

LOVE Has NO Boundaries



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ROAMING CANISTERS

Adrian Fridge

Love Has No Boundaries

An M/M Romance series

ROAMING CANISTERS

By Adrian Fridge

Introduction

The story you are about to read celebrates love, sex and romance between men. It is a product of the *Love Has No Boundaries* promotion sponsored by the *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* and is published as a free gift to you.

What Is Love Has No Boundaries?

The *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* invited members to choose a photo and pen a letter asking for a short M/M romance story inspired by the image; authors from the group were encouraged to select a letter and write an original tale. The result was an outpouring of creativity that shone a spotlight on the special bond between M/M romance writers and the people who love what they do.

A written description of the image that inspired this story is provided along with the original request letter. If you'd like to view the photo, please feel free to join the [Goodreads M/M Romance Group](#) and visit the discussion section: *Love Has No Boundaries*.

Whether you are an avid M/M romance reader or new to the genre, you are in for a delicious treat.

Words of Caution

This story may contain sexually explicit content and is **intended for adult readers**. It may contain content that is disagreeable or distressing to some readers. The *M/M Romance Group* strongly recommends that each reader review the General Information section before each story for story tags as well as for content warnings.

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Photo Description

Photo 1: A man, possibly naked, with short dark hair, sits with his knees drawn up to his chest, head turned to the side and his eyes closed. His hands are not visible, but the metal restraints on his ankles and neck are connected by a chain that then runs up the smooth black wall of his cage.

Photo 2: A green-skinned alien male leans his shoulder back against a gray space station wall, one hand touching the side of his head, the other tucked into a pocket. His bare torso is lean and muscled, and black pants with silvery piping ride low on his hips. Behind him, on the wall, black lettering is partially obscured by shadow.

Story Letter

Dear Author,

There I was, calmly going about my daily business, when there was a bright flash and I blacked out. When I awoke, I found myself in this metal cage and all chained up. There's a strange guy watching me and I don't know what he wants, but I think he is why I am here.

Sincerely,

Ilona

Story Info

Genre: science fiction

Tags: scientists, alien, interspecies sex, technobabble, masturbation

Word count: 10,677

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I took in a breath. Still alive—check.

Curled my fingers and toes. Mobile—check.

My head weighed heavily upon my shoulders as I tried to twist it side-to-side, my body splayed on the ground as I blinked in the darkness trying to figure out what happened. A cold shiver went through me as I sat up and drew my knees to my chest. All my clothes were missing, and metal bands connected by chains held down my wrists, ankles, and neck.

The ship didn't have an accident—check.

My eyes skidded around the room, a giddiness forming in my stomach as a smile passed over my face. In the shadows stood a form.

Alien encounter—check.

Okay, this wasn't ideal, but I couldn't complain. There was an alien, a real-life extraterrestrial, standing in front of me. All I ever expected to find were a few bacterial specimens, so fuck it, I was impressed.

I squinted to see if I could gather in more of the alien's features. Suddenly the lights came on and I shut my eyes, the burning sensation too strong.

"You're awake." My ears prickled as I recognized the words loud and clear from the alien in front of me. The accent was thick and unfamiliar, but I understood it. My heart beat faster as my mouth nearly dropped. They could speak my language.

"Your ship is under our custody now. Your crew is undisturbed in their chambers."

I sighed loudly, a certain tension draining at the good news that they hadn't killed the crew nor had they destroyed the ship.

I rubbed at my eyes before blinking them, trying to adjust to the brightness in the room. I took in a sharp breath as I absorbed every detail of my prospect.

Scaly green skin, bald bulbous head, and large yellow eyes with a black iris, the pupil a narrow, white vertical slit. Yet despite all that this alien was humanoid: lean muscular torso, broad shoulders and narrow hips. It even wore a grey lab coat and black pants, noticeably shirtless.

And this was our first formal encounter.

“Who are you?”

The alien smirked. “I’m the one who’s in charge of you during your stay.”

“My stay?” I paused, recalling how I even got here in the first place. I was the scientist in charge of the vessel while the rest of the crew was in stasis. Our mission was to set up base on our red sister planet, the first journey for mankind. The autopilot had a set course, and my job was to ensure a safe trip and landing. I kept myself occupied the past two months by drawing up plans and doing calculations.

The last thing I remembered was going over the water filtration system for the third time when the ship jerked to a stop. I speedily flew over to the control room to troubleshoot the autopilot. I lost consciousness sometime between realizing the autopilot was turned off and going to wake the Captain from her hibernation.

“Yes, your stay until I get further instructions from my superiors. I’m a little disappointed it took your species this long to get here. I expected it much sooner.”

“I don’t understand.”

The alien approached, squatting down in front of me. “I’m sorry, my Earthian is not great.”

“Earthian?”

“We’ve done research on your expedition, assessed which of your planet’s languages would be necessary for greeting your ship. I’ve only practiced with the computer.”

I tilted my head. “Well, I understand what you say. I meant I don’t know what you expected.”

“We’ve been anticipating the breach of Earth’s quarantine zone for the last three hundred years. I took over after my father several years ago. I thought we’d never meet you.” The alien reached out its hand. “I believe this is your proper greeting. I don’t know the translation for my real name. You may call me Casey.”

I couldn’t keep my hand from shaking as my palm touched the smooth, warm skin of this creature. Its hand had five fingers like mine, the nails thick and black. I couldn’t believe my luck. After all the intensive training, the years of study, the numerous hours of mental preparation, and I still couldn’t fathom the reality of it. I was shaking the hand of someone not human.

The chosen name was oddly familiar. “My ship comes from the Casey Space Program.”

“Yes, that’s why I chose it. What might your name be?”

“D- Doctor Eugene Waters.”

Casey’s smile widened, sharp white teeth embedded in black gums. “Waters. I like that.” Shivers went down my spine as Casey eyed my genitals. “Waters. Male. Mid-thirties.”

In the distance I heard the words repeated as a screen lit up, a profile with an old photo of my face and the blanks next to it filling with text.

As Casey stood, I couldn’t hold my tongue. “What about you?”

