'm interested in is Mr. Vodka. My cell phone buzzes in my pocket, so I pick it up and stare at it.

Weird. There's an ad in my email for a new dating app.

Whatever. What's the worst that could happen?

I take another long swig of my vodka before I open the app and start setting up my profile.

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2

Marv

“I’ll just go back to my room,” I tell the team after a productive training session. The V’aalarans, Leov and Goran, have just demonstrated their new app, and Goran had a real, live Earthling woman appear in front of him.

Holy motherlode. I practically race down the hallway to my room and finish setting up my profile. Goran had worked us through the steps, and all I had left to do was to finalize the process.

As soon as I’ve sealed the air lock, I sit down on my bed and turn on the tablet. My profile comes into view.

The Earthling-rendition of me looks quite clever. My deep purple-black skin appears brown on the screen, and my eyes shine like charcoal. I like it.

I activate my profile and take a deep breath. This is it. We’ve been without females since I was a child, and until now, we’ve had no way to restart our families.

Another deep breath. Will I find her? Will she find me?

I literally can’t wait. I press the selection sequence and begin checking out profiles of attractive females. They come in every skin tone, hair color, and eye color. They have cute names that sound like code words.

I pause over a dazzling photo. The female that I’m looking at has curly coal colored hair that reaches her shoulders, bright brown eyes, and her skin is copper colored. “Naomi,” I read her name aloud. It has a nice ring to it.

I select her.

And wait.

I expect to wait a long time, but suddenly there is a brilliant sparkling of lights and celebratory whistling sounds as the woman that I chose appears in front of my eyes.

“Who... are you?” she whispers.

“I’m Marv,” I tell her. She’s standing right in front of me, swaying a little as she eyes me with interest.

“Mmm,” she mumbles. “I’m Naomi. I like this dream.”

I watch as she lifts the top that she is wearing and drops it to the floor. Her perky breasts bounce as she moves. Next, she slips out of her skimpy

little shorts.

“Dream?” I ask.

She laughs and leans forward. “Catch me,” she says as she drops into my arms.

When I wrap my arms around her in a protective embrace, her lips find their way to mine. I’ve never kissed a female before, let alone held one in my arms. And this female is already prepared to become mine.

How lucky can a male be?

Her hands move down my chest and begin working their way through the intricate loops at the top of my belt. When my pants fall to the ground, she is immediately pleased with my erection.

She stops kissing me long enough to gaze down at my well-endowed penis. I am quite proud of the way that she smiles when she sees my enormous offering.

I was made to be a female pleaser. I know this now.

“Very, very big,” she says, her hands working their way from the tip to the base of my cock. “Give it to me.”

“Naomi,” I say softly as my fingers find their way to her soft, warm opening between her legs. “Will you be my mate?”

We are required to ask. Our word means everything, and if she agrees, we’re mated for life. If she’ll have me.

Oh, please have me!

“Absolutely,” Naomi tells me as she thrusts her hips against my exploring fingers. “Take me, Marv. Promise me that it’s just us. Just you and me.”

“I’ll be your one and only mate,” I promise. My heart thuds faster as I take in the beautiful woman that is so pliant in my arms. I’m instantly head over heels for this female.

“Marvvvv,” she beckons, her hands running up and down the length of my cock with an eagerness that I’ve never known. “Show me what it’s like to be your mate!”

I cup my hands under her butt cheeks and carry her across my room to the awaiting bed. Her excitement is apparent as I lay her underneath me. She opens her legs to reveal the flower between her legs. I slowly push the perfect pink petals away and trace the little bud at the top.

She cries out. “Take me!”

I want to play, to get to know her. To explore every inch of her perfect body, from her perky breasts with taut nipples to her naval to her luxurious pussy. But judging by the look on her face, I need to give her what she wants. Right now.

The tip of my cock moistens with pre-cum. Excitement for what we're about to do. I reach down and hold my shaft steadily in my hand, then slip the edge inside of her. She bucks her hips against me and takes my entire cock all at once.

She lets out a ferocious moan and then begins to writhe underneath me. I instantly know what she wants, and I give it to her. Her wet walls constrict around me as I thrust myself deep into her recesses, as far as I can reach, and then pull back. She pants underneath me with each pronounced movement.

"Marvvvv," she moans. I shift my weight just enough that I can pull her legs to the side. She wraps them around my lower back and urges me onward.

I give her what she's begging me for, until we're both a heap of exhausted lovebirds on my mattress.

She curls up in my arms and giggles. "That was fun," she tells me. Mmm. I agree. I want to do that every night for the rest of my life.

3

Naomi

My head is swimming. I most definitely had too much to drink last night, because I feel like I'm floating. Or moving. Almost like swaying on a boat, but instead, I'm completely still.

How strange.

I roll over in bed, but my hand doesn't land on my soft sheets or extra pillows. No, it lands right on a man's bare-naked chest.

Oh, no. What have I done?

Please, no. No. No, no, no. I didn't take him back. I couldn't.

I feel so ashamed. I know better than to crawl into bed with a loser.

I peek open one eye, nervous. Is he awake? And more importantly, can I get away?

But it isn't my ex. I'm not in a familiar bedroom.

And the guy next to me has a purplish skin color. I squint my eyes, trying to figure out where I am and who I just woke up with.

Did I go to a drunken rave and saddle up with the band? And why was my head aching so badly?

"Aw, Naomi," the purplish man says, his strong hand caressing my hair. I immediately pull back.

That's way too intimate of a gesture for a one-night stand.

"Mate, what's wrong?" the man says suddenly. I open my eyes completely, then blink several times. They feel dry and gritty, like I just woke up in a cheap desert motel.

I roll away and hop off the bed, trying to pull the sheet with me. I tug it, but it's partially tucked underneath this purple, muscular man.

He leans in my direction and smiles seductively. His enormous cock leans toward me, ready for another round.

Oh, man. I had drunk sex with him, and that cock and I can't remember it? Why can't I remember a thing about what was probably the best sex of my life?

His grin throws me off guard. Why does he look so overly confident?

"Where am I?" I ask, taking another step back.

The room is strange. The dimensions are all wrong, and I feel too short and the angles feel too sharp. What is this place?

Am I at his little love cave? Is this man one of those creeps like on those criminal tv series that I like to binge watch?

“Naomi, love,” the man says, his fingers absently stroking his perfect cock. “Is this what you earthlings refer to as foreplay?”

I take another step back, but this time, my naked butt hits against a door. The door automatically opens, and when I turn, I see a living area. There’s an irregularly shaped sofa and panels of electronic gadgets on the walls. There is a strange looking grey plant on a counter, and a bowl of odd-looking fruit.

I turn and rush into the room, even as I hear the man standing and walking towards me.

Oh, man. “Don’t hurt me!” I plead, afraid to meet his eyes. I feel absurd; I’m standing in a room where there’s no sunlight, but everything feels too bright and shiny. My head is swirling out of control. I feel like I’m about to have a massive panic attack.

“Where am I?” I repeat. A tremor rolls through my body.

I feel an impressive set of muscular arms wrap around me from my waist. He clasps his hands over my belly, his body smashed right up behind me. I can feel his erect cock against my back.

“You’re here, with me.”

I push those purple hands apart and step out of his embrace. He wasn’t holding me very tightly; I realize as I swirl around.

“Naomi, love. What happened? You were very happy last night.”

“I don’t know where I am or how I got here. Whatever I did or said or whatever, I was drunk.”

“Drunk? What’s that?”

The purple man who referred to me as an earthling stares at me strangely. At least he is an excellent actor, I’ll give him that.

As if I’ve been abducted by an alien or something. What are the chances?

“Seriously. Where am I?”

“You’re on the Intergalactic Research Station.”

I shake my head, but that causes my eyes to feel like they’re ping-ponging around my head. Ouch. I’ve never had a hangover this bad. Vodka was a mistake.

“Look, it isn’t funny anymore.” I’m standing too close to him, and I feel like I might puke. Or faint. Or both.

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4

Marv

I watch as my beautiful mate transforms in front of my eyes. She genuinely looks like she's afraid of me.

But that can't be right.

Naomi is trembling, and she's looking around the room trying to find an exit. I don't know what made her so upset. We were having such an enjoyable time together.

"Naomi, mate," I say, trying to figure out what words she needs to hear. "I am not sure what's going on. You were more than happy to let me claim you last night."

"Claim me?" she asks, cowering against the edge of the sofa. Oh, the things we did on that sofa last night. My mind flickers back momentarily to the way she flipped around and let me ram myself into her. She begged me for more.

I want her to look at me the way she was looking at me last night. Not like this, like a terrified female. She's got fear in her eyes and it makes me uncomfortable.

"Naomi," I say again.

She lifts a hand, holding it steadily in the air between us. "Stop." And in a softer, almost childlike voice she whimpers, "I want to go home."

Oh. My heart suddenly aches. "Naomi."

She seems to notice, because she eyes me strangely. "I don't even know your name."

"Marv. You arrived last night, through the App."

I watch as she shakes her head slowly. "No. Last night, I was at home, and my ex was trying to get me to open the door."

"Your ex? You already have a mate?"

Again, confusion fills her beautiful jade eyes. "Whatever happened between us, I was drunk. Wasted."

"Nothing about last night was wasted," I tell her. Her eyes wander down to my cock and I wonder if she remembers. I feel myself hardening at the thought of having her again. I want to hear her moan again.

I like how she looks when she's distracted. I sway my hips just enough to make my cock dance for her. Her brain might not remember, but I can do enough remembering for the both of us.

"I'm so embarrassed," she finally says.

I watch as she folds into herself, crossing her arms over her chest. "I need to go home. Now."

She sits down abruptly on the edge of the sofa, on eye level with my firm length. I doubt her move was intentional, as she looks so forlorn.

"Marv?" Naomi asks. "Where are we? What did you mean when you said the App brought me here?"

I wish those pretty little lips would find their way to my skin. But instead, they're downturned. I bend down to meet her eyes. "You chose me, on your phone App. It's a new program that the V'aalarans designed to bring females to this part of the galaxy."

"V'aalarans? Galaxy?" Her eyes are wide and full of newfound concern. "I don't understand." She looks up at me, afraid but desperate for answers.

