

Intermission Five – Sergei

May 3rd, 2021 – New Eden, California

“You look exhausted, Sergei,” Dr. McKenna said to Sergei Petrov as he entered the room, his partner Andrei having headed down to the canteen to grab them some lunch. “I know it’s not exactly thrilling having to come here and ejaculate as many times as you can into a jar, but we’re working to synthesize it as best as we can. Hopefully soon we’ll be able to let you just sit and rest at home without needing you in here every few days, but because you’ve been here, we’ve saved hundreds of thousands of lives that we wouldn’t have been able to help otherwise.”

“Da, I know, the work we do is important, but it still feels hollow, even with Andrei here,” Sergei sighed, handing another small jar of his jism to the doctor, who put it immediately into a storage container designed to keep it viable as long as possible. In an hour or so, it would get run through a separator, which would split it into tiny doses, that would then be sent out to hospitals all across the nation. His doses were viable for about a week, so the reassignment protocols were still being used relatively sparingly.

Supposedly the Germans had found a way to stabilize the reassignment vector into a pill form that remained viable for up to sixty days, but so far the Americans hadn’t been able to replicate that. Sergei had heard the Germans were offering to share research with the Americans and the Brits, but so far, that offer had been viewed with a bit of suspicion. Sergei hoped they acquiesced soon, simply because it would mean he wouldn’t have to come into the lab and masturbate into a jar several times a day. His protection and US citizenship was dependent on his cooperation.

“Think of how many non-heterosexual people you’ve kept alive, though, Sergei, if it ever gets tough,” Dr. Eve Merriweather said. As the ex-wife of the man who’d developed the lock and key part of the Quaranteam serum, she had found herself at odds with Dr. Adam McCallister’s work, even before he’d had them kidnapped to Russia. Now that she’d escaped (both from him and the Russians, although reports now claimed Adam was working for the Germans) and returned to California, she’d dedicated her life into cracking as much about the serum as she could and undoing some of the horrible work her husband had baked into humanity’s last gasp at survival. “I know how difficult all this can be, but that’s why we try and bring as many of those people in to meet you as we can, so that their faces will live on in your memory. To help you can keep in mind who these people are. So that you know actual people whose lives you saved, rather than them all being abstract numbers.”

“I get this, Doctor, but you know, it still seems unfair that I can have only one partner, compared to the many you both have,” Sergei chuckled before glancing at the door with a frown. “Do not tell Andrei I said that. He will consider me jealous man who wants more cock than he can handle. Are you any further into understanding why I’m different, Dr. Merriweather?”

“We’re still trying to understand how my ex-husband’s work ties into this,” Eve sighed. “I can’t say I’m especially thrilled about being paired up with a man for my survival, but it did keep us alive as a species.”

“How is your new man, Watkins?” Sergei asked her. “Better?”

“He’s... well, he’s quite a lot different than Adam was,” she said with a soft smile. “It’s... nice, being able to talk about... feelings with a partner. We’ve only been together for less than a year, but I already feel infinitely closer to him than I ever did with Adam. And Nathaniel’s existing partners are all good and charming women, so they have done their best about making me feel at home.”

“It is much better than we had it in Russia,” Sergei agreed. “There is no doubt about that.

Better food. Better accommodation. Certainly, much better weather. But do I really need the security detail, protective forces around me at all times? I am no head of state, no super soldier."

"Well, you do have magic running through your veins," Eve told him. "There are probably only a handful of people like you in the world, whom the serum is reacting in a significantly different way."

"Da," Sergei said, "but is it true the Germans have someone like me?"

"It is," Eve replied. "And there are reports of a few others in other places, but it's still insanely rare. We haven't found anyone in the United States reporting such a condition yet, and we've had doctors on the lookout all across the country, now that they know how someone like you would react to people pairing with him."

