

Insemination

“Mom, I feel like I don’t know who I am anymore. What’s my real name?”

“Jared is your real name, honey.”

“No, it’s not.” Blinding white light emanates from the floor around me then fades into murky darkness farther away.

How long have we been talking? I reach for my head, but my arm doesn’t make it far.

What the hell? A handcuff dangles from my wrist to a metal bar on my slab bed.

I shake my head to clear the foggy feeling that haunts me, and look around the vast, empty medical bay. “Where am I?”

“Where you belong, for now.” Mom shifts, and I tilt my head to see her, but can’t quite reach. She steps forward and wraps her fingers around mine. They feel warm compared to the cold slab under me. “I wish I knew how to help you.”

“Get me out of here, ma. They’ll kill me after what I saw.” I tilt my head to see her face.

“They, who? Saw what?” Mom bites her lip and crosses her arms.

“The aliens.”

“I don’t want to hear about that again. You and your dad weren’t abducted. He just left. Okay? Can you stop the insanity? They’ll let you go if you play along.”

“They? So... I’m right.”

“Shit.” She closes her eyes, pauses for a beat, then drops the act. “Oh, well.”

She shakes violently for a few moments as her hair turns white. Then she jerks her head up, revealing blue skin and multiple rows of eyes.

“Whoa. What the fuck?” I accidentally slam my head back onto the metal slab in shock.

This can’t be real. It just can’t.

My jaw drops to my chest as I stare at the morphing figure.

Its whole body shakes and jerks as it shifts between a snake-like creature with reflective scales and black orbs for eyes, a green-skinned plant-like dwarf dressed in rags, and a beautiful woman in flashes of nakedness, before stopping on a molten- form with arms, legs, and red holes where eyes should be. It comes around to the side of my bed, and pushes a button.

A metal guard shoots up all around my bed, and breaks into millions of tiny flakes as it folds over me.

Tiny flecks creep across my body like water, and I shake from side to side, trying to throw them off.

They latch together, pinning me down. I'm trapped.

A searing hand brushes across my face and the smell of burning flesh fills my nostrils.

I hear myself scream, and then a whoosh sound fills the room as an unseen door opens behind me.

A skirmish breaks out and I twist around in an effort to see.

The bed shakes as bodies knock against it. Fake-mom slaps the control panel and an alarm blares to life. My bed rocks hard, a thud hits the floor, and then Dad appears at my side. He pushes a button and the bed shakes. The mesh holding me breaks into flakes and slips down the side of the metal bed.

I scoot off the slab and fall as my dead legs buckle under me. I slam to the floor, coming face-to-face with fake-mom.

I scurry back until I bump into Dad's legs. "Where are we? What's happening?"

He shakes his head, picks me up like a baby, and then takes off running down a dark hall.

His body heat feels too-hot after the cold slab-bed.

The floor lights up with every step he takes, revealing black metal archways, dozens of hidden enclaves, and a long row of portholes.

He runs past them, and a purple planet appears like a sci-fi flip-book.

A siren blares to life, and Dad ducks into an enclave. He sets me down, and then feels along the wall, searching for something.

I stare down the hall from one direction to another, waiting to be caught at any moment.

"What was that thing? How did you get free?"

"I'm sorry, son." Dad falls to the floor, twitches, jerks, then stands up straight.

"Pop? Are you okay?" I feel a stab of pain and look down at a metal tube jabbed into my side. The top chamber holds a small green egg for just a second, before it's shot into my body, spreading fire in its wake.

I fall to the floor, writhing in agony as my body jerks and twitches. Scales break out across my body, then disappear.