I wonder what she sees when she looks at me. I know what I see. She sighs.

"Come with me," I tell her. I watch as questions swarm over her face.

She nods slowly and stands, then walks with me to my bedroom. Our bedroom. I want to share everything with her.

She walks slowly behind me, then enters the bedroom again. Her eyes scan the room, looking for some evidence that might tell her whatever she's trying to piece together.

She bends down and picks up one of her undergarments. Across the room, she finds her shirt. Oh, the way she looked when she pulled off all her clothes.

I can't believe this sudden turn of events. We had the most amazing night, and I need her to understand that we're meant to be together.

Naomi

I pace across the small room, then open the large window shade. Where I expect to see sand or water, I see dark space. There are stars everywhere, like I'm in the middle of one of those space movies.

I don't understand.

"How?"

The purple man is next to me, still as naked as the day he was born. Well, so am I, for that matter. I've never felt comfortable enough to walk around in the nude before, and for some reason, I don't feel an urge to put back on my clothes.

Because I want this to be a dream.

I want to pinch myself and wake up, right back in my shitty life with my cheating ex banging on my door. With a bottle of whatever I just drank in my hands.

His fingers glide tentatively across my lower back. I don't want to react to him, but whatever we did, my body seems to remember.

My breath catches.

I hate myself for responding to him, but I'm also pretty annoyed that I don't even remember everything we did.

I stare out at the galaxy. I've never been a big sci fi girl, and I can't remember ever looking at a picture of the solar system that looked so amazing.

"Take me home," I say, and I feel his fingers flinch before he withdraws his touch. I realize how ridiculous I must look, standing nakedly and staring out at the universe.

"The App only brings females to us. We don't have a way to send you back."

I spin around and glare at him, suddenly angry. "What? You think it's okay to take a person? You think you have the right to claim whoever you want? What the hell?"

He raises his eyebrows; two perfectly trimmed lines of hair right above his eerily black eyes. I stare at him, expecting his face to tense up in anger.

But instead, he looks like he's curious. Intrigued, perhaps. Definitely not angry. He looks more concerned than anything.

"All of our females died when I was a child. All of them. All the races, except for one."

"Which one is that?" I ask, my voice suddenly quivering. Because I think I already know the answer.

"Yours."

I shift my weight from one side to another, suddenly feeling cold. "I think I'd like to get dressed now," I say. I don't know what to do, to be honest.

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6

Marv

I don't understand what happened, or why my female is suddenly acting like I've duped her or something. She did not seem so unhappy last night.

"My love," I try again, but she shakes her head.

"I want to go home."

I sigh. There's no way to take her back to her planet. The App is a one-way ticket, and I don't really understand how it works. The V'aalarans invented it, and for some reason they decided to share it with the other tribes.

"I can't take you all the way across the galaxy. We'd die from old age before we'd get there."

Naomi bends down and picks up her undergarments, which she quickly puts on. She starts scanning the room for something else, so I bend down and start looking for her clothes, too.

"Found it," she mumbles.

But instead of standing and getting dressed, Naomi bursts into tears and collapses beside me.

"So, all the women on your planet were also taken?"

"Well, technically you're the first woman that will be going back there. But I've got the App and my people will be so eager to find their mates."

"I'm not your mate," Naomi states flatly.

I shake my head. "Yes, you are. You are bound to me. You accepted me last night."

Naomi pulls her knees against her chest and begins to sob. "I was drunk. I was so wasted. I have no idea what I said, and whatever it was, I shouldn't have said it."

"We did more than talk."

"I figured that out, Mr. Alien Man. Obviously. We were both naked."

I don't know what to say to that. She isn't wrong. But it hurts to know that she doesn't seem to remember what we did.

"What is... drunk?"

Naomi looks up at me, her eyes surrounded by fresh dewy tears. "I had vodka. It's a drink."

"Vodka?"

"Yeah. I was trying to forget... and then I forgot everything."

"Vodka." I shake my head again. "We don't have anything like that up here. Forgetting juice would be problematic."

She rubs her eyes, pushing away her tears. "I used to joke about vodka," she tells me. "But vodka makes the clothes fall off."

"I liked that part," I tell her. Our eyes meet, and I know she probably wants to drive a dagger through my face or something, but I won't lie. I enjoyed mating with her.

And I would give anything to do it again.

"So now what?"

I take her hand and gently guide her back to a standing position. "Now, we get ready for our first full day together. And tomorrow, we fly back to my planet. Our planet."

"But..."

"Naomi, love. We can't stay here. It isn't safe. There was a Foog attack this morning, and it appears that they've formed an alliance with the Ta'al. Those are two enemy tribes."

"And they're here?"

"Of course. This is an intergalactic research station, so we allow all tribes to come here."

"And you're from what tribe?"

"We call ourselves the Narulians. I am from the planet Narul."

She pauses, then sounds out the name. "Narul."

"I will be a good Mate. I will take good care of you."

"I didn't ask to be taken care of," she says, but her voice doesn't sound as angry this time.

"Then I will make it my life's purpose to spend every waking moment keeping you happy."

She shrugs. "No one can promise that."

"Perhaps no Earthling. But I'm Narulian," I boast.

She doesn't say anything to me after that. Instead, she wanders back to the window and stares at the spacescape. I glance down at the bundled-up clothes that she never finished putting on before walking over to join her.

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Naomi

“Once, when I was little, I asked my Mama what space was like,” I say, touching my fingertips to the thick glass that separates me from the galaxy around us.

“And what did she tell you?”

Marv seems harmless. He’s instantly next to me again, his firm purplish body waiting for me. Will he really always be beside me?

I’ve never had a reason to trust a man before. They all cheat, lie, take what isn’t theirs. Marv took, but that somehow seems different. I was intoxicated, but apparently his people don’t know about liquor.

Forgetting juice.

I glance to my left, where Marv stands in silent companionship. He is definitely checking me out but trying really hard to be nonchalant about it.

My eyes dip lower, and I catch another eyeful of his glorious cock. Why does it have to look so amazingly inviting?

And more importantly, why can’t I remember anything? His beautiful body is muscular in all the right places. Mmm.

I turn my attention back to the solar system.

“How far away is your planet?”

Marv licks his lips. “Narul is in the Badlands,” he tells me, then points somewhere straight ahead, but just right enough that his arm comes into my space. Nice trick.

“It will take us several Earth hours to arrive there. I will take you in the morning, alright?”

I nod. It’s not like I have any other choice. I mean, it’s either ‘stay here where it’s dangerous’ or ‘go there where I’m the only female.’ Right. Great options.

“So, what do we do for the rest of the day?” I ask innocently. I swear I don’t mean anything by it, but his cock tenses up like it’s ready for action.

And I’m curious. So, I reach over and touch him, before I can think twice. He immediately lets out a moan, then turns to me with such sudden need that I’m not sure I’ll be able to turn him away.

When his lips connect with mine and he pins me against the window, I realize I won't want to.

I need him. I need the sweet release that he's offering.

Wordlessly, he slides down my panties and inserts a finger into my pussy. I'm instantly wet with need.

I don't even know how he was able to arouse me so quickly, but I'm done thinking about it. I spread my legs as far as I can, daring him to take me, right here.

He removes his finger from my pussy, but then moves it upwards, finding my clit. He begins stroking me with such passion that there's only one thing that can calm me down. Only one way to tamper this rising heat between us.

I can't even tell him because his lips are locked with mine.

But he knows. As soon as I feel his cock entering me, a brief memory from last night floods through me.

My voice, saying, *"I'll be your one and only mate,"* and his cock exploring me for the first time.

I open my eyes and stare at him.

How did he do that?

Marv pushes himself deep inside of me and begins driving himself further and further inward with each thrust. My ass is plastered against the window and my legs are wrapped around him, letting him take me right here.

He releases me from our lip-lock and I moan loudly. He's memorized my body and I'm still playing catch up.

But he doesn't seem to mind. He begins licking my ear, right at the top, just where I like it. My hands fumble through his short dark hair, feeling my way through his thick, short hair.

"Naomi," he moans.

We cum together, my ass frozen in place from a sudden burst of movement. He picks me up and carries me back to his bed, where he lays me down and begins a gentler version of making love.

Marv

I've never felt as content as I do right now. My mate is asleep on my chest, and she finally seems relaxed. I'm sure she'll still have a lot to say to me when she wakes up, but at least I feel like she will remember our lovemaking this time.

Her dark hair rests against my chest. It's silky and smooth. It tickles a little, but I want to feel her beside me more than anything. I want to hold her in this moment forever.

Because this morning was heartbreaking. I'm ready to give her everything, and she doesn't seem to feel the same. I am certain that she isn't in love with me, but a lifetime together should change that.

Her breathing changes and she starts to stir in her sleep. When she lifts her head to look at me, she doesn't seem afraid.

"Is this what it will be like?" she wants to know.

"Mmm?"

"Will you always want me like that?"

I'm not sure that I understand the question. I know from my studies that Earthling females are not generally treated well by their mates on their planet. But she seems so fragile.

"Of course."

She seems satisfied by my answer and lays her head back down again. She's not sleeping, though. Her head is atop my heart, and she's running her fingers through the coarse hair on my chest.

"I like the way you make me feel," she says. "But I need to know something."

Her head rises again, and I see that her eyes are watery.

"What is it, Love?"

"How did you make me remember what I said?"

"What do you mean?"

"When we were, you know, at the window? You gave me a memory of what I'd said to you."

I don't have a clue what she's talking about. So, I tell her. "I don't know what you heard."

"When we... started. I had a flash of a memory. Me telling you that I'm your mate."

"I liked it when you told me those words." I muse.

"I'm being serious. How did you do that?"

I shrug. "You're the only mate I've ever been with. This is all new to me. If something happened, well, we just have to wait and see if it happens again."

"If you're doing mind tricks... I'm not okay with that."

I sigh, then wrap my arms around my restless mate. "No mind tricks. I am an honest male."

"I guess time will tell," she says, then buries her head back on my chest.

I rub my hands down her back to help her relax. She seems so stressed, and I have no idea why she got so upset with me.

I need a crash course in Earthling females, stat.

