

CHAPTER 16 Copulation Ceremony

Paradieceo had few rituals. Birthdays were celebrated by close friends when convenient, but the important rituals were: conception, birth, and ascension. Drota was due to conceive, and Ali's housemates were anxious to contribute this huge event in their lives to their new friend's learning about their culture. They had grown attached to Ali, they liked her, and she would be in Paradieceo for the birth of the baby; and she had, after all, offered to help take care of the newborn. For all these reasons, Ali was invited to Drota's conception.

The ritual takes place in a medical facility in the science building. Ali was ushered into a small viewing room with a speaker and a large one-way glass window so that the participants would not be distracted by the viewers. The lighting was dim, but Ali could see Drota, lying on a narrow table which had metal stirrups on each side and Salme sitting on a stool at her side, holding her hand. Two older women were having a conversation. Ali later learned that one woman was Drota's mother, and the other, her OBGYN. *I know what that table is; Elma told me that her mother described a gynecologist's office when doctors put a woman's feet in stirrups so that they could examine the cervix with their hands.* Ali had read about a time in medical history before the at home, self-administered medical probe, which enabled women to communicate medical data to the doctor's office by inserting the probe at home. That was also the time when detecting breast cancer subjected women to a breast crushing device which x-rayed the breast, the time before the invention of the breast cup which probed every part of the breasts without pain, a device which could also be used at home.

In addition to the table with the stirrups, there were a couple of stools and a small sink. Drota looked very nervous; Her body was rigid, and she kept wiping her free hand on her jumper. Salme was trying to make jokes; Ali never saw Drota not laugh at Salme's jokes – well, except for the rude ones. This could be a nasty experience for some women, especially those who disliked men, thought they were dirty and mean; or those who had never been penetrated by a man and feared they would experience excruciating pain; and those who resented the pleasure this man might get from his dirty act. This would probably not be the case for Drota. She did her homework: had an exam by a gynecologist 3 weeks prior to the ritual to assure that she is ready to conceive, and went to the club to have her first encounter with a man. It was no big deal for her, nothing she would want to repeat any time soon, but nothing horrible either. She did manage to reach a climax, helpful, she understood in moving sperm along to find an egg, so she wanted to be sure she was capable of this function when the time came.

Some women like to have their wives engage in foreplay before the copulation. There was an old wives' tale that the tremors experienced during climax helped move the sperm toward the egg, so it was not uncommon for the woman being impregnated to induce sexual excitation either from the Breeder or from her wife. The Breeder did not take drugs to allow him to maintain an erection for a long period of time. He was expected to insert his penis and ejaculate after the recipient had squeezed the penis several times with her vaginal muscles. Quick in and out; deposit the sperm and leave to provide as little trauma as possible for women who might be disgusted by even the sight of a penis. It was not unheard of for a woman to vomit during the process. Eleanora had explained the whole thing to Ali.

Ali was surprised they had invited Kyra to witness the ritual; It smacked of matchmaking, but when she asked Eleanora about it later, she was told that it was not at all uncommon to invite an unmarried woman to witness this ritual, and in fact, Kyra had not seen one before.

The OBGYN pulled up Drota's jumper, removed her underwear and propped her feet up in the stirrups, and slid her down the table a bit so her vagina was easily accessible. *Put a sheet over her for Christ's sake! This is way weird. It's like a group peep show,* Ali thought, being careful to hide her thoughts from the assembled group.

The Breeder arrived. *Geez, Ali thought; he's drop dead gorgeous,* not a whole lot older than herself, *I sure wouldn't kick him out of bed.* Kyra shot back. *I heard that Eleanora just smiled and hoped other spectators had not heard.* Ali put her hand over her mouth like Earth people do when they realize something fell out of their mouth that shouldn't have.

The man was very professional. He did not strip naked or make any provocative moves. He simply brought out his fully erect penis and stroked it until Drota indicated that she was prepared for the insertion.

I do NOT want to watch this! Ali's curiosity did not overcome her Earth born inhibitions. The observation room was quite small, and dimly lit, so it was not difficult for her to drift to the back and lean against the wall with her eyes focused on the floor. When the group started clapping, she looked up to see the Breeder, having contributed his precious substance which would become their daughter, putting his spent penis away and walking out of the room. Kyra was standing next to her, "Not comfortable for you?" and touched her shoulder. Ali nodded and walked out of the room.

There were occasions, of course, when the infusion did not take, a pregnancy did not ensue, and the ritual had to be repeated. This was not one of those cases.

There was a party afterward at the flat with food and drink. Salme and Drota were engaged in uncharacteristically affectionate behavior in public, touching hands, even sharing an occasional peck on the lips. Ali had helped prepare for the feast, creating some dishes which resembled American picnic food, like potato salad using a vegetable that tasted like a cross between potatoes and carrots, deviled egg slices, and something like a chicken salad. Everyone was impressed with the food and there was a giddy mood in the room.