"I am happy to be of use, Doctor," Sergei said, sitting down on the chair, picking up the carton of orange juice that was provided for him. He ended up drinking a few gallons of orange juice or pineapple juice each day, just to keep himself both hydrated and to keep his body up and running. It sounded like it should be easy work, masturbating into a jar several times a day, but it actually depleted his energy reserves quite quickly. "I must ask, Doctor... why are we asking those who use my sperm to get reassigned to remain entirely quiet during their reassignments? I heard one of the other scientists, Dr. Varma, mentioning that to you, but I had not heard as to why."

"There are... issues that can happen when we allow people to talk during that narrow window, so for the time being, we're insisting that no communication happen," Eve told him.

"That is unfortunate," Sergei replied, scratching the back of his neck. "They always look so enthusiastic when they make contact with my sperm, so eager to learn."

"That's part of the problem," Eve grumbled beneath her breath.

"What was that?" Sergei asked her, as he started to change back into his day to day clothes, instead of the hospital scrubs they had him wear around the labs.

"Nothing," Dr. McKenna said. "My colleague is just tired and crabby, that's all."

He nodded sagely. "This feeling I too know," he said stoically. "That feeling that you are trapped in never ending loop, that each day only runs into the next, a cycle we cannot escape."

"It's not *that* bad," Bill laughed. "You're well fed, you've got your own small mansion, you've got personal security."

"Da, but this is not my *home*, Doctor," Sergei said sadly, shrugging some. The thing he missed most of all was smoking. He could get cigarettes here, although they were heavily frowned upon by the doctors, and they were soft, *American* cigarettes, nothing like the real thing. Too many chemicals, not enough raw tobacco. Sergei had decided it best to just give them up completely, but that did not mean he did not still miss them regularly. "It is my new *adopted* home, perhaps, but it is not the land I grew up in, not the language I grew up speaking. I can be with the man I love, yes, true, but I am not welcome to see the place of my birth ever again."

"That may not be entirely true," Bill told him. "You've seen the news. There're uprisings in Russia, people overthrowing the yoke of oppression and wanting to try something new. Who knows what the geopolitical landscape is going to look like over there in just a few years' time. Maybe you'll be allowed back after the dust settles."

"The dust never settles in Russia," Sergei sighed. "They simply add new layers of dust atop the existing dust. But I suppose it does not hurt to dream."

"Anything else we can do to make your life easier? I know K-Rod said she's been taking you and Andrei to the firing range every so often," Bill said. "Has that helped?"

"I spent much of my life as a soldier, Doc—Bill," Sergei said. Doctor McKenna had

asked Sergei to call him Bill dozens of times, and as much as Sergei wanted to oblige him, the soldier's training him kept fighting it. He was getting better at it, however, catching himself this time. "Anything that lets me inhabit those familiar rhythms, familiar steps, it is a good step, something to help ween me off of my former life and ease me into this one. I should also say thank you for letting us go to visit the Tenderloin. Being a gay Russian soldier, San Francisco was a sort of pipe dream, a place we hoped to go to eventually, but I did not think we would ever see it. Do you think there will be another Folsom Street Fair in our lifetime?"

Bill couldn't help but laugh a little bit while Eve blushed slightly. The Folsom Street Fair was one of the largest outdoor events in California, on the last Sunday of September each year, dedicated to the BDSM and leather subculture, but had sort of become a larger event than that, as perhaps the largest regular organized public nudity allowed event in the country. "You've heard of that?"

"I wouldn't call myself a leather man," Sergei said with a slight smile, "but the photographs have made it past many a Russian censor who didn't know to filter the term. Still, it seems a wonderful event tied to gay pride, as well as the BDSM scene." He glanced over to Bill, cocking his head, a little surprise occurring to him for the moment. "You seem to know quite a bit about it."

The older man laughed, nodding his head. "Not intentionally! The whole thing started in the mid-eighties, but when I moved here in the late nineties, it was already a long-established tradition. Of course, I'd heard little rumors about it here and there, but I didn't expect I was going to accidentally stumble onto it one day when I wasn't paying enough attention. I'd gone into the city to do some shopping, turned a corner and then got quite an eyeful of public cock on display, a trio of naked men, collared and leashed, following behind a very burly man in a leather vest and leather pants. And this was back in the 90's when it wasn't anywhere near as big as it is now."