Naomi

When I awaken, the first thing that I notice is my skin. It's lavender.

"Why am I purple?" I ask drowsily. "I don't understand."

Marv is laying next to me, completely asleep. I am considering waking him up, but instead, I stand and cross the room again. I want to see the galaxy again.

I think I can see my ass print on the window. I move down a few feet.

There's so much I don't know. He doesn't seem to know, either. But I stretch my arm out in front of me, and it is lavender. Like a field full of little wildflowers. A walking bouquet.

I glance back at my sleeping giant. His skin is dark purple. Is this some weird mating ritual?

Gross.

I want my life back.

But somehow, as I study my newly purple skin, I wonder if that's even possible.

I decide to find clothes. He doesn't have a closet, but there's a suitcase looking box thing by his bed. I open it up and find a book with weird letters in it, a handful of herbs and dried fruits, and some sort of robe.

Does he wear robes?

I pick up the robe and study it. It has some of the same weird letters on it. The fabric is soft, light brown, and feels like silk. I drape it around my shoulders, reveling in the feel of this strange new material around my body. It feels too large, but it also feels warmer than laying around in the nude all day.

"Hey," Marv says. He's suddenly beside me again. How does he do that?

"Hi."

"You look beautiful," he tells me. Fine, he can have some good boyfriend points. I mean, if that's what this is. His whole "mating" philosophy is making me a little nervous.

"Thanks," I whisper. "Um, I'm sorry I went through your stuff."

“It’s okay. We’re mates now.”

I swallow hard, thinking about what that means. He definitely feels a connection.

I’m worried that I do, too.

And then I remember that I’m purple. “Hey, Marv?” I ask. “Why is my skin suddenly purple?”

He smiles, then leans in for a kiss. “That means that we’re mates. You have some sort of gene that gets activated when you choose a mate. And then your body releases something to make us match. I’ve only read about it, but I’ve never seen it. I heard that the V’aalaran queen took after her king, but I’ve never seen her.”

“Really?”

He nods.

“And that happens in all the tribes?”

“Well, sure. Except for the Earthlings. You guys have the, uh, recessive genes. We have the dominant ones.”

“Figures.”

He looks at me strangely but doesn’t say whatever he’s thinking. I guess that’s for the best. I’m not in the mood to argue.

“I’m a little hungry,” I tell him. “What type of foods do you eat?”

Marv grins like a schoolboy. “I travel a lot in space, so I’ve gotten really good at cooking up here.”

He crosses the room and opens a drawer I hadn’t noticed earlier. He pulls out a pair of pants and puts them on quickly. “Can’t risk getting burned while cooking,” he tells me, half-teasing.

Okay, so maybe he isn’t so bad.

I follow him out of the bedroom and take a tour of his tiny space kitchen.

Marv

It is so hard to focus when my beautiful female is standing right beside me. She's forgotten that she didn't want to be with me just a few hours ago.

And now she's taken on the skin tone of my tribe. I'm so eager to take her home to show her off to my people. And to give them the App before we launch back into space.

"When you said you spend a lot of time up here, what did you mean?"

I shrug. "I'm usually at our smaller space station, above Narul. We were sent out here for the meeting, but then I am supposed to go back there and run the station."

"So, we're not going to live on your planet?" She looks around nervously. "I'm going to spend the rest of my life in outer space?"

I pause. I'm in the middle of stirring up a batch of sea veggies and protein patties over the flame when she catches me off guard. "You don't want to live in space?"

"I thought we were going to Narul."

Her lower lip is trembling a little. I think back to when I first came out to the station, and how isolated I felt.

"It's only short term. I do short missions, and then go home."

"But you're not leaving me alone on a planet that has no other females?"

I reach over and brush my fingers against her cheek. She feels cold. "No, you come with me, Love."

"And what about..." she doesn't finish her thought, just looks away.

I reach over and touch her forehead and her eyes widen nervously.

"You do know. How do you do that?"

"Do what?" I ask nervously. What just happened?

She backs away and starts pacing. "Naomi, what's happening?"

But she scurries out of the room, to my bathroom. I hear the lock on the door and realize that she needs a few moments.

Naomi

My stomach rumbles, but I ignore it and turn on the faucet. It takes a few minutes before I figure out the right water setting, but soon, I've managed to make my first space bubble bath.

As I settle into the water, there's a gentle knock at the door.

"Go away."

"The food is ready. Shall I serve it to you in the bathroom, or keep it out here?"

I'm hungry. I think about that one music video with the girl eating in the bathtub and grown. Am I becoming that girl?

"Fine," I mutter, standing up and crossing the room, soap suds and all.

I unlatch the door and walk right back to where I started. I plop right back down into the water, not even daring to make eye contact with this mind reader space alien.

"I'm sorry I upset you," Marv says, entering carefully. He carries the food to me and holds it out, like a peace offering. "Can you tell me what I did?"

I glare up at him and he honestly looks worried. Worried that his little plan to have a breeding female will sizzle into pieces.

"You spoke to me again. Without using your mouth."

"What did I say?" he asks nervously.

"You said, 'When we have babies we'll stay home.'"

"I didn't speak it, though," Marv tells me, his eyes widened with confusion. "I thought those words."

I shrug. "It sounded like your voice to me," I tell him. "It happened earlier, when we were, well, you know."

I glance at him. He blushes. 'I do know, and I want to do that again,' his creepy little mind tells me when his hand brushes against my skin.

My eyes narrow. "I think it only happens when you touch me."

He sets down the plate and takes my hand in his. He stares directly into my eyes. "What am I thinking now?"

I wait. Nothing happens. His hand feels strong around mine, and I find myself wanting to pull him into the bathtub with me.

“Nothing,” I say.

He leans forward and kisses my cheek. His lips are soft against my skin. ‘*I love you, Naomi,*’ I hear his voice say in my mind.

I jump just enough for him to know that I heard him. “Um, I think I’ll have my meal in the bathtub, for one, now.”

He doesn’t say another word, just releases my hand and gives me a plate of interesting looking space food. I have no idea what it is, but I take it just to occupy my hands.

I don’t like this. Not one bit.

And how in the world... um, universe... could he know how he feels about me so quickly? I don’t even know how I feel about this plate of food.

I shove a forkful of something that tastes like buttery potatoes and salty green stuff into my mouth. Chew, Naomi. Don’t think about the hot space dude who just professed his love to you.

But even as I chew, I can’t help but think about him.

Why am I so attracted to him?

12

Marv

I didn't intend to scare her, but that's exactly what I did when I mind-melded with her. Or whatever that was.

But why can she hear my thoughts, when I can't hear hers?

I don't get it. I start wracking my brain for a memory that could explain what is happening between me and Naomi.

An image floods my brain. My Father, lying on his bed, sulking. I remember hearing him crying about his 'lost connection' to my Mother, after all the females passed.

I never knew what he had meant.

Was it a Narulian thing? I hadn't heard any of the V'aalarans mention it.

Weird.

Maybe I could use some forgetting juice. Instead, I sit in silence in the dining area, eating my first meal as a Mate all by myself, while my female sits alone, scared, and possibly furious with me, in a large bath.

I chuckle. I'd never even thought of filling that tub with water.

"What's so funny?"

I look up and see Naomi standing in front of me. Her hair is wet and hanging around her shoulders. She's carrying her plate of half-eaten food. She put the robe back on, but it's loose on her much smaller frame.

"I was just thinking about how ironic it is that I was all alone here, on our first full day together. But now you're with me."

She makes a clacking sound with her teeth but sits down across from me anyway.

"What is this green stuff?" she asks, pointing with a fork.

"That's a Narulian see veggie. Kilpo."

"You have a sea?"

I smile. She is curious about my planet. Our planet.

"We have many seas. We are mostly an aqueous planet, like Earth. Except we keep a good balance with nature."

“Yeah, humans are kinda destructive,” she muses, taking another bite of kilpo and mashed baday. “I do like this. It tastes... different.”

“I can’t wait to show you everything.”

“Do you have pictures?”

She looks hopeful. Eager.

I smile. “If you can hear my words, maybe you can feel my thoughts in other ways.”

“How would that work?”

“Well, we can sit together after you finish eating.”

She nods, then quickly finishes her meal.

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Naomi

We settle onto his strange-looking sofa, my head resting against his chest. It feels weird to be so intimate with a man I've just met, but I keep reminding myself that he's my space mate and that I can't go anywhere but here.

His hands are running down my back, tracing little massage trails up and down my spinal muscles. He kneads my sore muscles with his strong hands, his fingers working me into a state of peaceful sedation.

"When I was a boy, I had a beautiful Mother," Marv says. "She was one of the last to die from the Strange Illness that killed all the females. I remember watching my Father rub her back like this, when her body ached."

I let myself relax and try to take in the sensations. The soft lub-dub of his heartbeat, which sounded surprisingly similar to a human heart. The soft fuzz on his chest feels warm against my face.

"What was she like?" I ask.

"She was kind. Strong. She used to take my sister and I--"

His voice suddenly stops. Almost like he had forgotten something incredibly painful. I glance up at him, seeing the frozen look in his eyes. I know that look. It's the one that drove me to get stupid drunk last night.

I reach up and touch his face, just as his memory washes through me.

"Marv, hurry up!" Mother called. She was carrying a large basket of sea veggies, and my little sister ran at her feet.

My sister. Julee.

"Carry me, Marv," Julee begged.

I reached down and picked her up, her little lavender face tired from the long walk.

"I don't feel so good," she whispered.

"Mother, I don't like this," I said loudly. Julee felt like dead weight in my arms. "We need to hurry."

Suddenly, my slow feet broke into a sprint. Mother dropped the basket of sea veggies, and we ran as fast as we could, Julee faint in my arms.

When we got to the infirmary, it was too late. Julee was already gone.

“How?” I whispered.

“There’s a sickness,” Mother confided in me. “The females are dying, and we don’t know why.”

“I can’t lose her,” I cried. “And I can’t lose you.”

I blink all of a sudden and sit up. Marv is crying, but I don’t think he realizes that he has tears streaming down his cheeks.

“You had a sister?” I whisper.

“Julee,” he answers, but I already know. Our eyes meet. “You saw that?”