Ali was in a strange mood, that she couldn't quite define. She remembered reading about a time when couples used to have gender reveal parties; it was the same era when abortions were being made illegal. Both were illogical to her. There still was no proof that a human fetus could survive outside the womb before 6 months, even with life support; the idea that the fetus had a soul or was sentient were not supported by science, so most people of medicine and science believed that a fetus was not a baby being murdered, rather a biological phenomenon. Yet most parents behaved as if the fetus was a sentient being, talking to it, and playing music for it. Some psychologists claimed that the experience of the fetus in the womb impacted the emotional development of the adult. There was a study that suggested the fetus grimaced when the mother ate certain foods like Brussel sprouts; there were also studies that reported the intelligence of amoeba; and there was a ritual called a gender reveal party where adults demonstrated that they did not have enough sense to raise a child, in Ali's opinion.

Ali was beginning to recognize that she had a very low tolerance for things she considered stupid: things that were not supported by science or did not make sense to her. She was well aware that this was not an appropriate time for soul searching, but the truth was, she was feeling fidgety and uncomfortable.

Kyra asked Ali in code if she wanted to go to the cave after the party; they both had a free unit tomorrow. Ali answered "no;" it was the kind of no that said: 'And I don't want to go to your flat or to walk in the park.' This was not Ali's usual demeanor; something was strange. Kyra was smart enough to know this was not the time or place to pursue what it was. No longer in a party mood, Kyra went home.

Ali told Drota that she needed to go for a walk and that she would clean up from the party either tonight or tomorrow when she did not have to work.

"Are you ok," Drota asked.

"Ya, I'm running into some conflicts at work; I just need some thinking time. She went to Eleanora and asked if she could go to the room of secrets for a bit and got Eleanora's OK. It did not take long in the room of secrets to realize that she was desperately lonely. She could go to Kyra's; Kyra would embrace her and infuse that magnificent healing energy. Not what she wanted; not what she needed. Ali left the room of secrets, not saying goodbye to Eleanora, and headed for the Night Club.

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Ali had gone to the Night Club several times since the embarrassing incident with Mahmee, and it was quite uncomfortable. Mahmee was almost always there, but Ali managed to walk straight to the front near the stage, appearing to not notice. She had not been ready to lose her virginity, but she had wanted to be in Jerod's

space, to feel his energy. The Madam had apparently acquired a bit of wisdom and had not approached her about using her rain check.

For sure Mahmee will be there like a spider, lurking in a corner shadow waiting for her next prey; I wish I could stop feeling embarrassed every time I think about her, Ali thought on her way to the Club.

Each time she saw Jerod, she was more attracted than the time before. This night she decided that she should put aside dedication to virginity and allow this very gentle man to introduce her to sex. And so, on the night Drota conceived, the first time she had refused Kyra, Ali nervously approached the Madam and said she would like to use her “rain check.” The Madam asked if she had decided who she would like to have sex with. “Yes, Jerod.”

Now, in a dimly lit room the size of a monk’s cell, which was not the lovely hotel room at a resort she had fantasized as the venue for giving her virginity to her husband, Ali reached up to kiss Jerod. Much to her dismay, he pulled back, visibly shaken – *will this session end in disaster; maybe I’m meant to stay a virgin.*

“You don’t want to kiss me?”

Jerod knew from their trip to the Wilderness that Ali was an alien in Paradiaceo. “You don’t know?” he stammered; “kissing is for women only. Do boys kiss women on your planet?”

“Yes, there is a lot of kissing. I guess I better just follow your lead.” Ali’s disappointment was crushing, having imagined, every time she could be alone in a secret environment, what it would be like to kiss Jerod.

He touched her hand, yes, her hand, in a way she had never felt before, in a way that sent shivers, warm wonderful, electric pulsating shivers up her arm and through her body, a sensation that made her feel weak in the knees, and aching in her groin, in a way she would never be able to adequately describe. He lifted her skirt and slipped his hand inside her panties so that in one careful movement he caressed her ass and her panties fell to the floor while he crumpled the skirt of her jumper in his hands, working it slowly up her body and over her head. He put his hands under her tee shirt caressing her breasts with one hand while pulling the tee shirt over her head with the other. His tongue now circling her nipples, his hands on her ass drawing her close to him, pressing his erect penis against her mound of hair. One hand ran down her thighs between her legs pushing them apart ever so gently. With her legs now opened just a bit, he tucked his penis between her legs, letting it rub her clitoris while his hand on her back pressed her nipples against his chest.

Ali, all but gasping for breath, was helpless in his embrace; she was desperate to have him inside her. He oh so gently picked her up and laid her on the bed. She trusted him completely.

There was something almost spiritual about the moment of pain followed by rapturous pleasure. She lingered in his embrace while he caressed her hair, her cheeks, and kissed every moment of her body - except her mouth.

“You feel,” Ali said softly. She turned toward Jerod, hands tucked under her head and looked at his resting body. “You feel, Jerod. What can that possibly be like for you here?” The silence that followed was like a steel gate. That conversation would not be continuing.

He reached out to touch her face. “Are you satisfied with your raincheck?”