“What about me?”

“I’m a scientist too. I’d like to know your specifics as well.”

Casey laughed, a deep low rumble that shook my insides. “Casey. Male. Two hundred and three. Roughly the same age as you except I’m using Earth years.”

My brain started going a hundred kilometers an hour. “I guess we’re a fast planet compared to yours.”

Casey wiggled his hand out of mine and stood straight, hands on his hips. “You’re quite curious about everything except your well-being.”

“My well-being?” My lips curled. “Even if I’m about to go under the knife, at least I can say that not only have I met a sentient extraterrestrial, but I had an actual conversation with him. That’s all I ever dreamt of, it’s why I’m even here.” I laughed as I outstretched my arms. “Look at you, you’re beautiful!”

Casey nodded in affirmation. “Then the feeling is mutual.”

I may have been a bit too eager to cooperate after being alone for over two months and craving attention. Over a dozen or so tests later and I was exhausted. In just a few short hours, Casey had more information on me than all the doctors, teachers, and therapists I’ve seen since birth. Everything about me was fascinating to him, and the computer profile grew ever longer as he created checklists of dozens more tests he planned on doing. So far no probes.

Casey had the lab to himself. There were other aliens, his students, who came and went for some of the tests, all lizard-type aliens, but none of them speaking anything I could comprehend. I was surrounded by them, the focus of all their efforts, their specimen. I was special, if only for a little while.

Their lab had data on human development since the Stone Age, watching carefully as the species matured, like bacteria under a microscope, mapping out our mutations, our socialization, our entire ecosystem. Earth was quarantined to make sure we developed in isolation until we were ready to meet the rest of the universe, some sort of grand experiment by his kind. They knew we were coming, and they prepared themselves extensively. Now I had the fortune of being the ambassador of the human race.

It made me feel big and important. Casey asked me a million questions, and I did the same in return. Technologically, his species was more advanced. They had a space station with artificial gravity installed. That was impressive. They had access to the far reaches of space, their vessels running on fusion power. They even had a renewable oxygen supply. My ship was nothing more than a crude barrel compared to them; no wonder they were so curious how we made it this far.

I didn't get much time to myself until the work day drew to an end. One of the students brought me a tray of food, and I eyed it the same as my lunch. They were feeding me, which meant they wanted to keep me around longer. But what they fed me, it didn't look artificial or processed. I prodded the slab of cooked meat, smelling it before cutting a chunk off, still disturbed by how appetizing it smelled and tasted.

I was struck by the silence; I was so used to hearing my own voice. Casey just watched me as I leaned back on the couch. When they saw I didn't struggle, they stopped putting me in the cage. When I got cold, Casey gave me a lab coat to wear. It was almost as if I was in a luxurious prison, the chainless cuffs on my wrists, ankles, and neck reminding me of my position.

"This real meat?" I asked hesitantly, unsure of whether I'd offend him somehow but hoping to make conversation. Even though I only met him, he reminded me of myself after the first time I finished solitary confinement training at the space center. I had to be near someone, had to make small talk, had to do anything to feel again. It was the only reason I could think of for why Casey was still with me. He could have thrown me in the cage, gone to bed, and been done with it. Instead he kept beside me, drinking me up with his gaze.

"Yes. We didn't want to risk infecting your system with foreign organisms, so we got *take-out*." There was that curl in his lip, the one I started associating with whenever he thought he was being clever.

"Thanks," I said offhandedly.

That silence again.

"So, uh, what does the number mean in the name?" I pointed to the plate above the main computer which said Intergalactic Zoology Zone-3MW. "And why is it written in my language?"

"This station has four zones. The third is mine." Casey nodded. "You'll find I keep a lot of Earthian around me."

“Oh.” I took another bite of the meat with suspicious origins. I stopped in the middle of chewing to process that revelation, sighed, and swallowed the piece. This wasn’t the time or place.

“I want you to know I have your best interests in mind.”

“Is that before or after you dissect me?”

Casey cocked his head to the side. “Is that what you’re expecting?”

I waved the fork in the air. “If our positions were reversed, your cadaver would be on our operating table.” That’s what I expected when I first arrived. “Of course, if we had a station that captured your ship, I guess we’d keep one of you around, like a lab rat. First you treat the lab rat really nice, measuring their every action, analyzing every reaction, and then they get cut open so you can inspect their insides. You’ve been taking care of me well, so I’m reasonably content.”

Casey grimaced as he pulled back into his seat. “That’s barbaric. All I’ll need are blood samples.”

“Oh.” I pursed my lips, feeling the sting in his judgment.

“I was saving them for later when you’ve settled in.” Casey crossed his arms. “Now that you don’t have to worry about that, any other concerns?”

“Any other concerns?” I laughed. “You really don’t understand how loaded that question is, do you?”

“If our positions were reversed, I don’t think I’d be so cooperative, particularly if I feared for my life. I’d try to slash at your face, or something, and would have landed myself back in the cage. It’s astounding you’re so calm and collected.” Suddenly he took my hand in his, caressing my knuckles, his glisten in contrast to my chalky whiteness. “I really want to help in any way I can.”

“Don’t.” I shook my head. “Just be honest. How long do I have to live?”

“No one is out to kill you.” Casey held my hand tighter, his nails pressing into me. “No, no. The plan is to let you go after all this is over. Everything will be fine once you get clearance.”

I raised an eyebrow. “Clearance?”

“There’s a whole committee that has to vote on this. It could take several days to several weeks. Approval means everything proceeds as normal. You get back on your ship and continue with your mission.” He paused. “If they don’t approve, human space exploration will be set back.”

“Set back?”

Casey kept silent as I stared at him. I didn’t know what to feel. He was worth more to me than my own life. This entire trip was meant to settle humankind in the stars. Even if I wasn’t around anymore, those people would meet Casey and his kind. They would find themselves in good company.

“It’ll mean a tragic accident for you and your crew,” Casey said slowly.

“And what about you?”