I nod. “I did.”

“She was so little. Almost five. We were gathering food for her party.”

“Her party?”

“My people are simple. We used to have parties when the little ones were big enough to go to school. Julee was finally old enough, but our planet was on quarantine.”

I wipe away his tears automatically with my hand. “Quarantine?” I ask, to keep him talking. The look on his face is so far away. So, lost.

“There was something, but we didn’t know. Was it in the water? The air? The food? We never figured it out.”

“And that something took the females?”

He nods.

“What makes you so certain that it’s safe to bring me? To bring other humans?”

To this, he peers directly into my eyes. “Queen Abigail, in V’aalara. Apparently, she’s been there for many years, and nothing has happened. She recently had twins.”

“Twins?” I ask. Half human, half alien. I mean, I totally understand that they’re bringing females here to repopulate. Or to just have sex with. Or whatever.

But twins?

“Julee was beautiful,” I murmur, not ready to digest the fact that I could have multiple babies at once.

Were they like mammals that had litters? Would he impregnate me with multiple babies?

I try to keep a straight face, but he must see the panic in my eyes. “What is it?” he asks.

I shake my head. “Nothing.”

He peers at me with such a sense of sadness that I almost give in and tell him my rambling thoughts. But.

I don’t want him to cry again. I also don’t want to admit to myself that I am feeling something for him. Compassion? I don’t know. But his little sister was beautiful.

Lavender skin. Long red hair. Little purplish freckles on her face. Bright green eyes.

Would our babies look like that?

Did I want to have his babies?

“I know what we could do,” I finally mumble. I shift my body on top of his and let the robe fall to the ground. His enormous erection finds me immediately, and I sink down onto him with a quiet gasp.

His cock is ready and his hips buck underneath me.

I touch my hand to his chest as I sit upright on him. ‘*Take me, my Love,*’ he whispers into my mind.

And this time, I don’t get upset. We might not have forgetting juice, but we can have some amazing forgetting sex.

Marv

I don't understand my mate. One minute, she's mad. The next minute, she's on top of me, begging me for pleasure.

I run my hands over her beautiful breasts, trying to get lost in the moment. The memories that have been flooding back about my childhood are wrecking me, and then Naomi comes out of nowhere with her solution.

I need to lose myself in the moment.

Naomi rides me with ease, her eyes peering directly into mine. She's curious about something, I can sense it.

She maneuvers herself so that she can continue moving herself up and down the length of my cock while leaning in. Her hair tickles against my chest, sending lightning bolts of heat across my skin.

Her mouth brushes against mine, then she slips her tongue inside. Every sensation pulls me away from the darkness.

Another flash of memory fills my mind, and I shake my head. Naomi sighs.

"Marv," she groans as she lifts herself back up, her hips colliding against mine with increasing intensity. She closes her eyes and her jaw drops open.

I need to feel those lips on my skin. I reach up and touch her lips with my thumb, which she immediately takes into her mouth and begins to suck. Slow, determined strokes, from the tip to the base. Oh, wow.

She knows how to make me want it all.

I love this female. I will give her anything she wants.

Naomi opens her eyes suddenly and stops rocking above me. My cock is buried inside of her, and she's staring at me. I feel completely exposed.

"Your turn," she says, then climbs off me. I watch as she crosses the room and bends over the counter, exposing her dripping pussy. She's waiting.

I stand and immediately cross the room. My hands capture her perfect ass and I penetrate her in one swift move, my cock ready to take her. She leans forward, screaming in ecstasy.

“Is that how you like it?” I ask.

She demands, “Give it to me hard.”

I thrust myself inside her, the feeling of her tight walls around my cock making me feel like I’m soaring. I push forward, again, again, again.

Each movement makes me feel less lost, closer to my mate. Each time she lets me push myself inside of her, I want to have her forever.

When I achieve sweet release inside of her, she doesn’t say anything. She lets out a soft moan and waits until I’ve completely emptied myself inside her.

At this rate, she’ll be carrying my child by the time we get to Narul.

“I love you,” I tell her again after I’ve unmounted myself from her beautiful body. She is still quiet, but she folds into my embrace and lets me hold her.

Even if we look ridiculous, naked in my cooking area, I feel more content than I’ve ever felt. I need everything Naomi is offering. I need her sweet touch, her delicate pussy, and her beautiful heart.

I feel like I’m the luckiest male alive.

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Naomi

Packing for our journey to Narul is surprisingly easy. Marv barely has any personal belongings in his space quarters.

When he's finally ready, he opens the doorway to a long corridor. I stare at the shiny metal walls, then absently touch one with my hand. It feels smoother than I expected, and cold.

I'm trailing just behind him as we move down the corridor. Another alien with golden skin approaches. "Hey, Marv. Is this your mate?"

Marv is grinning like a nerd who got asked to prom by the hot girl. I stifle a giggle. Whoa. I'm the hot girl.

Is he the nerd?

"This is Naomi," Marv says. His arms are full with his large box of belongings, so he tips his head to introduce me. "Mate, this is my friend from V'aalara. Leov. When did you get back?"

"This morning. We had to intercept a Foog ship and rescue four females."

"They're out of control."

"Precisely. They tried to leave with Goran's mate, Camila. But Camila and the females overpowered them."

Marv looks surprised. "Wow."

"We Earthling females can be quite resourceful," I tell them both with a shrug. "Just don't forget that."

Leov chuckles. "I'm sure of it. My mate made sure to tell me that she's in control." He glances at Marv and blushes. "She totally is."

"Well, you should come visit sometime. I'm taking Naomi to Narul."

Leov nods. "We'll do that, once everything settles down. I'd like to check on your tribe and the success of the App, so we should plan on it."

"Great."

They say goodbye to each other, and Marv gestures for me to continue walking. We move down the long corridor, then enter a spaceship hangar. There are several dozen sleek black ships spaced evenly around the room.

"Wow," I say.

“Just wait until you see how fast it flies,” Marv tells me.

I wink at him, then say, “I’ll bet you can fly faster.” I watch as his face changes and he blushes.

“Alright. Let’s get out of here.”

We cross the room to a black ship, which looks like all the other ships, but somehow Marv knows it’s his. He reaches out a hand momentarily to touch a square on the black paneled surface. The ship recognizes him, and a door opens. He quickly replaces his hand under the box and steps inside, leading me inside.

“Wow,” I tell him again. There’s a series of long panels that appear to be supercomputers. They fire to life and begin doing whatever they’re intended for.

I walk through the small craft to the cockpit.

Mmm. I never really thought about that word before.

“I noticed that the hallway was circular. Is there a room in the center?” I ask.

Marv smiles. “Yeah. I have a bedroom inside, just in case we have to stay overnight on some strange planet. This is an explorer ship. We use them when we’re studying other planets.”

“I guess that’s a new kind of mile high club,” I tease.

“Mile high? It depends which planet is closest to us. Definitely more than just a mile.”

I can’t help myself. I burst out in laughter.

“What did I say?”

“It’s okay. If I had forgetting juice, I’d make you drink some right now.”

Marv gives me a strange look but sets down his box in a special container that immediately latches around it. Now that his hands are free, he wraps himself around me again.

“I can’t wait to take you home with me.”

I nod. Home. At least one of us still has one.

“Where do I sit?” I ask, trying not to think too much about it. He’s lost every female he ever loved. I just lost my home. I guess there’s a difference.

I guess I’m the solution. The App is the answer. But I feel sad, nonetheless.

“Are you ready?” he asks after I’m seated.

I shrug. “Ready or not,” I mutter.

He doesn't react to my change in mood. Instead, he sits down beside me and fires up the ship. An airlock door opens and within minutes, we're off, darting through space. Like it's nothing. Like it's just another routine commute on the freeway.

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Marv

Naomi did that hot and cold thing again, the one where she becomes completely despondent. I wonder what it means.

I have a lifetime to figure her out.

For now, I guess I can show her around.

“Those are asteroids,” I tell her, pointing to a row of three large rocks coasting through space to our left.

She sits forward and studies them. Her attention shifts to a moon in the distance. “And that? Is that a planet?”

I smile. “No. It’s one of the many moons of Jakari. The planet is a little further, but it’ll be on the right. When you see it, you’ll realize that moon is tiny.”

She seems captivated by the scenery, and I tell her about the different tribes as we fly. “There were twelve tribes,” I explain. “A long time ago, they split into different parts of the galaxy, where they could each grow in peace.”

“What about my people?”

“Your planet is home to the Samari.”

“Samari?” Her eyes were on me again. “I haven’t heard that word before. We call ourselves humans.”

“Earthlings, Samari,” I say. “Basically, your tribe didn’t want to deal with technology. They felt like it would destroy the galaxy, so they opted to go dark. They settled your planet without tech.”

“When?”

“Thousands of years ago. They landed in that large continent that your people call Africa.”

She nods, thinking it over. “But we have tech now.”

“Not really,” I tell her. “Watch this.” I touch a keypad and say, “Nari, show my mate the solar deck.”

A computer screen pops up in front of Naomi. “What is it?” she asks.

“Oh. Right. Nari, switch to her Samari language. Which one, Mate?”

“English.”

The Narulian symbols fade away and are replaced by a string of hard looking letters.

“You may search for any of the ancient wisdom.”

“But this just looks like the Internet,” she says.

I shrug. “You’ll see the difference. Let me help.”

Naomi still looks confused, so I talk to the narrator again. “Nari, show her the agriculture of Narul.”

Sea veggies pop up on the screen, along with dozens of other staple foods. Naomi placates me by touching the screen to learn more about sea veggies.

“Wait, how come I can understand you when you talk to me?” Naomi wants to know.

“I implanted a translation device behind your ear. It doesn’t work for written language, but it works to communicate between all the tribes.”

“So, we’re basically speaking to each other in two different languages?”

“Yes.”

“Is that why sometimes it sounds strange? Like it doesn’t translate right?”

I nod.

“Interesting.” She thumbs through the solar deck, studying the foods of my planet. I watch with great pride as she studies my homeland. She moves from food to history.

“When we get there, I’ll take you to meet the King.”

She seems interested. I think about the honor of bringing the first female home. And not just the first female, but the window to bringing all the other females.

