

D14 Preferring Selections

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A work of fiction, meant for adults. Read something else if you are not an adult, or are offended by stories with sexual content. Then again, if all you're looking for is in-out, in-out, in-out, you should probably read something else. I welcome constructive comments. Enjoy.

Paul wiped the sweat from his forehead and winced; a nasty headache and his meds were at home on the bathroom counter. And he'd barely started the County Fair -- still a lot to see.

But another part of him chided, "Why bother?" Why indeed -- it was hot, crowded, and only going to get more of both as the day progressed.

What he needed was a few minutes in a cool, shaded place. A few minutes and he'd be better.

Well, the Industrial Arts exhibits were in the big halls -- protected from the sun, and cooler -- the place to go. Cross the midway, past the rides and so-called "games," by livestock, and he'd be there. He looked at the printed program and map -- he could go around the back of the midway area, and pop out at the end of one of the Industrial Arts halls. Better.

He heard the low thrumming of an air conditioner as he walked down the row of dubious exhibits -- the largest, the smallest, the strangest... When he saw the sign, he stopped and smiled. What the hell -- he'd saved more than that on parking! And the tent was the one with the air conditioning running!

The sandwich board in front of the tent read, "Strega Amalia - Past, Present, Future \$5."

Paul peeled a \$5 bill from his wallet, replacing the wallet in his front pants pocket and the five in the back pocket.

"Hello?" he called at the entrance to the tent. He could feel the cool air inside.

"Please enter," invited a pleasant voice.

Paul pushed past the cloth drop of the entrance. It was cool and dim inside -- heaven. As his eyes adjusted, he saw a small round table and a ...

His eyes snapped past the table to the woman sitting behind it -- forties maybe, long curled dark hair, oval face, enigmatic smile, and a full figure in a long-sleeved outfit of some kind, one with a low cut front.

"Please be seated," she suggested, her palms up on top of the table.

Paul sat across from her, choosing to look at her rather than the crystal ball on the table. His head was pounding; he could feel it pounding in time to his heart.

"Your hands, please," she said.

Paul placed his hands in hers. Hers were cool, smooth, soft yet strong.

"Close your eyes please," she whispered.

Paul closed his eyes, trying to take in the cool. Left eye pulsing with the headache. Breathe slowly, it's cool and dark and I can relax, he told himself. Another breath, feeling a slight tingle, relaxing a bit more.

"Please remain seated," the woman's voice whispered. Her hands left his.

He felt hands on his shoulders, leaning him back. "Relax; I've got you," she whispered, as he leaned back against softness. Her hands went to the sides of his head, palms in front of his ears, cool fingers extending forward to his forehead. "Easy breath and relax," she suggested, moving her fingers slowly, sending tingles through him.

Paul took a breath and let it out, letting coolness and relaxation pour through him.

"Very good -- again..."

Carla tracked the diagnostic readouts projected in her vision as the unit under the table initiated sedation of the subject and continued the diagnostic scan. She felt it activating the intrusive probes in her handunits. She glanced down to see silvery threads extending from fingertips and disappearing into the subject's skin, knowing other sets were doing the same at the rear of her handunits.

Subject pain readings dropping. Med unit diagnosed and treated a cerebral vascular condition and the associated systemic triggers producing the pain. Primary physiological scan complete with minimal correction required; secondary med scan and psych scan underway.

Preliminary evaluation -- subject exceeds selection criteria. Carla felt the med unit activating more of her systems. Further functional diagnostics required -- she received the initial diagnostic, treatment, and programming profile.

She smiled at the diagnostics. This was the kind of work she enjoyed.

Outside the tent, the lettering on the sandwich board changed to “CLOSED” even though nobody noticed.

Further evaluation required repositioning; relay nodes installed for permanent neural probes. Temporary probes withdrawn. Reposition subject for functional diagnostics and initiation of treatment and programming.

*

Paul was floating in a cloud; her hands felt so good on his head, and he could imagine what the pillows were that supported him so gently.

Moving -- he was moving? It was like being in a dream. Floating on his back, naked? She was naked on top of him, full breasts sliding up his body, stopping to grind into his cock.