“I don’t know,” he exhaled. “And I don’t want to think about it. Why should you get exterminated just because someone far, far away whimsically decides its the logical thing to do? It’s absurd. You earned your right to enter the universe, just as we did. It’s utterly unfair to you, Waters.”

“Well,” I pushed back my hair, the brown strands grown out past my ears, “they should have just killed us from the start instead of making me wait.”

Casey lowered his head. “With the tests going as they are, it’s unlikely to turn to the worst-case scenario. I’d do anything to protect you.”

“I see,” I said, more coldly than I intended. Casey seemed dejected by the response, his hand coming off of mine.

“Why aren’t you upset?”

“I *am* upset, but what can I do? I’m in the middle of space on an alien station. I’m just glad my crew isn’t awake or else it’ll turn into an even bigger disaster. The only thing I can do is wait, and I’m used to that.”

Casey put both his hands on my shoulder, meeting my gaze as his sharp fingernails dug into the fabric. “I shouldn’t have told you so much. You’re going to be okay. Let’s get you to bed so you can be well rested tomorrow.”

“Even so,” my eyes darted around the lab; ever since I got there I’ve been wanting to explore the lab, but there was always this test or that keeping me tied to a spot, “I can’t just sleep.”

He watched me with curiosity, his grey lips curling. “I could use some help, if you’re up for it.”

“You’d trust a primitive animal like me with your equipment?”

“Waters, you can’t possibly do worse than my students.”

I laughed, and this time he joined in.

Day one on station—momentous.

I groaned as I spread out across the makeshift bed, a springy mattress held together by metal bars. There was only one, and it was meant for Casey when he needed to work on and off during the night. He may have removed my metal restraints, but it was replaced by this torture. Casey’s kind was advanced, but not advanced enough to make spare beds that didn’t feel like I was stabbed every time I turned. I would have been happier to be back sleeping in zero gravity than continue with this.

My arm hit Casey on the shoulder. There was also that. My stay at his station was now into its second week, and I had yet to see him leave the lab. Sometimes we worked through the night and collapsed together on the bed. Other times he’d rush me to the connecting room, leaving me to fall asleep on my own only to wake up with him beside me again.

It reminded me of my college days, back when I used to dorm. My boyfriend would spend nights with me, and I’d always try to wake earlier than him to catch a glimpse of his sleeping face. Now that it was Casey beside me, I’d sometimes wake with a fright, as if my brain was trying to piece together the vision of a human in the darkness and upon failing would conjure a monster. Yet if I kept my eyes closed, Casey’s steady breathing and warm presence only filled me with comfort.

Sometimes we'd accidentally touch, like today. It made me want to "accidentally" roam down his chest and check what hung between his legs.

I gritted my teeth and got out of bed. I hadn't gotten off in over a week and it didn't look like this clearance was coming soon enough. I didn't have access to the ship, nor could I get any of my usual wank material. It was my sex drive that got me the most wound up during my isolation training; I couldn't spend months with nothing but math and solitude. I needed an outlet, and my dick was getting the wrong idea about Casey. For all I knew, alien lizard-sex involved a rod down my throat and eggs buried in my stomach, waiting to eat me from the inside, and those were the horrible movie moments I clung to to keep myself in line.

I yawned as I went over to the bathroom. It was an empty room unless one knew which buttons on the wall to press; then the utilities would emerge. I clicked for all of them, not sure how these aliens prioritized their morning routines, and slipped off the lab coat.

As I leaned against the sink, staring at myself in the mirror, I imagined even more gruesome experiences one could have with alien species. That's right, I told myself, bad idea. Even if it would be the kinkiest thing I'd ever done.

I pinched the bridge of my nose in disbelief. Blood was leaving my head and I needed more productive thoughts.

It had been two years since I'd been with a man, a byproduct of dedicating all my resources to preparing for this mission. My last lover dumped me because we didn't have time for each other, not that the sex was any good. I wasn't attracted to him and I couldn't stand the things he said. We got together because we were the only two gay guys in the program. The memory was so distant I had to fill in the gaps with fantasy. All I had to do was recall some sexy stud from one of the videos I had on file and cast him as the lead, pretend we were reshooting the entire scene with better acting. It gave me the release I needed, taking off the edge, but something about it was weaker than usual. I needed more than this.

I rinsed myself in disappointment.

When I got out I noticed Casey absorbed in his work, as usual. I still wasn't sure how or why he was able to look so human beneath the scales, but aside from his eyes, it was all there. The crown of his head held no hair, showcasing the oblong shape with two flaps of skin protruding out where ears would be. Darkened scales jutting out like eyebrows, nostrils flaring under the bridge of a nose, and those dark-grey lips, I wanted to touch them.

"I was going to give you another minute before I went in," he said, his lips thinning. "Put on those gloves."

"No problem," I said with a broad smile.

He nodded silently, more focused on his work station than me. He'd been testing the last batch of my blood for the past two days, and today he began removing the vials from the cylindrical unit, all of them looking different depending on the substance he dripped inside. It was twenty-six vials, the first two batches already showing repeatable data. The computer screen had been set up to spin a 3D model of my DNA.

I sat beside him, putting on the same gloves he had on. Casey removed the contents of the first vial, putting it on a clear glass sheet before popping it under the scanner. The ping and the way he nodded at me meant we had a good start. He typed up a bit and asked for the next vial, which I handed to him with the tongs.

"Can I ask you something," I said, even as all his attention was elsewhere.

"Go ahead."

"Well," I hedged, "They say there's only a one percent difference between human genetics and that of apes. A part of me is hoping you're not actually an alien but the next evolution of mankind, the one percent difference we'll develop once we move into space." I wanted it to be true, if only because I'd be able to convince myself he was human, just at a new stage.

"No, we're completely unrelated."

I groaned. "What did you evolve from then?"

Casey looked at me, a scowl on his face. “Do I disgust you in some way?”

I pinched the bridge of my nose. “I didn’t mean it like that.”

“Then why do you sound as though whatever I evolved from is disappointing?”

“Just confusing, you know. We’re so alike. I sort of wished some part of you came from Earth.”