I can’t wait.

“How much longer is it?” she finally asks.

“You see that purple star up ahead?” I ask, pointing to Narul.

“Yes.”

“That’s where we’re going. We should be there in another ten or so Earth minutes.”

Naomi

I'm not sure what I was expecting. I skimmed through Narulian history, studied the different plant life, and even read a news update about the Badlands. But when we enter Narul's atmosphere, I suddenly feel terrified.

This is real.

This is beyond real. This is more than being transported into a space alien's research station dorm room. This is me traveling to a world that has never seen a human. A planet that has no females.

What if they kill me?

Even worse, what if they kidnap me and force me to mate with someone else?

Marv is sorta starting to grow on me. Although, his admonitions of love are a bit premature. It's been two days.

The bright orange and purple atmospheric gases give way and we see the planet beneath us. Like Marv said, it's mostly aqueous. There's a brilliant blue colored ocean, complete with rising and falling waves that flow beneath us.

Are there whales? Or other sea creatures? I should've read more.

At least the water seems right. There are small island land masses around the planet, with one large land mass in the middle.

"Where do you live?" I ask.

He points to the central mass of land. There are lakes and rivers surrounding the main city. As we approach, everything comes into clearer focus.

The trees are bushier, but similar. They have bluish green leaves on them, though. The grass has a purplish color.

Are we really this similar?

"Wait, they breathe oxygen, right?"

Marv laughs again. "We're more alike than we're different. All the tribes originated from one master family. Yours is just the recessive one, but other than that, you need the same air, water, and amount of food. Although, the food will be different."

I nod. There isn't much more I can do at this point. We're here.

Marv talks into his radio comm device, announcing our arrival.
"General Marv to Base. Incoming."

General?

He did say that he had an important job at the space station.

"Looking for private landing. Need to speak with the King, of immediate importance."

"Land in Zone 14."

Marv understands where that is and takes us down. We land in a small patch of pinkish grass next to a large building.

"Let me do the talking," Marv says as I stand. My legs feel like jelly.

Suddenly, my stomach lurches. Is this how I'll feel after all space travel?

"I need to throw up," I tell him.

He guides me to the bathroom on his ship, where I lose my breakfast. Once I've cleaned my mouth, I join him.

"Okay. I'm ready."

"You're okay?"

"First time entering a planet's atmosphere. I guess I'll get used to it?"

"That's my female."

"No, we say 'That's my girl.'"

"Mmm. As long as you're mine, I'll say whatever you want."

Touché.

Marv

“King Hiro,” I say as we walk off the ship.

My King is waiting for us, just as I requested. He knows that I have something important to say and has chosen to give me audience.

“What is this?” the King asks, eyeing my mate. “How?”

Naomi is already adorning the traditional lavender skin of our people. She walks beside me, quiet as can be. I wonder what she’s thinking.

I decided to gather my belongings later, and I have my arm wrapped around her shoulder in a clear, possessive move. She is my mate. I only carry my rucksack.

Naomi glances up at me, her eyes filled with worry.

“The council met on the research ship. The V’aalarans have found a way to bring Samari females to us.”

The Samari had long been considered our only chance. The only tribe that still had females.

But they were out of reach, until now.

“She is Samari?” the King asks, his expression filled with wonder and curiosity. “But they’re so far away. How did you bring her here?”

“The V’aalarans developed an App to select females. They materialize here.” I reach into my rucksack that has been hanging over my shoulder. I pull out the tablet and show him. “This device will help us bring females. We can start with your sons.”

“My sons. That means I could have heirs.”

Naomi clutches my arm, fear obvious across her face.

“This is Naomi,” I say. “She is my mate. She will give me heirs, also.”

The King bows slightly in my direction. It is a small gesture, but it means that he is deeply appreciative.

He turns to the men beside him. “Summon the council. Bring my sons. Today, we shall change our destiny.”

To my mate, he smiles and says, “Welcome, Naomi. If you need anything, the Narulian people will provide it for you. You are now one of us.”

She glances at me nervously, then nods. "Thank you, King."

Wow. She even knows how to address a King. A part of me had worried that she might say something outrageous.

She squeezes my arm again. Alright. She isn't comfortable.

"I will show Naomi my quarters and then return to the meeting."

"Very well. I will provide you with two guards to protect her until we have brought more females. The males on this planet have not seen a female in ages."

"Can I just stay with you?" Naomi whispers.

"Actually, maybe we should do that. If you're okay with it."

"Well, I was drunk when I used the app, so I'm a bit curious."

I chuckle. She has a point.

"Alright. King, she will stay by my side. She is a strong mate, indeed."

"Indeed."

Naomi

I'm holding Marv's hand as we walk into an underground fortress. Narul is nothing like what I would have expected. Everything is bunkered and fortified.

I guess when he said Badlands, I wasn't really paying attention.

Evidence of prior battles marked the landing pad above us. There were decaying buildings, and the hangar wasn't nearly as state of the art as the space station.

But down here, below ground, Marv takes me by the hand into his secret kingdom.

The walls are made of the same smooth black sheet metal that I saw on the space station. There are small boxes along the wall with little computer panels. They are becoming easier to spot, now that I know what to look for.

Each small box has a surrounding indentation in the wall, and there's a small red dot on it. I would have expected a purple dot.

Marv glances at me.

I shrug, trying to send him my best "I'm okay" vibe. Although, to be honest, I'm terrified.

When he was talking to the King, I sensed his fear. Even as he spoke with calm, clear words, he was afraid for me. Afraid for my safety.

I am the first female.

We walk behind the King, surrounded by his armed guard. They don't look primitive at all; rather, they're all adorned in thick black gear that looks like it is bulletproof, waterproof, and whatever other proof they might need up here.

There's an elevator device, and it drops us deeper below Narul's surface.

"Have you always lived below ground?" I ask, trying to make pleasant conversation. Marv squeezes my hand again, tight. I glance at him, and hear his words in my head, 'Please let me do the talking. Trust me.'

He knows I can hear him. I nod.

Oops. He had told me that, on the ship.

“Only since the Fall of the Females,” the King responds, his eyes roving over me again.

Thankfully, I am fully clothed.

I still feel gross just from the way he looks at me. But Marv is right. Give them other females, and I’m not a commodity.

Living on his satellite thingie might not be such a bad idea.

We round the corner and enter a large conference room. There are a dozen dark purple men in there, and when I enter alongside Marv, they gasp in unison.

“A female?” one of them asks.

“Yes. And each of you shall have one of your own. Everyone have a seat,” Marv commands.

I hover next to him and watch as he commands his men.

With each precise word, it becomes clearer to me. Not only is he a General, but he is well respected. This is why I have not been kidnapped.

But one of his soldier men is leering at me, and I don’t like it at all.

Marv

My mate is hovering behind me, and for that, I am glad. These males have never known the sheer pleasure of mating, and they would kill for the opportunity.

Old customs have fallen to the wayside. They want what I have. So, I must give them their own mates.

“Males, let me explain the App to you. There is a device that Samaritans use on Earth, called a cell phone,” I say. “They are all addicted to it and they use it for everything. The V’aalarans found a way to create an App for their device, one that looks like a regular dating App. We get to screen the females, and if one of them selects us and we select them back, they are instantly transported to us.”

“Can they leave?” Prince Yi asks.

I shake my head. “The device only brings them here. There is no path to return.”

“And they do not fight?”

“Not too much,” I say, wincing. I know that some of what I need to say will be hard for my mate to hear.

“And if they do?”

“Subdue them, if needed. But honestly, try to win them over. They are strong and need to be treated as such.”

“How did you win this one over?”

I glance at my mate. She looks annoyed.

“I’m still working on that.”

“But you mated, nonetheless. She agreed to be your mate?”

“Yes.”

Naomi’s fingernails dig into my arm. I forgot that she was holding onto me.

Ouch.

“Alright. Show us.”

I walk Prince Yi through the process of setting up his profile. He starts searching for a mate and finds one that he definitely likes. But she does not

swipe up.

“You may wait. Or you may move on.”

“How long does it take?” Yi asks.

I glance at Naomi. She swiped fast. “How long, my Love?”

She clears her throat and stares at the Prince. “If she has not responded by now, you should move on. There are plenty of other Samari in the sea,” she says.

Interesting phrase. I’ll have to ask her about that later.

Yi swipes past a few more attractive females. He finally stops on another one. Rachel.

“Now what?”

“Wait a moment,” I command. He has already initiated the sequence that causes lights to flash at the top of her screen.

The screen begins to glow.

“She has accepted you.”

Everyone sits in complete silence, in awe that Prince Yi will have a Rachel soon.

“Now what happens?” my mate whispers from behind me.

“She will materialize in front of you. And then you will place a communication device behind her ear.” I fish into my pocket and take out a handful of them, which I drop onto the table. The males pass them around, each eager to have a comm device.

Naomi reaches up to her ear and starts touching the skin behind it. She finds the spot where I planted the device and sighs.

In front of Yi, a female form begins to take shape. She is tall, dark skinned, and has long hair in braids.

She starts screaming in her language, and even though we can all understand her, she can’t understand anyone.

“Naomi?”

“Oh.” Naomi takes a step forward. “Rachel?”

Rachel turns to glare at her, her eyes filled with fear. And hate. “What is this place? Why am I here?”

“This is the planet Narul. You have been summoned here to be Prince Yi’s mate.”

“I agreed to no such thing!” the female shouts. Naomi sighs, a sad expression on her face.

“Yi, place the device.”

Yi glances at Naomi, who bows her head before speaking. “Rachel, I’m so sorry. Yi will place a device into the skin behind your ear. This will allow you to understand their language.”

“How do you understand me?”

“I’m from Earth.”

“And you let them take me?” Rachel demands. Her hands are immediately on her hips, anger snarling her lower lip.

Naomi cowers behind me. “I’m so sorry.”

Rachel folds her arms over her chest. “Fine. Place your damned device. I have something to say.”

Yi leans forward and inserts the device behind her ear. He waits for a moment as it connects, then tells Rachel, “I have never seen a more beautiful female in all my life.”

She stares at him, still fuming. “Take me home. Now.”

“This is a one-way trip, my Princess.”