So good -- he felt himself responding, getting hard after so long. Tingling running down his spine and through him -- getting harder and harder, so hungry for her! Kissing and sliding together, kissing at both ends, her tongue thrusting into his mouth as he thrust deeply into her. Moved to a nipple, rewarded with a mouthful of warm, sweet bliss. His body responded so strongly to hers, thrusting, sucking, holding on, moaning and thrashing as he came, then settling back to suckling as he drifted wrapped up in her.

*

Carla floated in pleasure, holding the subject and monitoring progress. She moved his head a bit to stimulate suckling. Ensemble delivery almost complete. The pleasure these creatures got from suckling, the pleasure both partners received, was impressive. And it made ensemble delivery easy as well. Components for the primary ensemble gathered at the back of the subject's throat as he sucked and swallowed. Components diffused through the back of the throat and aligned along target vertebra, organizing into threads placed in nerves and running to their corresponding nodes. Secondary ensemble components traveled down the esophagus to the stomach and diffused through tissues to the spine, traveling to lumbar vertebra and target nerves. She felt a tendril move along her skin and into the subject's nasal passages -- additional components were needed to build more complex nodes, including a link node.

She felt systems boosting her internal component production -- a more advanced installation was possible, based on this subject -- a good catch for her! She observed part of the programming being sent to peripheral units in the tent, scanning the area for complimentary selections to bond with this subject. She was going to have a busy day!

Diagnostics complete and required repairs and enhancements complete. Initial programming complete. Primary, secondary, and link nodes in place. Initial calibration complete. Link diagnostics complete and link functional. Release subject and allow ensemble formation to continue. Keep subject in target area for bonding once selections are made.

*

Paul woke in the arms of a beautiful woman.

“Better now?” she asked, smiling and holding his head closer.

Paul took a deep breath of the scent between her breasts, then suckled briefly but hungrily at each, kissing nipple and breast when finished. “Yes, thank you,” he whispered.

She helped him dress, and sent him along with a kiss on the forehead.

Paul stood outside the tent, smiling in the sun. He felt great, better than he’d felt in a long time. Looking at his watch -- a little over an hour! Feeling in his pants pocket -- and he still had the five dollar bill! He laughed, shook his head, and started walking to Industrial Arts, stopping to get a Pepsi along the way -- he was quite thirsty all of a sudden.

*

Alice turned the corner, wide eyed and panting, looking for *some* place, *any* place to hide. There! In that tent!

Carla barely had time to review the preliminary scans on the girl when she was alerted that trouble was coming -- she could hear him yelling as he stuck his head into tents coming down the alley. Carla pulled the girl to her and had the defensive unit throw a shield around her, rendering her invisible. Carla contemplated deflecting -- no, that wasn’t a solution.

Boris stuck his head in the tent. “Where dat bitch?” he yelled. He sniffed the air -- she was in here! “Where you at, bitch?” He barged in and pointed to the woman in the tent, yelling, “My bitch, she in here! Bring her, or I kill you! Now!”

Alice felt funny, kind of dizzy, and it was like she was looking through some kind of screen. She almost cried out when Boris stuck his head in the tent, and then charged in! Yet he looked right past her, yelling at the woman, threatening her.

Yet the woman stood there and smiled.

What was Boris going to do? Beat the woman like he beat her? But Boris froze, turning sparkly all over.

Carla had the data she needed. She reached for the girl, dropping the shield around her.

“You are safe, my child,” she assured the girl.

Alice reached out to touch Boris -- he hadn’t moved! He was frozen, standing there!

“Has he harmed you?” Carla asked, knowing the answer.

Alice nodded.

“Does he deserve a second chance?” Carla asked.

In answer, Alice pulled up the left side of her top, showing mottled bruises along her ribs.

Carla interrogated systems. Male subject’s vehicle located in nearby parking area, a pickup truck parked across two marked spaces. Initiate containment field to provide physical containment and optical blurring, diameter 1.5 meters, height 2000 meters. Release male subject from confinement at top of containment field.

As Alice lowered her top, covering the still painful bruises, Boris disappeared. She gasped.

Boris blinked, looking for the ... what the hell? He was falling! He was up in the air and falling!