“I’m sorry if it doesn’t.” Casey sighed as his expression eased. “But it’s the whole reason we began studying you. We saw the emergence of our characteristics, and it was the perfect opportunity to learn more about our own development.”

I nodded. Hell, I was going to do the same if I was faced with alien bacteria.

Casey leaned back in his chair, looking over his findings as his expression loosened up. “I’m going to have to run another full body scan on you.” He leaned back further, stretching the back of his chair as he put his hands up behind his neck. “Have to make sure you didn’t injure yourself in the shower.”

“Okay.” I cringed, realizing he’d find nothing and start suspecting me.

“Are you really sure you’re fine, Waters?” Casey said with sadness in his tone.

My hands gripped the table. “Did you find I have an incurable disease?”

Casey seemed confused for a second as he shook his head. “I’m asking about you. For some reason you’ve become more... I don’t have the word for it... since we first met. Something about the way you looked at me. It reminded me of the way my father used to send me gifts. Would you call that cheer?”

“Even gifts lose their luster after the first time you use them. You’re right about the cheer. First alien encounter and all. I was doing flips in my head. Once that wore off, I’m just trying to figure out what’s next. As cool as it is being here with you, I’d like to get back to my ship and complete our mission.”

He began scanning another vial. “I’m sorry about the waiting. I wish I could entertain you more than this.”

I bit my lip as the word “entertain” echoed in the depths of my mind, niggling at the fantasy I’d been desperately burying. I closed my eyes and let out a breath. “How about this,” I said, hoping the more I spoke the less my mind would wander, “tell me about your species. It would only be fair.”

“I wouldn’t know where to start.”

I reopened my eyes, examining him as he did the same back. “How about the difference between you and the reptiles we have back on Earth?”

Casey’s lip curled. “Do you think I’m *hot*, Waters?”

I was sure my heart stopped, because I damn sure held my breath.

“Because we’re warm blooded just like you. I’d say that’s the major difference.”

I covered my mouth as I lowered my head, heart racing in my chest. Stupid brain making more trouble than it was worth.

“You don’t look well.” Casey paused to touch my knee.

“I’m fine.” I lifted my head, smiling as I swatted his hand away. “Please continue.”

It didn’t seem Casey noticed my reaction. If he did, I couldn’t tell with the way he offhandedly went back to recounting his history. At one point he shifted over a second computer screen, clicking open an encyclopedia for me to read through as he went about his work. So much for entertainment. I skimmed through the screen, all of it in a language I could neither read nor comprehend. If Casey bothered to glance over he’d see the confusion on my face transform into shameful curiosity as my eyes locked onto the section about mating.

I gulped. The photos were graphic, and even if I couldn’t understand the words, I’d never be able to erase this. This was supposed to be educational, not wank material for a pervert with alternative tastes; this was Casey’s culture. This was their life, their reason for continuing their race. Everything that he

was came from this, and all I could do was salivate like some starved animal, ingraining the images of the visible cocks for future selfish purposes.

My heart jumped into my throat as Casey's hand went out for the next vial, his eyes still fixated on his own screen as he kept talking, mostly to himself, a habit even I knew was a trance brought about by boredom. I rapidly scrolled down the page, glad I didn't have to explain myself.

I turned off the extra screen, focusing back on the task in front of me.

"What's the verdict?" I asked as Casey went through the last few. Out of the twenty-six vials, there were a select few he set aside for further analysis at a later time. It didn't in any way mean I was much of an exceptional being.

"It's good. The committee will be very pleased."

"Will it help with their decision?"

"That's the intention." He called out to his digital secretary, "Send now."

"What exactly are they looking for?"

Casey had a big smile on his face. "You know all those movies where aliens come down and start destroying all your capitals with confounding accuracy? We're trying to avoid that for ourselves."

I rubbed my hairy chin. "What are you implying?"

"They want to make sure you'll never rise as our equals."

"Like a slave race?"

"Yes." He didn't even bother softening the blow.

"Then we're fucked, because we're not like that at all."

"Not necessarily."

"Please enlighten me."

Casey put his hand on mine, his smile much broader now, showing rows of sharp teeth. "They're not the only ones making plans." Before I could ask for an explanation, he grabbed my hand, pulling me with him as he went across the lab.

“Where are we going?”

“I don’t know about you, but I’m exhausted and that fold-out bed is killing me.”

Casey turned toward the cage. I didn’t fight him when he took my hands, one after the other, and secured the metal straps around them, nor did I object to the neck band he added to the set. It was time for him to go back to his daily routine, and he had to make sure I wasn’t going to run back to my ship and make a grand exit while he wasn’t looking. I eyed the cage, small and empty, and braced myself to be thrown in.

Instead Casey took my hand, pulling at me again, this time to his work desk where he removed a sterile syringe and filled it with a clear substance from a bottle. He swiftly lifted my sleeve, sterilized an area, and injected me with whatever that was. He applied a bandage and took me towards the exit.

It was my first time seeing beyond the lab, as we crossed the empty corridor, heading through a passage of bright, luminescent lights and white walls toward the far end, where we stepped into their version of an elevator. Casey pressed some buttons as the doors closed and we began going downwards.

“We need a break, don’t you agree? It’ll take them at least another week to go through what I just sent, not counting how slowly they’re going through the other tests I subjected you to, and I don’t think I can stand another night camping.” He curled his lip at my wide-eyed and no-doubt confounded expression. “And I enjoy your company, Waters, even if you do snore at night. I like you, and that’s why you’re coming with me.”

Like me? Sure, I should have been worried about a million more important things, like, oh, the judgment of the human race or how Casey clearly had his own secret agenda. But nope, my mind was stuck on those stupid three words: I like you.

I blinked, my eyes going back to the door in front of me. Lab rat. That’s all I was. A very coveted lab rat. One that he could cuddle with once he took it home. My chest constricted as the walls closed around me, his hand gripping

mine tightly. I tried to control my breathing, and with that Casey's scent, once cloaked in lab smells, became clearer, like a sea breeze filled with seaweed and sand. It brought me back to lazy summer days and of relaxation I'd long forgotten. I looked over at Casey, imagining us naked on the beach.