“And each of these men is expecting to find a woman?” Rachel asks, staring directly at Naomi.

Naomi squeezes my hand even tighter, so much that I feel severe pain radiating up my arm.

“They have no women. I cannot stop them. I used the App, too.”

“The App?” Rachel says, then her mouth drops open. “Oh, my.”

Prince Yi’s younger brother, Fio, is already plugging his way through the App as well. He pauses over a female, Greta. “She looks kind,” he says to the group, oblivious to the conflict on Rachel’s face.

A few moments later, Greta appears in front of us, and the sequence repeats.

By the time each male in the room has selected a female, including the King, Naomi is in tears.

“They didn’t agree to this,” she whispers.

“We need them,” I tell her.

Rachel catches her eye, now having witnessed the same breakdown amongst a number of females. The same raw terror that she experienced was repeated a dozen times.

“Let me take you to my quarters.”

“But these women...”

“They will be treated like Queens.” I turn to face the males. “Remember, treat them like Queens. Each and every one of them.”

As we walk away, the tablet in my hand, my mate by my side, I know that the fate of Narul has been forever changed. But my mate looks heartbroken, and the look on the faces of those females tells me what I had not understood until now.

This is a trick, and the females feel like they've been robbed of their choice. Yes, we need them. But we've stolen them to serve our own purpose.

Rachel wasn't even the loudest female.

Alondra, the last female selected, took one look around the room and screamed. She started kicking and punching the warrior she'd been selected for, and he let her. They would war with us, one angry female at a time.

By the time we get to my quarters, Naomi doesn't want to talk or cuddle. She moves silently to the bedroom and collapses in the bed, where she continues to cry.

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Naomi

At some point during the night, I awaken. I can hear somebody else crying, and I know that I've participated in that woman's pain.

I stand and cross the room, where I find my captor standing by a strange contraption.

After seeing all those women being "selected" I don't feel much like being his mate anymore. He didn't care if he got me or someone else. All he needed was a warm female body with a uterus.

He would've accepted any female. I was just overly willing, since I'd had too much vodka.

"I'm sorry," Marv says without turning. He's sifting through a box, and when I approach, I see that it's a memory box filled with pictures.

"Oh," I whisper, seeing a picture of Marv with his little sister.

I sit down beside him, on the floor. "Tell me about Julee," I say.

Marv runs his hand over her little face. She has the most beautiful hair.

"She liked to play rough. I used to wish I'd had a baby brother, instead, so she tried her best to act like a male. She liked to play fight with me."

"She looks feisty," I say.

A loud moan rolls through our wall. Oh. Those walls are thinner than I expected. I glance over at Marv, but his expression doesn't change.

I guess mating is just expected. No goofy expressions, nothing.

I reach over and touch Marv's arm, and he turns to look at me. His words stretch into my mind: *'I only wanted you. I saw you first and stayed on your pic. I wouldn't have chosen a different female.'*

I release my hold on his arm. Does he know what he just told me?

I'm not sure I like being so connected to him.

"Let me show you something," Marv says suddenly. He puts away the photo.

I lean back on my elbows and take in the design of his wall. Marv leans forward and presses a button, and it illuminates his dark wall in front of me. I don't know how I didn't see it until now.

His wall is made up of an enormous fish tank, like a wall at an aquarium. Inside, there's sea veggies and other plants. But there are also hundreds of weird looking fish swimming together. They have weird boxy shapes and silvery bodies.

"What are those?"

"Chutts. They taste amazing."

I can't take my eyes off the weird little chutt fish. They spin when they swim, perhaps because they're box shaped.

"Does everyone keep fish in their quarters?"

"Yes. We have to stay below ground, until the fighting ends. The Ta'al have taken down too many of our fighters."

I shake my head. "But what makes you think the war will end when you have females? Didn't someone do something to kill off all the females?"

Marv's face changes, and he suddenly looks tired. Like I've drained the last bit of hope from him.

He shrugs and stands. "Would you like dinner?" he asks, just as the woman on the other end of the wall lets out a series of very content moans.

"Yeah. But can we go to another room?"

Marv grins. "You know most of them are mating tonight."

"See, you are a perv. I thought it was just me that was wondering that."

"Perv?" Marv reaches out to offer me his hand, but I ignore it.

"Never mind," I say, standing up. I wipe my hands on my borrowed pair of pants and then try to shove them in pockets.

But there aren't pockets.

That's going to be a problem.

"Come with me, Mate," Marv says, oblivious to reason 9,834 that I'm unhappy here. Or perhaps, ignoring me.

Marv

Naomi is smarter than an entire room full of generals, warriors, and royalty. She sees the question that we've all avoided asking.

Who did this to our females?

The battle won't end. They'll just find another way to harm our new females.

I suddenly understand the reason why the V'aalarans offered the App to all the tribes. It makes sense now. They already figured out the problem.

Someone went after the females. And they want to keep their new females safe.

I don't know who to trust and who to fear. We've held an alliance with all the tribes except the F'oogalians and the Ta'al. We've kept peace with everyone else.

But have we been wrong?

Another moan shakes through the wall, and I suddenly don't feel hungry. I want my mate. I turn to look at her, hoping to see the same hunger in her eyes.

Naomi is staring at me, a strange look on her face. "What is it?" she asks.

I watch as she steps forward and touches my arm. She pauses, waiting for something.

Why won't she trust me? I stare at her, wondering why she won't let me love her.

"Why should I?" she asks, and I realize why she's holding my arm.

"You can hear my thoughts?"

She shrugs. "Some of them, but only if I'm touching you."

"But I can't hear yours."

"Are you supposed to?"

"I don't know. I thought the Connection would work both ways."

"Connection?"

I shrug. Might as well lay all my cards on the table. She can hear my thoughts anyway.

“My Father used to tell me he had a Connection with my Mother. I never understood it, until you started to tell me you were hearing some of my thoughts.”

“Why can’t you hear me?”

I wonder. “Maybe it’s a simple answer,” I say. “Maybe it’s because I love you, and you aren’t sure how you feel about me yet.”

She lets go of my arm. “Convenient.”

“There’s nothing convenient about it. I want to know what it feels like to hear you. I want you to be happy with me.”

“Do you hear yourself?” she demands. “You want me to be happy with you. Not just happy, but *with you*. My happiness is only in conjunction with us being together.”

“But you enjoyed making love to me. I could definitely feel that.”

Naomi shakes her head emphatically. “That doesn’t mean I should instantly fall in love with you, or that I should suddenly be okay with you guys stealing a bunch of Earth women.”

Oh. So that’s why she’s upset.

“Look, you knew we were going to need more females. We talked about this.”

Her little face scrunches up in disgust. “Yeah, but I was there. Rachel looked me in my eyes and blamed me.”

“You had no say in what we were doing. Just like you can’t stop what we’ll be doing tomorrow.”

Naomi’s eyes widen. “What’s happening tomorrow?”

“We’re summoning the rest of the mates. Our entire tribe will have a female for every male.”

“But what if the females don’t want to be here?”

“Then they shouldn’t be on an App looking for a mate!” I growl.

“Not every woman is on there for a mate. Some of them just want a friend. Others just want sex. I wasn’t looking for a mate. I was drunk.”

“Well, you’re here now.”

“Yeah, I’m here now.” Naomi’s shoulders sink and she storms quietly out of the room. I peek into the bedroom, where I see her covering herself with blankets.

I hadn’t intended to fight with my mate. Now what?

Naomi

It's weird, being able to read his thoughts when he can't read mine.

At some point during the night, I awaken with a start. Some noise must've pulled me out of sleep.

I glance over and see that Marv is sound asleep. Of course, he is it's been a busy couple of days. And he lost his virginity to me in a whirlwind of crazy space sex.

I roll over and hug him from behind. I'm not sure why, but I crave affection from this handsome alien. Nighttime is too lonely, and even though I'm mad, I don't want to sleep alone.

Thankfully his bed is small enough that I can pretend I accidentally invaded his space.

My hand settles on his belly. He's apparently sleeping nude. I guess we need to figure out our sleeping habits, but it is what it is. In the middle of the night, it isn't wise to wake a sleeping bear.

I sigh. A teddy bear. He has not raised a fist or been cruel to me in any way.

I lay my head against his shoulder and try to imagine a future with him. I had expected to be above ground, breathing in fresh air and seeing sunlight. Instead, he has a massive indoor fish tank, and in his other room, a large garden filled with plants that provide him food and oxygen.

His life is like nothing I've ever seen.

Was my life much better?

I think about my ex, banging on my front door. That's where all this started, right? I was cheated on, feeling lonely, and looking for love.

But was I even capable of love?

Marv's breathing changes, and he lets out a soft snore. Is he awake?

I try to lay completely still. Maybe I'll just listen to his thoughts.

But I hear nothing. He just continues snoring softly.

I'm a terrible person, because I really just need human connection. I want to be touched. I want to be loved. But I don't know how to give those things in return.

I lay beside him, wondering time and again if he'll wake up. But he doesn't. He even manages to roll over in his sleep.

When his broad chest is within my reach, I rest my head on him. I even start to move my hand along his stomach, seeing if I can arouse him.

He continues to snore.

Seriously?

I roll off the bed and take off all my clothes, then climb back in. I lay beside him, but none of his thoughts invade my brain.

Nothing.

He just snores.

I start to get worked up by the fact that he doesn't even notice me. It feels like hours must have passed, but there's no clock and no sunlight. I kick away the blankets and reach for his cock.

It immediately hardens.

Ohhhh.

I lower myself to his waist and study his cock. The shaft is long, and the tip is soft. I wrap one hand around it, remembering the way it felt like silk in my hands back on his ship.

I lick the tip, then continue moving my tongue down the shaft, towards the base.

He doesn't move. His breathing changes, but if he's awake, I can't tell.

I open my mouth and taste him. He feels warm and excited, all at once. Liquid heat stirs at my core, and I know I want him.

But instead, I move my mouth up and down his cock, gliding as far down as I can. My hands explore his soft, fuzzy balls. He has fine, curly hair over them, and they feel amazingly round.

I release his cock from my mouth and work my way down to his balls, taking one, then both of them, into my mouth. I suckle him until he lets out a loud moan.