Chris put his arm around Debbie as they walked through the parking lot. It was a good day for the Fair, if a little hot. “What an asshole,” Chris said as they walked by a gaudy pickup with oversized tires that was straddling two parking spaces. “Some people never learn,” Debbie agreed.

As they passed the truck, they heard a loud noise. Both of them turned around, looking.

“What was that?” Debbie asked, holding Chris closer.

“Sounded like somebody dumped a load of crap in the back of that truck,” Chris replied. Turning more to Debbie he asked, “Sno cone or cotton candy?”

She laughed and hugged him. “Sno cone first -- it’s getting hot!”

“Not as hot as you,” he growled, kissing her neck.

Carla led the girl to sitting at the table, and held her hands. “He will not bother you or anyone else.”

Alice’s eyes went wide. Did that mean what she thought it meant, the way she said that?

Carla smiled. “You are still young, with most of your life before you. Please, my child, think before you act. You especially should avoid actions which are immutable.”

Alice frowned a bit.

Carla tilted her head a little. “Do you know what immutable means?”

Alice frowned a bit more, thinking... “Like, quiet, can’t talk?”

Carla smiled a bit. “Almost, my child. It means impossible or difficult to change. Think of actions you could take -- which among them are difficult to change. Tattoos? Piercings? Sexual relations? These and so many more, immutable...”

Alice felt her ears grow red, blushing. Yeah, like really difficult to change...

Carla nodded slowly. “Think of a tattoo -- now visualize it on the forearm of your grandmother...”

Alice chuckled, but then blushed more, going quiet.

Carla smiled. “What may be pleasurable or attractive today may not be so tomorrow or the next day, yes?”

Alice nodded.

Carla told her, “You may find it hard to believe, but I was once your age...”

Alice chuckled again and nodded.

“Decide carefully,” Carla counseled. “You already know that quick decisions may have painful consequences...”

Alice still felt the pain in her side, and knew she’d feel it for weeks. She nodded.

“Please, please -- think before you act,” Carla whispered, holding the girl’s hands.

Alice nodded. She’d been lucky, running from Boris... She felt confused. “What do I do now?”

“He will not bother you or anyone again -- from him, you are safe. But do not make the same mistake again! Enjoy the fair -- take the bus home.”

Alice nodded. She stood up as the woman did. They hugged.

Carla had systems cloud the girl’s memories of the last few minutes as she stepped out of the tent. As far as she knew, she took off running from Boris, and never saw him again.

*

Officer Katy Morales walked the carny area of the County Fair slowly. No need to be in a hurry; it was already hot out. And anything questionable wasn’t likely to be going on this early in the day anyway. She’d observed the games; just the usual. She’d exchanged nods when she’d spotted Ross, also working undercover, an investigator from another division.

Turning a corner, she saw the sandwich board in front of the tent -- “Strega Amalia - Health, Love, Life \$5.”

Katy froze. Her stomach flipped and her hands went cold. She took a breath trying to shake it, to loosen up. But she felt the fear rising again. Maybe Strega Amalia had an answer for her, an answer for the lump in her left breast. “Hello?” she called, peering into the dimly lit but cool tent.

“Come in, my child,” a pleasant voice invited.

Katy entered, scanning the area automatically; no threats, one occupant, a good looking woman with long curly dark hair.

“Please sit down,” the woman suggested, holding her hands open on the table.

Katy sat down, placing her hands in the older woman’s. Her touch was comforting, reassuring.

Carla smiled. “It’s all right; you are safe here.” She interrogated the selectors -- why had they brought this one in? Even her preliminary scan showed this one didn’t meet selection criteria.

Oh. The selection AI brought her in out of curiosity, sensing turmoil, angst, something very complex they wanted to investigate. Primary physical scan indicated a cluster of abnormal cells in the left breast which had seeded to surrounding lymphatic tissue. Tentative identification of a nexus. Permission for deeper psychological scan? Granted. Carla watched as the subject sighed and the tension in her melted away as the systems relaxed her body and mind.