The elevator stopped just in time. I was focused again on our travel through another series of hallways. This time it was bustling with more of Casey's kind, and they dispersed as we approached, narrowing their eyes in judgment. I guessed the restraints kept them from questioning who was in charge, and my hand closed tighter around Casey's, my senses tingling once again.

Casey unlocked a door and I found myself in his apartment. It was spacious, if slightly empty. I could make out a lush sofa, bookstand, and television stand, all in subdued shades of blue and pink. Casey bypassed all of it as we entered the kitchen. He let me go as he opened his refrigerator, taking out a few things as he began to cook.

“Need any help?”

“Just sit. I'm going to show you my *real skills*.”

I chuckled as I supported my chin in my hand. The lab always smelled like metal and chemicals, and my meals there were connected to those odors. This, however, felt like I was back home; the sweetness from the vegetables Casey cut up intensified as he seared them in oil. I had no idea what most of them were.

“Isn't that going to introduce foreign substances into my system?”

Casey snorted as he turned to look at me. “Our immune systems are compatible, so I inoculated you before we left the lab.”

“I thought you didn't want to contaminate my system.”

“For the experiments.”

I scratched the back of my head as I sat on a slim stool cushioned with a yellow fabric. “When I return to Earth, I don't want to bring back some deadly virus by mistake.”

“One of my students had a virus the other day. It was the same day I asked you to count the peaks on that graph as they appeared during the scan of your stool sample.” It was during my second day, probably the most embarrassing, not counting that specifically awkward incident. “Even though I kept you on the other side of the room, you were still exposed. It’s not worth the risk keeping you vulnerable like that. Besides, you’ll be subjected to a thorough sterilization shower before we lead you back to your ship.”

I nodded. “I’m your lab rat, of course.”

“Not exactly.” Casey poured something into the pan before closing the lid. “Unless your lab rats can hold a conversation.”

“I think they just choose not to.”

Casey laughed. “It’s why I prefer you this way.”

The smell from the food came wafting in, and I shivered, my mood dissipating. “What about the others? They looked like they’d rather eat me than have a conversation.”

“We’re not planning on putting you on the menu.”

“Even so.” I rubbed my stubble. “Let’s say this committee of yours gives us the green light. We inhabit a new planet. Then what? Do we stay ignorant? If not, do we become servants to your kind? I mean, these are things I only dreamt about a short time ago, when I imagined humans were the only sentient beings around.”

Casey grumbled. “I don’t know what they’re scheming. My only objective is to make sure you get the opportunity to discover the rest of the universe. I’ve seen enough footage, real and dramatized, to know your kind will find its own destiny if given the chance.”

“And me?”

“You...” Casey said, his eyes moving up and down my torso. “I’ll miss you.”

I waved my hand in the air, dismissing any thoughts that he may be flirting. “You’ll only miss using me as a basis for research. I know how this goes.”

“You really think it’s only that?”

“I’m not delusional.”

Casey nodded. “I guess you’re right, Waters.”

I wasn’t sure why, but something changed in his demeanor. He finished cooking and set the two plates between us. It looked delicious. I took a first bite, and indeed, it was.

“Wow. What is this?”

Casey’s shoulders slumped. “Nothing special. We have a terrarium on the station where we get everything.”

“Still,” I maintained, “this tastes way better than what they were feeding me before.” Actually, I was just glad to be out of the lab. “By the way,” I asked as I remembered the log on board, “wouldn’t it be strange when the crew wakes up and realize the date is off by a week or more?” I put the fork down. “And the crew on Earth is tracking the ship’s progress. We’re completely off course and standing still.”

“Not exactly,” Casey shook his head. “We calculated the speed and direction of your vessel before we took you on board. This station is migrating on your route toward the planet as we speak. It means even if the committee drags their feet, they have a firm deadline to meet.”

“Oh.” I twiddled the fork in my fingers. “You could have told me sooner.”

“It didn’t seem as important at the time.”

I nodded. He had a point, even if I still wished he’d have explained sooner. “Anything else unimportant I should know?”

Casey shrugged, a slight frown forming in between his chewing.

Something was definitely off about him. Maybe it was enthusiasm that left him when I professed I wasn’t delusional. What else was I supposed to think?

That him missing me was something heartbreaking? We were aliens to each other! Species from different planets across the galaxy. Us meeting in the first place was jaw dropping; us going separate ways was inevitable. It was hard enough trying to douse my horny feelings without having to also contemplate these emotions.

“Would it be possible to get some supplies from the ship anyway?”

Casey’s attention stayed glued on his plate, his fork moving the pieces around as he spoke. “Make a list and I’ll send someone.”

I mentally fist-pumped in victory. I shouldn’t have been so overjoyed when Casey sounded so defeated, but if he was going to have the comfort of his apartment, I wanted some benefits too. After we finished eating, Casey gave me a disk with a schematic of the inside of my ship. I zoomed in on my chamber, clicking on the portions of the room that had the stuff I wanted, typing the names and descriptions of each thing in the margins. Casey slid the disk into a wall unit, and a blip of the light told us it’d been sent to one of his students.

Afterwards I watched television while he showered. The channels were reminiscent of those back home: news, sports, drama, comedy, and porn. I focused on what I could make out from the breaking news. From the looks of caution tape and uniforms, I assumed this was a piece about a recent crime. Then I saw a crowd full of various alien species, some looking like the monsters from my nightmares. Yet the way the crowd undulated, the way it tried to get more camera time, even the way they seemed to heckle each other was all too reminiscent of back home. The universe had less diversity than I ever perceived possible.

I grumbled as it turned to commercials—jewelry, vehicles, fashion, food, other shows featuring Casey’s kind. At least future generations of space explorers wouldn’t be able to complain about severe culture clashes.

Casey came out dripping wet, a towel hanging from his neck. My eyes trailed down the muscles, the misty shine forming a cascade of shades of green with each ripple of sinew, every part of him well-defined. There was a pattern

of dark green stripes along the side of his torso, curving into his back and coming around the other side. But my eyes skimmed further down and found, in despair, nothing there except for a smooth, green bulge, as though he were wearing briefs.