"How much has it grown?"

Bill rubbed his beard a little bit. "In the 90s, it was probably thirty or forty thousand people, but I think, 2019, the last year they held it, it was approaching four hundred thousand people," he said with a slight grin. "It's quite the scene. Now, with a lot of gay men having died to DuoHalo, the turnout will probably be quite a bit less than it used to be, although maybe it'll even out with a bunch of other people turning out for the BDSM aspect of it instead. Lots of people have found themselves sort of inadvertently part of the BDSM scene now that they have partners who are into that, even if they themselves weren't a part of it."

"Has that happened a lot?" Sergei asked, titling his head slightly, amusement on his face. As of late, he'd often been too exhausted to just hold some conversation with the doctors, but he felt like it was important to stay at least a little informed as to the world he could get access to via the staff of New Eden.

"Quite a bit," Bill said, leaning back in his chair some, crossing his hands over his chest. When Eve had first arrived here, this sort of conversation might have been taboo, but since then, she'd had to adapt to sexuality coming much more to the forefront of daily living. Lots of people had. "Lots of men who aren't *against* BDSM but don't have *experience* in it have found themselves with partners who are quite into that kind of thing, and they're learning to adapt, trying to make sure they do whatever it takes to keep their partners happy. You know Dr. Marcos? Phil? Well, a couple of his partners are *big* into being tied up and used that way, so Phil's had to spend a bunch of time picking up things like shibari and Japanese rope tying, but he said it's brought him and his partners closer together, because a few of them sort of had an

interest in that but always felt too shy to talk about it. But now that everyone has to have sex daily, or even multiple times daily, people are talking about the ins and outs of it a lot more. What they like, what they don't. We have to, otherwise I think we'd all go crazy. Say goodbye to Puritan Repression and hello to Free Love part 2."

"How about you, Dr. McKenna?" Sergei asked with a wry smile. "I can envisage you with a leather cap, a vest and some hot rocker pants while you're wielding a whip over a couple of cute young ladies dressed in scraps of leather. It might be quite the becoming look on your."

Bill couldn't help but guffaw at that. "Well, I've got one partner who like a bit of D/S and I'm doing my best to get into it, to pick up the mannerisms, the lingo, the expected patterns of behavior... but I have to admit, Grace gets far more into it than I do," he said, turning a bit red. "I hadn't realized she liked ordering people around, especially since I won't let her do that with me, just like I won't order *her* around, but when she found out one of my partners was turned on by calling me Master and her Mistress, well, Grace is one of those people who doesn't do anything in half measures, so she went at it full force, and has been working to try and get better."

"How's that been?" Eve asked.

"It's been... a learning experience, no doubt about that," Bill said before sort of giving a shrug and a cryptic smile. It was clear to Sergei that the older man was still getting accustomed to having to be frank about all his sexual goings on, but that it was now generally public discourse, and that trying to keep it private just deprived himself of shared experiences. "But at the end of the day, it's not that hard to give people what they want, and if she wants me to be strong and domineering and it turns her on to be ordered to do shit, well, I should just take that as a sacred trust and not abuse it, right?"

"Just tell me it's not your daughter's friend, Bill," Eve laughed.

"Kenna?" Bill said, almost startled at the thought. "*God* no," he laughed. "Kenna's the most active hand girl in the whole damn household, shy of Grace. If anything, she's more dominant than most of the rest of my partners, even if she's got a bit of a verbal degradation kink. She enjoys sort of surprising me, and being both very active and vocal about what she likes and doesn't like. That was incredibly awkward, the first time when she was crawling all over me, telling me she'd been masturbating thinking about me for years. Apparently, Jen, my daughter, had known about it growing up, but thought it was just a phase she'd grow out of. In fact, both Jen *and* Grace knew about it, so that was more than a little strange. But, y'know, apparently that's common, girls having crushes on their friends' fathers and whatnot." Bill tossed his hands up a bit. "News to me, but then again, most things usually are."