And then, I don't stop. I work my way back to his cock and take all of him into my mouth, down my throat. His hips start rocking, pleading.

I bob my head up and down, finding great pleasure in the moans that he continues to release.

He's close to climax, so I remove myself and stare up at him. His eyes are intent on my face.

"You are magnificent," he tells me.

In his mind, he tells me something else. *'I don't understand you. I don't know if you're mad at me or if you want to love me.'*

I smile sadly and climb on top of him.

I don't understand myself, either.

By the time he explodes inside of me, we're both screaming and moaning. I need him, and I don't know how I feel about that.

I can't imagine any other man every making me feel this way – human or not.

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Marv

When morning comes, my mate is resting peacefully in my arms. I hold her for as long as I can, but I know the males are waiting.

When I finally stand and get dressed, she opens her eyes.

“Selecting more women today?”

I nod. I’m not sure how to answer her without starting another fight.

“Can I stay here? I don’t think I can watch that again.”

I bend down and brush a kiss over her forehead. She pulls me down for a long embrace, and I’m sure she’s trying to hear my thoughts. It’s okay though. My only thoughts are of her.

“I’ll come back quickly. There is food in the ice chest.”

She rolls back into her blankets and fakes sleep.

When I leave my quarters, I stand in front until two guards arrive. True to the King’s word, he will protect my mate while I fulfill my task.

I turn to the guards and tell them, “Don’t worry, you will all get mates before the day is done.”

Both of them grin. They must’ve seen some of the gorgeous females yesterday. None were as beautiful as my Naomi, but the males were quite pleased.

I walk slowly to the main auditorium. We must work our way through the entire kingdom, which will not be an easy task. The King has prepared tablets for everyone, and I will upload the App for them all at once.

When the entire auditorium is full, I pick up the loudspeaker.

Silence fills the room immediately.

“The V’aalarans have offered us a gift,” I say. “They created an App that attracts females. Everyone here will choose a female today. Choose well. You can only have one.”

I conduct round after round of matches. The room fills, then empties again, each male hauling his prize out with him. Some of the females look devastated. One of them sank down to her knees and cried. She had to be

carried out. Another kicked and screamed as she was carried over a warrior's shoulder.

By the time I've finished the last batch of males, I'm exhausted. I've seen females of every size, shape, and skin tone. I know that the true females will bear the lavender color by morning. Others might take longer, perhaps a day or two.

But they will accept us.

They have to. What other choice do they have?

I return to my door, where both guards await eagerly. I repeat the process with them, and they each select a female. Their mates appear in front of us, one fighting and one forlorn. It's a scene I've watched all day, and I'm exhausted.

"Thank you," I finally say before entering my home.

I walk past the two guards with their newfound mates, locking the door behind me as I enter.

I don't see Naomi when I enter, so I wander into the extra room.

She's sitting next to a small plant, singing to it.

"Hi," I say.

"Hi," she answers.

"May I ask what you're doing?"

Naomi shrugs. "I read somewhere once that plants grow if you sing to them."

I stare at the little plant that she's been singing to. It's a slow growing foarder plant, one of the starchy vegetables. She pats the leaf then smiles.

"I'd like to think that it's listening," she says, then stands. "How was it?"

"Sad. I can see why you didn't want to be there."

She wipes her hands on her pants, smearing tiny traces of dirt. "It's hard to suddenly have all your choices taken from you."

"Do you feel that way? Like I won't give you any choices?"

She moves slowly across the room, then bends to pick up a small plant. When she's holding the little container in her hand, she tells me, "Imagine you're a plant. You have to grow, that's your job. But you could grow tall and be a tree, or you could stay small and keep your fruit to yourself."

"I don't understand."

"I'm not sure if I'm the tree or the small plant. But I want to choose."

She sets down the plant and looks up.

“Okay,” I offer. I’m not sure what she needs to hear from me.

“Let me try it another way. My life was difficult, but not terrible. I had my own place, a job, and friends. I visited my Mom sometimes. It was my life, and I liked it.”

I stare at her, waiting.

“But now I’m here. I have a big alien dude with purple biceps. I’m going to be living here, underground, and on a spaceship satellite thingie. But I won’t get to stand in the sunlight.”

“You want sunlight? I can find sunlight for you.”

“Let me finish,” she says. “I can’t decide if I want to be a tree or a small plant. But if I don’t have sunlight and I’m trapped, my choice is already gone.”

I think I understand.

But then, why did she wake me up with her mouth? And why did it feel so perfectly amazing?

“What do you need me to do?”

“I don’t know. Just be patient with me. This is really hard.”

“Of course,” I promise her. “Whatever you need.”

Naomi

We fall into an easy routine. We wake up, he cooks, I study his plants, his fish, and the computer library thing he has. He pulls me into his arms and heats me up a few times a day, and we mate like horny teenagers.

But something still feels off. I feel like I'm going through adolescent mood swings, to match the uptick in my sex drive.

We've been on Narul for almost two weeks when I finally figure it out.

"I need a friend," I tell him.

"Hmm?"

"Well, girls on my planet always have a friend. Another girl that they can talk to."

Marv nods. "Another girl. I shall find one for you?"

I shake my head. "Not the App, silly. There has to be another girl who is already here and also needs a friend. Girls like to spend time together."

I glance around the room. The plants are growing, the fish are swimming, and I'm losing my mind. "I need to get out."

"Okay," Marv says. "We have a recreation center."

"Is that just a bunch of sports equipment?"

Marv laughs. "Some of it, but there's a whole lot more. I hear some of the mated pairs go there sometimes."

I take extra time fixing up my hair. After all, back on Earth, women spend hours getting ready, and it's never really been about looking good for the guys. We like to impress each other.

I put on one of the robes that I've borrowed from Marv. Hopefully, some of the women that were "selected" know a thing or two about designing clothes, because these utilitarian boys' outfits need to go.

We walk together to the recreation center. Marv sneaks his hand into mine and winks. "You look amazing," he tells me.

I like that he can still be impressed by me. "Thanks," I tell him.

When we enter, I take in the enormity of their underground world. There is an enormous field where males are kicking around several odd shaped balls. Some are more oval than round.

Off to the side, there are swimming pools, a room with screens that look like televisions, and a bunch of chairs set about for everyone to relax on.

And there are several lavender girls sitting around the room. Well, mostly lavender. But I see a few unchanged females as well.

“May I go chat with the girls?” I ask.

Marv smiles. “You’re free to walk around in here. It’s safe.”

Safe. There is that word again. What isn’t he telling me?

I walk slowly, reading the very large room as I wander through the complex. When I reach the largest pool, I sit down at the side and dip my legs in. It’s otherwise empty.

I guess men and women don’t want to swim together.

My eyes continue to wander around the room, until I realize why I feel uncomfortable.

There are no children.

They have an entire recreation center and no children. I suddenly feel heartbroken for the loss of an entire generation.

No wonder Marv came looking for me.

“May I sit with you?” a woman’s voice says.

I glance up. It’s a brunette with pale skin. She is unchanged. I nod.

The woman plops down beside me and dips her own legs into the water. She lets out a long sigh.

“Which one is yours?” she asks me.

I glance around the large room, looking for Marv. He’s at the edge of the ball court. I point, and he waves.

“Oh.” She pauses, studying him. “Well, mine is that snarling beast standing right over there,” she says, pointing to a big purple guy who has his arms folded over his chest. He’s standing on the other edge of the pool, watching us.

“I’m Naomi,” I offer.

“Kimmy.”

“How has it been for you? Has he been kind?”

Kimmy flips her arm over to reveal her wrist. There’s a flower tattooed on it.

“I don’t get it.”

“You will. Let me see your wrists,” she says.

I flip them both over. Nothing to see.

She sighs. “That means I’m pregnant.”

“But you didn’t ‘change.’”

“Because I didn’t agree to mate with him.”

“But...”

“Yeah. He made me.”

I stare at my wrists again. A flower means a girl is pregnant? “How did you know about the flower thing? He told you?”

“I asked him what the hell it was when I saw it. I keep expecting to turn purple after each time he sleeps with me, but I’ve never agreed to be his mate, so I guess that’s how that works.”

“Is he... gentle?”

She shrugs. “I mean, sometimes he’s rough. But only if I ask.”

“So, you are okay sleeping with him?” I want to know.

“I mean, yeah, he hasn’t forced me. I just won’t be his mate.”

“But you’re having his baby.”

“His creepy little half alien baby.”

“We’re trapped here,” I say, staring at Marv.

“Maybe. Or maybe that’s what they want us to believe.”

I shrug. If there was a way home, I’d be able to read it from Marv’s thoughts. Mostly I just read him feeling sad that he can’t send me back. He knows I’m unhappy.

“I don’t think there is.”

She squints again at Marv. “Wait, isn’t he the guy who was conducting the whole App thing? Back at that big room, when I arrived?”

I stare down at my wrists again. I don’t think I want to be friends with her. I glance up at Marv and mouth the words, “Take me home.”

He understands and crosses the large room quickly. He’s by my side almost immediately.

“It is him,” Kimmy says. “He showed them how to bring us here.”

I don’t know what to say to that, so I let Marv lead me home.

Marv

Naomi has been distracted ever since we went to the recreation center. Three days passed, and I keep seeing her staring at her wrists.

“What is it?” I finally ask her, touching the soft skin on her arms as I take a seat beside her. She’s on the sofa, listless.

“I don’t know. The other woman didn’t like me because you helped bring all the girls here.”

I sigh. “Yeah. I imagine that will make it harder for you to find girlfriends.”

“When do we go up to space again? To your smaller space station?”

“I wanted to talk to you about that. I found another opportunity.”

She looks up at me. “I’m listening.”

“You said that you want sunlight. The V’aalarans are looking for a few members of friendly tribes to go stay with them on their planet.”

“Is it in the Badlands?” she asks. Her eyes look scared.

“Close, but not in them. It’s at the edge.”

“Will I be able to walk in the sunlight?”

She’s been edgy lately. Has it been because I’ve kept her down here, below the surface?

“Yes.”

“Okay.”

“Perfect,” I tell her. “And, they actually have a job for you.”

Naomi seems to visibly relax beside me. “They do?”