Casey grunted. “You have no idea how much I was looking forward to that.” He wiped his face, and turned around to go through a drawer, and the stripes on his back were V-shaped, pointing down to his pinky-sized tail.

I rested my elbow on the armrest, covering the view I had of his fine ass. “I know what you mean. Nothing compares to relaxing at home.”

A beep went off at the door.

“That must be your stuff,” Casey said as he got the door naked.

On the other side was a student I’d seen plenty of times before, with a satchel on his shoulder. He handed it off with a grumble in my direction, never once eying Casey for his lack of clothing. Then Casey closed the door with a farewell and brought the satchel over to me.

I took it without hesitation, aiming directly for the bathroom. “This may take a while,” I warned.

“Take your time.” Casey waved at me as he took my seat on the sofa, changing the channel and increasing the volume.

As soon as I locked the door behind me, I removed the portable tablet I asked for. Turning it on, I found it still had battery left. I found one of my favorite porn videos to watch as I plugged in my earphones and pressed the button for the sink and toilet. I sat on the lid as I propped the tablet in one hand and my cock in the other, a tissue below it.

Human fucking human. It was so matter of fact. I felt nothing.

I sighed as I pumped my shaft, letting the images unroll before me as I lurched forward, gripping the wall in need. I was close, but something was lacking. Typically these sessions went quicker, with more ease. My mind wandered. It contorted the fantasy, trying new positions, new actors, new scenes, clutching every last combination until the lead male morphing into

someone recognizable. Someone with yellow eyes, green skin, and a hard cock just for me.

I screamed as the heat in my groin reached its pitch, erupting all over the wall as I fell to my knees, black spots in my vision.

Fuck.

This was wrong and I knew it.

The few times Casey took my hand, madness rose within me, I wanted more, knowing it was impossible. As the heat grew in my pelvis, tears rolled down my face. I didn't want a human man. I wanted Casey.

I groaned out as the orgasm hit, the stream dripping onto the tissue as I lurched forward, aching sobs escaping my lips.

I stayed like that for several minutes, rocking back and forth until my nose clogged and I couldn't breathe anymore. I put the tablet away and reached into the shower, hoping the hot water would soothe the coldness in my chest.

No one ever had to know. I've seen the sorts of crazy things people posted online, the creature-sex fetishists. I was just one of them, nothing more. My mind was merely making shit up out of the harsh reality. Once this dilemma was over I'd never see him again, and it was all for the better. I dried myself, feeling calm as I buttoned the coat, checking my face in the mirror. Put on a smile. That's right. All this was was a slip.

Smile. He won't know the difference. I brushed my teeth and shaved my beard. Presentable, even with the subtle redness around my eyes.

I dressed in my own clothes, hesitating as I stood at the door. This would all be over soon. One day I'd look back at this like a surreal dream, but until then, I had to keep it together. If Casey asked, I was lamenting the separation from my own kind. Homesick. That's all it was. Once I was back with my own kind, everything would be okay. Until then, I had to smile.

"You're right," I said as I stretched my arms over my head, walking barefoot along the soft carpet. "I was looking forward to that. Using my own stuff is a privilege I'll never take for granted again."

Casey neither moved nor responded.

I approached him cautiously, noticing how his head was hanging down. On closer inspection, he'd fallen asleep.

As I sat beside him, his balance faltered and his head collapsed against my shoulder. My chest heaved as I tried pushing him over to the other side, fighting the urge to bring my face up to his, taking in his smell and his warmth. Instead, his arms craned over my chest, tugging me in closer as he mumbled something incoherent in his own language.

I couldn't escape him.

We sat in silence. It was the third time in the past hour we tried small talk and my mind drifted off. I couldn't even recall what I was thinking. We gave up and turned on the television once again.

The night before, Casey insisted on continuing to sleep on the couch, shooing me to the bedroom. It was the first time since I met him that I hadn't woken up with him by my side. I hadn't realized how cold a bed could be until today.

And now our conversations were jagged, built on mere etiquette neither of us wanted to break. It made me wonder if I was better off not coming here at all, to be kept in the cage; it would have been better than now, sitting on opposite ends of the sofa, a palpable void between us.

I rolled my head up, staring at the ceiling as the noises from the screen filled the air.

Antiperspirant commercial.

"You guys sweat?" I asked.

"Yeah," Casey rested against a large pillow. "It regulates our body temperature."

"Through the scales?"

"No, the pores between them."

“I see.”

Why did I keep trying?

I got up, heading to the bedroom where the satchel with my stuff was stored. I closed the door and took out my tablet, looking through the general list of movies I had saved. Mostly nature documentaries. I clicked through, sighing to myself as I lay on the bed. It wasn't only the porn that kept me sane, sometimes I was more homesick than anything else.

I considered watching the special about tropical beaches, grumbling as I realized why I was particularly interested in that subject. It was Casey's sweat that got to me on the elevator; I knew it because his scent was lost after he showered. I'd snuck a whiff while he was asleep on my shoulder the night before, a part of me hoping to gain back the reverie, but all I got was his fruity soap perfume.

I needed to get my mind off of this. I switched screens, tapping on the icon for my work. The spreadsheet opened, all the numbers and calculations flying at me, reminding me why I was in this predicament in the first place.

I went through some of the figures I'd drawn. The last thing I'd checked was the filtration system... before the aliens got me. I squinted my eyes as something struck me as off. I bit at my nail as I pulled up the digital scrap sheet, erasing my previous notes and deriving the formula from scratch again. One of the variables was wrong. My heart beat erratically in my chest as I went back to the spreadsheet. How the fuck did I miss that? I glanced back and forth rapidly, seeing the error was a typo, a miniscule detail I'd overlooked on multiple occasions, one that had me adjusting the filter strength to compensate.