She nodded, kissing his hand.

“Good, Madam will knock soon if we don’t appear in the normal timeframe.” Jerod sat up but Ali caught his arm before he turned away.

“Did you? I mean, were you satisfied?” He was not flaccid. Ali knew so little about men, but she thought he should be flaccid.

Jerod froze. That same panic she witnessed when she first met him and wanted to “just talk” seemed to sweep over him.

You must be satisfied. I don’t matter. Jerod sounded more stern than she thought him capable of. He had done his job as he was expected to. Was it not enough?

The next few minutes seemed like hours. Dressing, combing her hair, watching him as he straightened the bed. *For his next customer. Get this through your head, Ali. He is NOT available. Period.* Her thoughts sounded loud as a trumpet – she even caught herself wishing he could hear; if he did, he gave no sign of it. *Perhaps that’s because males do not possess telepathy.*

Madam’s knock on the door.

Ali could not imagine a kinder, gentler, more pleasurable loss of her virginity, nor more conflicted feelings. She matter-of-factly complimented herself on her decision, avoiding the realities of his inability to feel what he so expertly delivered.

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On her way home from losing her virginity, Ali thought she should contact Elma. She did not want to encounter Salme and Drotá, so she sat on the steps to the transport platform. Elma was at her loom when Ali contacted her. “*What’s new?*” Elma asked.

Ali had not anticipated that question: “*Oh, ah, well, not much.*”

“*You are holding back,*” Elma replied, “*you can’t fool me.*”

“*Ya, right, well, you know there are lots of things I can’t tell you about; nothing’s wrong; in fact, everything is very right. Classes are going well; my students are learning things; I just wanted to hear your voice and make sure you and everyone else are OK.*”

“*We are fine dear; except we miss you. Guess who came by last week asking about you.*”

“*Uncle Paul?*”

“*No, Jimmy. He’s still waiting for you to come back. I told you, there’d be no other woman for him; I was right, he is hurting without you, poor dear.*”

Ali was now holding her head in her hands, “*Really? Jimmy? Do give him my regards.*”

“*Your regards! What’s with you girl. You don’t have a fella there now, do you.*”

“*Of course not, wouldn’t that be silly. I’ve heard of long distance relationships, but wouldn’t this be a bit much!*” Every Paradiician who knew her would know that she had just lied to her aunt. But not Ali; she thought she was getting her shoes shined. Kyra could have told her how wrong she was.

“*What an innocent you are. Love just happens; it doesn’t ask for your street address,*” was Elma’s response.”

“*Oh Elma, you are a trip; I love talking to you; Look Elma, about Jimmy; please don’t encourage him. I don’t want to tell tales out of school, but, well, he was the one who separated from me; he couldn’t see waiting two years for me to come back, so I kind of separated from him, emotionally, you know, and he.... well, all of you are going to have to understand that a person does not come back the same from an experience like this.*”

“*I do understand what you mean.*” There was a bit of sadness in Elma’s voice. She knew it was true; the person who came back would not be the same Ali who left. She would turn that into a positive, but in this moment, she experienced a sense of loss.

"I'm going to have to go now; give everyone my love and stay well."

Ali sat on the steps shaking her head and blocking her thoughts. Salme and Drota had cleaned up from the party and gone to bed. She would need to apologize for being out so long. She took a shower a day early, hoping no one would notice and ask questions. She wore her jumper to bed and put her clean jumper over her and hugged herself to sleep.

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The issue of virginity now resolved, Ali attended the nightclub, not to give her roommates privacy, but to engage in this euphorically pleasurable activity. Unfortunately, she faced a new obstacle. Jerod had told her on her 2nd visit that multiple visits to one male were not allowed. That rule was in place to protect against exactly what Ali didn't realize was happening: falling in love. Jerod, of course, had no concept of falling in love, and for that matter, no notion that a woman would be emotionally attracted to a male.

Ali was presenting a dilemma for Jerod. He was trained to do what a woman asked him to do, but he was also expected to follow the rules. Since Paradiqueo was a culture of rule followers, he had not been presented with this conflict previously. The conflict was exacerbated by the fact that he really liked Ali, and since he was not given the nectar because it would inhibit his sexual performance, he could be tempted to defy the rules. After about 4 visits, Ali was informed by the Madam that a woman could have only two consecutive visits with one male; she must choose a different dancer the next time she came to the club.

Finally, Ali, having convinced herself that Jerod was just a fuckbuddy, complied with the letter of the law, engaging dirty dancer with the skater's ass, basketball thighs and great pecs only to discover how much she loved being with Jerod.

Unbeknownst to Ali, the Madam had reported her behavior to Eleanora who reported it to the Council. No one was particularly worried because Ali would be returning home in less than 2 intervals, about 14 months earth time. The worst that could happen is that she would try to get him to go to Earth with her and denying the request could be a bit messy for the Council, but that would be messy then rather than now, so they told the Madam to lift the ban. The Madam told Jerod but failed to tell Ali.