“They have some females that didn’t fit in. They want to create a housing program for them and give them a chance to settle in on their own terms.”

“Really?” she asks. “Are they going to do something similar here?”

I shake my head slowly. “V’aalara’s leadership is a bit different. You see, they raised Queen Abigail. She was the first trial, and they accidentally brought her as a child.”

“That’s awful.”

“But apparently, they brought her twin sister in trial two.”

Naomi's eyes widen. "What? That's unreal."

I nod. It is a bit amazing that it all worked out. "So, since they have two Earth females who they are listening to for feedback, they are trying to figure out how to make the outsider females feel more at home."

"Since they have no way to return home," Naomi whispers.

"Yeah. They regret taking them. They're miserable. Refused their mates."

Naomi leans against me. "I don't have a flower on my wrist."

"That's okay. When it's our time, it's our time."

She nods. "Thanks, Marv. I'm grateful."

I kiss her forehead, my lips grazing her soft hair. "I'll give you anything you want, my Mate," I tell her, for the hundredth time.

She doesn't say anything, which is good enough for me. At least we haven't fought since the recreation center.

Naomi

V'aalara is everything that Narul isn't. From the moment we land, my mouth is gaping open as I stare at our new planet.

And seriously, I get to live on another planet. If I wasn't so sad about leaving Earth behind, I'd probably be overjoyed with my excitement about being here.

Marv introduces me to his friend, Goran. Apparently, they worked on the space station together. Goran's mate, Cam, is golden and grinning. She immediately shows me her flower mark.

"I'm so nervous," she confides in me as we walk together through a large garden. The garden is filled with pink flowers.

"I'm sure you'll be an excellent mama," I tell her. I don't know if I'm ready, so every day that I don't see a flower, I breathe a sigh of relief.

Cam pauses and looks at me. She has a tiny baby bump over her super slender waist. "How are you doing?" she asks me. "And I'm not asking for a simple, 'I'm fine.'"

"Oh," I say softly. How did she know? Can she read minds?

"Naomi, I know it's hard. I didn't like that I was summoned up to that space station, either."

I glance at her. "You were at the space station?"

"Yeah. We arrived on the same night, only I tried to escape and ended up having to kill a Foog."

"Whoa."

She chuckles. "Tell me about it. They had captured four females and turned them green before they tricked me into boarding their ship. I hadn't accepted my mate yet."

"I've accepted mine," I say defiantly.

"Hon, I know. You're purple."

I bend down to smell a flower. Its scent reminds me of honeysuckle on a fresh spring morning.

"I'm not sure about this whole 'forever' thing though. I was drunk when I used the App. I'm not exactly girlfriend material."

“Why not?”

I shrug, then start walking at a snail’s pace. Cam didn’t react to my words, just kept walking beside me, matching my pace.

This was what I’d wanted, right? A girl to talk to. Marv had found it for me, and I was still too scared to speak up.

“I have never been in a decent relationship. Boys cheat on me. I’m not good enough.”

“You’re plenty good enough,” Cam says.

I keep walking.

“Naomi,” she says, causing me to pause. She walks right up to me and places a hand on my cheek. “Look at me.”

I do.

“You’re beautiful. You’re worthy. You deserve to be treated right.”

I want to agree, but...

“Does Marv treat you well? He looks at you like you’re his Queen. Is that how he treats you?”

I nod.

“Then what is it?”

“I don’t know. I want to go home.”

Cam sighs. “But if you know in your heart of hearts that you can’t go back, can he be enough for you?”

I shrug. “I don’t know.”

“Think about it, okay? Please?”

I nod. We keep walking, and she steers away from hard topics. She points out their fruit-bearing trees, some p’aca that look like sheep but taste okay, and a long winding road to the mountains.

“You should talk to him,” she tells me finally, as we part.

“Thanks,” I tell her, and I mean it.

Marv

“This is our new place,” I say, showing Naomi around our designated quarters. They’ve given us a small condo near the Unsettled Camp. Apparently, they’ve rapidly built a housing unit just for single females, and guards protect it from intruders.

They don’t want me to stay there because it might be weird for the females. But they are grateful that Naomi has agreed to work for the cooperative of females.

“I like it,” Naomi says softly, standing by the window.

When we were back on Narul, I didn’t have windows. My last above-ground home there had windows, but we’d been under attack so much from the Foog and the Ta’al that it became impossible to protect ourselves.

I walk over to her and stand beside her. “It’s a nice view, isn’t it?”

She leans back, encouraging me to wrap an arm around her. So, I do. She relaxes beside me.

“I wonder what it would have been like to meet you in a normal way. To go out on a date and decide that we should be boyfriend and girlfriend.”

“Hmm,” I murmur, nuzzling my lips into her hair and kissing her. “I would’ve fallen head over heels in love with you.”

“Why me? How did you choose me?”

I shift my arms so that I’m wrapped around her waist. “I’ve never seen such a beautiful sight before I laid eyes on you. Your smile was so.... real.”

“But I was drunk,” she whispers.

“I have the photo.”

“You do?” she asks incredulously. I release her from my embrace and hurry away, then return with my tablet. I retrieve the saved file and show it to her.

It’s her, but back in human form. Before she was changed. Her eyes are bright, and her lips are full. Her hair is messy, and she doesn’t seem to care. She’s holding that bottle of what I’ve learned is “forgetting juice.” And she’s smiling, even though there are tears in her eyes.

“This was my photo?”

“Yes.”

“And you chose me from this? I look awful.”

“You look perfect.”

She shakes her head. “I don’t understand.”

I lean forward and wait for her to touch me. There’s a memory I want to share with her.

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Naomi

He leans into me and urges me to hold onto him. I do, and suddenly I see a flash of a memory.

Mother is standing by the stove, tears in her eyes. Father hands her a handful of flowers to make tea.

"What will I do without her?" she asks.

"Aw, my Julee."

My Father wraps his arms around my mother and holds her while she cries. I stand in the shadows, watching. Memorizing the curve of my mother's hips, memorizing her face in the dim light.

"If this illness takes you, I need you to protect her," Father says.

Mother nods. "I've been feeling a pain, in my arm. It started here," Mother pointed to her elbow, then traced the pain back to the center of her chest. "I think this illness attacks the heart."

"I know my heart will never be the same," Father says.

They stare at each other; both of them with tears in their eyes. "You are beautiful," my Father tells my Mother.

Marv closes his eyes and waits.

When he opens them, I stare into his eyes. I immediately ask, "I reminded you of your Mother?"

"No, not that. You reminded me of everything beautiful in the universe."

"How?"

He presses his hand into mine. "That memory, that was the night my Mother died. I never looked at anything and saw beauty again. I saw pain. I saw emptiness."

I wait.

"And then I saw you. You were the perfect light in my dark world. I've been waiting for you my whole life, and I didn't even know it."

"If you met me in the middle of a crowded room, would you still have chosen me?"

“Absolutely,” he says.

I lean into him and take a deep breath. “Okay.”

“Okay?”

“I’ll try.”

He doesn’t understand the sheer momentousness of my words, so I lean against him and press my lips against his. I kiss him until I have to come up for air.

“I like it here,” I finally tell him.

“I’m happy wherever you are happy.”

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Marv

Naomi settles into her new job, working with the females who are Unsettled. She comes home after her first week wearing a new outfit, something made in the collective.

It's a dress, styled in the Earthling way.

She walks in and grins at me. "Look what they made for me," she declares.

Her breasts are perfectly adorning the top of the dress, and I can see her cleavage as she approaches. Oh, this female makes me so needy.

"I want to show you something else," she says, her voice conspiratorial. She grabs my hand and drags me into our bedroom, where she removes her dress in one solid move.

Underneath it, she's wearing new panties. They aren't lacy like the ones she brought with her, but they're shiny. "I like them."

She pulls them off and hands them to me. "Okay, here they are," she teases.

They're made of p'aca fur.

She lays down and spreads open her legs, waiting for me.

I hesitate for a moment. She's been acting strange over the past few days.

But she's waiting.

I climb onto the bed and lick her perky little clit. I suckle it into my mouth, eager to make her sweet juices flow. She cums as I lick her pussy. I want her to scream my name, so I keep going, pushing my tongue deeper and deeper inside of her.

"Marvvvv," she calls out, and I climb on top of her. I enter her eagerly, like a young man finding home for the first time.

I love her more and more each day. She might not feel the same, but maybe someday, she will.

As we move in tune with each other, I dare to look into her eyes. She is staring right at me, those beautiful pools of light smiling up at me.

“Ohhh,” she moans as I finish inside her. She pulls me into an embrace over her, and I hear her whisper to me, “*I love you.*”

I glance down at her. Her lips don’t move, but she says it again. “*I love you.*”

“You do?” I whisper.

“You can hear my thoughts?” she asks, stunned.

“That was the first time I ever heard them. But if that’s what you’re thinking, I want to hear it forever.”

“I love you,” she says, this time speaking the words out loud.

I press my lips against hers and tell her the same.

“I’m glad you came to me,” I tell her.

“And I’m glad you picked me. I’m sorry it took me so long to realize it.”

I shake my head. “My Love, I would’ve waited a lifetime for those words. A lifetime.”

She smiles, and that’s really all a male could ask for.

The End

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Author's Note

What would it take to convince Naomi that this love was real? I was willing to take her from one planet to another until she saw that Marv was serious.

Marv is an innovator, a man of his people. But as the Narulian who brought females to their planet, he also had the opportunity to ask for the one thing that his mate truly needed for happiness – a place where she could walk freely in sunlight and find friendship.

The feeling that keeps bringing them back together is the feeling that will connect them in the end. I hope you enjoyed this story about Marv and Naomi. ❖❖

Thanks for reading!
~~Amalia

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Coming soon:

If you loved General's Bride, feel free to drop a rating on Amazon and grab the next book in the series: Captain's Bride.



Meet Isabela and Wyan. Isabela is a scrappy little problem solver who does not want to become a V'aalaran. She'll grab Wyan's spaceship to try to escape, even though he's tied up in the back.

How will Wyan convince Isabela to give him a chance? And more importantly, just how far will Isabela take her spaceship as she escapes?

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