I jumped up, goose bumps on my skin as I paced the room. I'd been working on this for months, reviewed it multiple times, even had it approved by the Captain. I shoved my hands through my hair. I had a flawless reputation, and all my projects in the past were successful. The Casey Space Program trusted me when they hired me as the lead scientist; the crew trusted me with their well-being. When we landed, they would have used my numbers

to build the system. My miscalculation would have created an imbalance in the water supply, one that would jeopardize the entire mission.

If I weren't abducted... we would have died.

I swooped up the tablet again, praying it was still synced to the ship's server as I began checking all the other seemingly insignificant numbers. I even pulled up all my other projects. I had to make sure once we landed we would be safe to continue with our mission.

Casey knocked.

"I'm busy!"

He nudged open the door as I continued tapping with one hand, biting a finger of the other. "That looks awfully small for whatever you're doing. Do you want a bigger screen?"

With wide-eyes I looked up at him. "That would help."

I tapped my foot and walked around in circles as Casey took his time hooking up my tablet to his personal computer. Once the screen was up, I continued from where I left off.

Casey stood behind me and watched quietly. He pointed at a box. "Multiply by this."

I already knew that. "Can you stop hovering over me? You're ruining my concentration."

"I'm just trying to be helpful."

"I don't tell you how to do your job." I swiveled the chair, to get a good look at his face. "In fact, something just dawned on me. You told me all the experiments were done and you sent them everything you had. What about those vials you separated for 'further review'?"

"You shouldn't worry," Casey said coolly as he sat on the edge of the bed. "While you were asleep I used the data from the vials and recalibrated the computer. Even if they get new blood samples in the future, the results will be the same. I didn't want any evidence of tampering."

“Tampering?”

“This station was installed with the best equipment to track Earth’s progress. I’ve studied your language and culture, gained a sense of your perspective, and I’ve done everything in my power to avoid getting blind-sided by my kind’s prejudice against your species.”

“Prejudice?”

“I was raised with a high fondness for humans. It came with the knowledge you’d never be what my superiors wanted. You’d be better.”

“Why?” I narrowed my eyes. “We’re nothing close to what you have.”

“Not at the moment,” he smiled. “But you have brilliant imaginations and a certain charisma. You’ll never be their servant class. They just can’t know it yet.”

“When did you have time to reprogram? I’ve been watching you this entire time.” Then it hit me. “You lost sleep over this?”

Casey palmed his face as the shade of it turned yellowish. “It’s nothing I can’t make up.”

I tapped my finger against the desk. “Okay, so let’s say all you’re saying is true. I still don’t understand why you had to fabricate the truth. They’ll blow up my ship, and we’ll make a new one. It’s not going to stop us.”

Casey stared at me, his expression blank. “Your safety is far more important.”

“Because you like me,” I said in a flat tone.

“Yes.”

“I’m disposable.”

“Far from it. I couldn’t have met a better human.”

“And I couldn’t have met a better... you. That doesn’t change the facts. My mission was to be the caretaker of my crew during our travel through space. We were hijacked by an alien station, and I was extensively experimented on. Then there’s a committee we’re waiting on to find out if I

can continue travelling or if I'll be killed. But I know of your existence. I'm going to tell my crew if I get out of this alive. We're going to look for you, and then you'll be experimented on." I flailed my hands. "Do you see where your plan failed? We're the prejudiced ones. By saving me, you're only endangering yourself."

"It's a risk, but I know you won't do that. Because I know you."

"You really think so?" I refuted.

In an instant I found myself grabbed and thrown to the bed, my back hitting the mattress as Casey's lips enclosed mine.

Wait. What?

I pushed at him hard, sending him tumbling backwards. "What the hell do you think you're doing?"

Casey dusted himself off, sliding beside me. "When I said I studied your culture, do you really think I skipped over that part about sex?"

My throat clenched. "But... you... and me? It's absurd. It's delusional. It can never work."

Casey leaned in closer, his breath brushing against my cheek. "I've been considering and reconsidering this ever since we first met, but unless I do something now, I know I'm going to regret it. I can't stand another day like today. I thought maybe you needed some comfort—the lab is not the best place to relax—but you only got worse. I lost hope, and now this. I was doing what I felt was best for you, and I know you'll do the same in return. You like me as much as I like you. It makes me want you so much it hurts. I really meant it when I said you're beautiful."

"I find a lot of things beautiful. It doesn't mean I'd fuck those things."

"Perhaps not," he said as he pushed a strand of my hair behind my ear, "but I have a feeling this is mutual. My research shows we're physically compatible."

"No," I pushed at him again, "I'm still human, and you're an alien lizard-man. This isn't natural."

“We’re both scientists who are attracted to each other. Even if I can’t explain why, I can’t deny that it’s there. I need to test this. I need you.”

“Then you should also know I have no idea where your dick is.”

Casey laughed as he slid off his shirt and pants, prompting me to do the same. “It’s hidden in a pouch.”

He took my hand and placed it between his legs, the tender area cool to the touch. I groped around, not finding any opening to the pouch. Casey chuckled and advised me to glide my fingers up and down the area until it began to heat up. He kept my hand still as the tip of his cock edged out, my hand sliding down the shaft as it rose higher, blooming in width, the color lightening from black to a light grey.

“See, all very simple,” he said in a low growl as he reached for my shaft.

“For you maybe. Mine just sits there until it’s interested.”

“Seems I’m *interesting*,” Casey said as he kissed along my neck and down my collarbone, sending shivers through me. My cock swelled with blood, the tip pink and hard as he rubbed his thumb along it. I arched back with a moan. “And,” he continued, “so are you. Ever since you smiled at me that first meeting, I don’t know what it did, but all I wanted after that was to see that smile again. So calm. So confident. You didn’t fear the unknown.”

“Because I had everything to gain the moment I saw you.”

“Me?” Casey stopped at my navel, my dick nearly jutting into his neck. “I’m nothing special.”

I smirked. “You’re special to me.”

Casey pulled himself back up my body, his lips against mine. “That’s the smile.”