"How's it going, what with you having said no to Kenna originally?" Eve asked him.

"I think everybody understood my concerns, not just personally but how it all looked, considering the influence I have around here," Bill said with a sigh. "I didn't want anyone to think I was abusing my power, even if it seemed like nearly everyone and their mother was doing it. Since I was a fallback option for Kenna, I haven't had to take too much shit around here about the age difference. It'll start getting weird again if Kenna decides she wants to get pregnant, but Jen's already got a head start, with a bun in her oven. She and her boyfriend wasted *no* time once the government said it needed people to start breeding like rabbits."

"You don't like her partner?" Sergei said.

"I just think she's *young*, and know she had plans, wanting to go to college, get a higher education, and I'm worried if she becomes a mom so young, it'll derail all that for her."

"She's not going to go to college in the fall when they reopen?" Eve asked.

“She has the option to,” Bill said. “Same’s true for Kenna. Both are still thinking it over, and they have a month or so left to decide. It would be weirdly timed for Jen, considering she’s due in January, but she might do it anyway, considering all the benefits they’re offering for new mothers and furthering education. They really are trying to have an entire nation of newborns within the next couple of years.”

“Your daughter, she should get education,” Andrei said in his broken English as he entered the room. Andrei hadn’t spoken much English at all when he arrived, but had been doing his best to learn the language as quickly as he could. Sergei’s was still much better, though. “Do you think government will let us... what is word... get burdened?”

After a brief exchange of Russian, Sergei smiled and translated for the doctors. “He means adopt. Do you think Andrei and I will be allowed to adopt children? We would very much like to be parents, and I know many young women will be pressured to have children they are not ready to keep.”

“There’s also a lot of orphaned boys and girls under the age of ten,” Bill said. “If you’re looking to adopt and don’t mind someone with a few years on them, I would be happy to get you contacted to the adoption agencies. Lots of desperate boys and girls looking for good homes. We could have you meeting kids as early as tomorrow.”

Andrei’s face lit up, and Sergei couldn’t help but smile. The two of them had talked quite a bit about how good it would be to have a handful of children running around the large empty house that the Air Force had provided for them. “Let us meet with your people tomorrow to discuss what we are looking for, then,” Sergei said. “I think we would not mind adopting three or four children, but we will want to meet them first, if that would be okay.”

Eve smiled over at them kindly. “It would only be natural for you to want to find a good group of children to call your own,” she told them, reaching over to put her hand on Sergei’s shoulder. “I think that’s incredibly noble of you two, and I want you to know that I’m very proud of you for agreeing to take on such responsibilities.”

“We simply want to have family of our own,” Andrei said with a slightly nervous look about him. Sergei knew his partner had not expected everything would move so fast, although Sergei knew that whatever he asked was likely to be done in an expedited fashion. The Americans truly did want to make his life as easy and as pleasurable as possible, lest he simply one day say that he didn’t want to provide his sperm anymore. The deal was good for both parties, but that didn’t mean he couldn’t occasionally ask for additional things, and he and Andrei had long dreamed about having a family of their own. It would give them something to unite over, and something to keep their minds occupied.

“It’s a very noble thing regardless,” Bill said. “I’ll start the paperwork today, and we’ll have someone here from Child Services tomorrow to start building you a profile of what you’re looking to put together.”

“Could... Is possible we get Russian boy?” Andrei asked, and Sergei smiled, knowing his partner simply wanted a taste of home.

“It’s possible,” Bill said, “although it might take a little bit longer. But you know what my people are willing to do to make sure you’re happy.” Everyone chuckled a little bit. “We can start tomorrow the process and by this time next week, you should have children showing up at your home.”

“There are many children without parents, yes?”