My hands gripped his back as our mouths opened up to each other. Sharp teeth, pointy tongue, slick scales. We groped at one another, the closeness with him burning up my core. All those years of drowning myself in work to be able to fly to space, all that isolation training to guard the ship while the crew hibernated, all so I could be at the forefront of human history. Here I was. I

gripped him tighter as his fingers wove through my hair, our cocks sliding along each other's bellies.

“Fuck,” I broke off to breathe as my balls clenched. “I want you inside me.”

“You sure?” Casey raised a brow. “Really sure?”

I reached down to stroke his thick, rock-hard cock, the sides of it slimy and hot. “Is there a problem? I thought you said we're compatible.”

Casey laughed as his face flushed with yellow. “It'll burn. A lot.”

Shit, that got me aching more as I bent my knees, opening my legs for him. “I'd like that. A lot.”

Casey's grin took up his entire face. Without further hesitation he lined the tip of his engorged cock with my hole. I gripped his shoulders as he plunged in, my muscles standing no chance against the intrusion, giving way to the fullness as I moaned louder.

“Fuck.” My neck craned back as my feet dug into the covers. “So much better than the fantasies.”

“I couldn't agree more,” Casey groaned.

I didn't have time to question the implication as he began grinding in and out, hitting my sweet spot as I clenched him. It was a long time since anything that big went inside me, and it was like learning the sensation all over again. It burned a little, not as much as Casey feared, his slime acting as sufficient lubrication.

The bed rocked beneath us as a part of me wondered if he'd stop if it broke, the same part that hoped he'd drive hard enough to make it happen. He pumped his shaft into me as he bit at my neck, ears, lips, and whatever else he could get his mouth on as my hands wrapped around his neck, refusing to let go, savoring every bit of pain and pleasure he dealt. I couldn't protest, not with the way the pricks of pain travelled my nerves, tickling my shaft, making me want to explode. I wasn't prepared for the intensity. I pressed my nails into his

shoulders as he grabbed my knees, bringing them up higher as he pressed into my chest, plunging his full length into me.

“So close,” he lamented as his pace faltered.

In a sweat-filled daze, my fingers slid down the crook of his back, finding the little tail at the end, wrapping my finger under it and caressing the tender underside.

Casey buckled with a scream, his thrusts losing their rhythm as his cock undulated inside me, his release setting my insides aflame.

“Burning!” I yelled as he filled me up, consuming me as everything I had surged onto his chest.

I exhaled, my heart racing and my brain beating against my skull as Casey dropped my knees, still rocking back and forth as we stared at each other in wonder. He rolled over so I lay on his chest, his cock still firmly planted in my ass.

“Well,” I remarked as I licked at a bead of sweat from his chin, he tasted like the ocean, salty and warm after a sunny day, “You weren’t kidding about that warning.”

“Yeah. And I got a surprise too; no one’s touched the underside of my tail during sex before. This will need a retest for certain.”

He grinned as I bit at his lip. His cock expanded again.

“Wait,” I said in shock, “I need at least a few minutes before I can go again.”

“Oh, don’t mind me. Sometimes it takes a bit longer to completely unload.”

“What?” I yelped as Casey held my ass cheeks down, the sharp friction numbing my head as more of his cum coated my insides, the heat rising into my spine and making me drop into his chest. After that his shaft deflated, wiggling out of me. “What,” I whispered this time, “is that stuff made of? Lava?”

“Don’t worry. It’s nothing but the result of my sac growing hotter than my normal body temperature. It’s not enough to do you any harm.”

“What did I get myself into?” I laughed in satisfaction as my eyes closed and I drifted off into sleep. My fantasies were going to need some serious tweaking.

I lay on the sofa as Casey went about making breakfast. It was day four of staying in his apartment, and I couldn’t count how many times we had sex since. We fucked everywhere. We wrecked the living room, broke a couple of chairs in the kitchen, and caused a small flood in the shower when we bent one of the pipes. If we were too tired to screw, we’d embrace each other, feeling up every part of the other’s body.

Casey had told me everything, from his own fantasies to how he was afraid of the consequences. He even showed me his collection of human porn; it was more impressive than mine. When it came to relationships, though, his success rate was no better than mine, his sex life losing priority to his work. That wasn’t the case for the past three days, and we’ve never been this satiated before. We were the same, and it took an alien abduction to find each other.

I knew what I had to do. My superiors were not ready to hear about Casey, would take it as a threat and would start a conflict. I had to ease them into the idea that we weren’t alone in the universe, first with bacteria samples then with something small and simple. Casey said he could buy me time, that he could extend the quarantine until we proved we could not only settle in space but also begin to thrive. Then, he said, it would be up to fate to decide whether our two species would get along.

A ring came from the door, and Casey stepped out to get it while I covered myself with the blanket.

Casey was talking to someone out of my line of sight. There came an exclamation from him as he slammed the door and ran over to me, laughing. “You got clearance.”

I jumped into his arms as we kissed, holding each other close. A dread filled me as the weight of the decision hit me. Whether I lived or died, I wasn't going to be in Casey's arms anymore.

"This is it," I said, tears in my eyes.

"A leap for mankind."

"What will happen to this station?"

"No use for it anymore. We're going to release your ship and travel back."

My chest pounded. "I'll never see you again, will I?"

Casey kissed the top of my head, moving down to my cheek and my chin. "Not unless you come with me."

"You know I can't."

Casey held my hand, our fingers intertwining. "Yeah," he exhaled, "All of this would be for nothing if you suddenly go missing."

"Hey," I said as I bit his lower lip, "maybe you can come visit. I still have a few months left of travelling; my crew won't know the difference."

"Or once you're done with your mission," Casey bit right back, "I can abduct you and never let you go again."

I raised an eyebrow, a smile spreading on my face. "I'd like that."

Casey's lip curled. "Then we have a *date*."

THE END

Author Bio

I entertain people with stories. When I'm not writing, I'm out looking for new sources of inspiration. I love adventures, no matter how big or small, and I'm always up for trying something different, perhaps even kinky. I have a bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering even though I'm really pursuing a career in publishing; I volunteer my time at indie and used bookstores. If you like my fiction, it's all set in the same universe, across time and space. It's like the story never ends.

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