Eve nodded somberly. “Many of them died before they could be found, but yes, there are still many more in need of good homes.”

“We will provide them with one, with stability, with order amidst the chaos.”

Dr. McKenna nodded. “Well, we’re done with you for the day, Sergei, so if you want to head home, you’re welcome to do so, and I can make a few phone calls so that you’ll have folks to talk to here tomorrow about adoption. They’re very much expediting the process, but they’ll want to make sure it’s a good fit, not just for you, but for the kids also.”

“Is good,” Andrei said. “Is right.”

“We thank you, Dr. McKenna,” Sergei said. “I have to admit, I was anticipating some pushback, but I guess I truly can... what is your American expression? Write my own ticket?”

“Something like that,” Bill agreed. “Nancy’s here to drive you boys home.”

2nd Lieutenant Nancy Meyers was part of Linda’s team of women who had been tasked with special duties, and Nancy’s was to keep tabs on Sergei and Andrei, and to provide them with a level of security necessary. New Eden was an especially secure area, but it didn’t hurt to have security on the people who were extremely important, and while there wasn’t any expectations that people would try and take a shot at Sergei and Andrei, Linda preferred to be safe instead of sorry. “You ready, kids?” she said, standing in the doorway. Nancy’s best trait at being covert was that for all the world she looked like she would be the perfect yoga practicing trophy wife, a second-generation stepmom who was secretly a Karen lying in wait, when instead she was a crack shot with a rifle and a sidearm and was easily the best knife thrower in Linda’s Girls. But the bright blonde bushy ponytail and suburban MILF attire were the perfect camouflage. It looked more like carpooling than a security detail.

“Yes, boss,” Sergei said as he grabbed his satchel, slinging it over his shoulder. “Thank you again. I know I can seem to complain a lot, but honestly, it will be nice to have a few days off without my dick chafing.” He chuckled a little bit, as did all the doctors. “I empathize with you men who have dozens of partners to satisfy every week. At some point, the spirit is willing, but the body can only give so much of itself.”

“See you all again tomorrow!” Andrei added cheerfully, as they started to head out of the room. Once they were out of earshot of the doctors, he switched into Russian to ask his partner about the details of what had just transpired. “They will help us adopt children? Is that what I heard, Sergei?”

“You heard correctly, Andrei. Tomorrow they will send an expert to help us develop a computer model, one that will let us understand what kind of family we can build from those in need of adoption. There are even a handful of Russian speaking boys and girls we can consider as options.”

“We will, of course, raise them to be bilingual,” Andrei said proudly. “Despite how much trouble I am having in picking up their language, I will work even harder on my English, so we can raise them properly here.”

“Your English is not so bad,” Sergei teased.

“I sound like a bad cab driver in awful movies we see on cable late at night,” Andrei said with a spit. “But it’s nice of you to be so kind while I am frustrated. This language makes no sense. The pronunciations are all over the place! Did you know ‘through’ and ‘blue’ actually rhyme? They do not end the same way *at all*. I will learn, though. I will learn and I will get this language down even if I am fighting to my last bootlace.”

“Just making the effort is probably enough, Andrei,” Sergei said with a smile, even as he was looking out the window, when something caught his eye, and he switched back to English. “Lieutenant? You said if I saw something unusual, I should say something, yes?”

Nancy immediately brought the car to a halt. “Absolutely,” she said. “What did you see?”

“Can we back up to near the fence?”

The car shifted into reverse, driving on the secluded road backwards without much fear of encountering anyone. “Look there, near the base of the fence,” he said.

Nancy brought the car as close to the fence as she could, then hopped out, stepping close, but looking very carefully around her to investigate. “Shit,” she muttered just loud enough for Sergei to hear her. She hopped back into the car, slamming the door shut, turning the vehicle around.

“Was it—?”

“Yes,” she said, grabbing her phone, tapped Linda’s name at the top of her Favorites. “Boss, call a Code Yellow. Somebody’s breached the border of New Eden.”