Carla had already initiated treatment of the items identified on the primary physical when the psychological report came back. Yes, that was the nexus. Subject had identified a suspect mass which had been medically confirmed, and was scheduled for follow-up diagnostic work in four days. Carla smiled; that diagnostic work would be completely negative. Carla queried the systems and received an affirmative reply. She smiled and told the unit to proceed. Genetic susceptibilities to that and a number of conditions reversed, and made dominant. A set of tendrils extended from beneath the table and flowed into the subject. They didn’t remain long, and withdrew.

Carla frowned, reviewing the in-depth psychological report. As usual, the physical component was easy. For now, simple shifts in hormones and neurotransmitters would have to do. Longer term, solutions had to come from within. Couldn’t justify sensor/effector nodes in this one, but a temporary tracking/reporting node they could do. As tendrils entered the subject’s body, she thought that they’d just have to plant the seeds and hope for the best. Well, that and whack some of her hormonal and cortical balances to leave her in a much more pleasant state than she’d been in the last few days.

*

Katy blinked her eyes open, looking at the woman smiling at her, holding her hands.

The woman shook her head slowly. "My dear, you are a beautiful young woman. To find your bliss, you must look inside -- for bliss is within you, as it is within all of us. You will have a long life, and if you so choose, it will be a life filled with joy. You can choose -- you *must* choose. And remember, it is not suffering *or* bliss, but suffering *and* bliss -- and if you so choose, the suffering is optional."

She stood and pulled Katy to standing, kissing her on the forehead. "I give you my blessing, and my protection. Wake up -- do not sleepwalk through life; pay attention and decide actively! Go, my child, and live."

Katy stood outside the tent. She felt good. She felt relaxed. Hell, she felt horny...

She headed back to the carny area. Ross spotted her and nodded again. She walked over to him.

"Hey Morales, I used to pitch in high school -- want me to win you a bear?" he gestured to one of the games.

She smiled, pulling her shoulders back to give him a better view. "Ross, the motherfucker of all earthquakes could roll through here, and the only thing left standing for miles around would be those goddamn bottles."

Ross leered back, liking what he saw. "Wanna bet?"

"That's why you're still walking a beat," she razed, taking his arm in hers.

*

Patty sighed, turning around. She was lost, no idea where she was, other than in the carnival section of the Fair. She didn't know where the others were, or how they got separated, but somehow she didn't think they cared. If they'd even noticed that she was gone.

She sighed again, the look on her face hardening. No, they didn't give a damn. She wasn't even sure why they'd invited her along in the first place. She shook her head. Or why she'd ridden with them. She needed better -- better roommates, better living conditions. Work was okay, but she needed something outside work. And having a place to go outside of work that felt safe, even welcoming, would be a good start.

She took another few steps, turning a corner, and stopped in her tracks.

The sandwich board outside the tent read, "Strega Amalia, Relationships and Roommates."

She smiled and approached the tent, smiling a bit more as she sensed cool air blowing out of it. "Hello?" she called.

"Come in, my dear!" a woman's voice invited.

*

Carla watched the selector AI identify the target from meters out, drawing her in, dipping in to lead the subject's thoughts while the physio nodes did a coarse scan. Even based on preliminaries, the selector predicted high match probabilities, particularly based on the stored profiles from the male subject.

Carla had to agree as the subject stepped into the tent. "Come sit down, dear!" she invited, holding out her hands. The subject had large breasts, larger than the form she wore, and a nice curvy figure to go with them. She didn't have to run any simulations to tell that their male subject would be attracted!

Selectors had another possible tagged -- why did they always come in clusters? Carla cut the chit-chat and initiated sedation and deep probing of the subject. Get on with it!

Oh, a delicious fit! Such complementing needs and abilities! Near the lower edge of the acceptable age group; much younger and the male subject might have difficulties with daughter complexes. Noted -- both would receive programming to alleviate the issue. Tendrils flowed out of the subject's chair and into her body at multiple points, with larger delivery units entering her mouth and one nostril. Component delivery and organization commencing.

Carla sighed and shook her head. The subject had a significant self-image problem, yet she was so attractive, particularly to their male subject! Carla sub-tasked an AI to evaluate strategies for dealing with the issue on a societal level, as well as reprogramming this one.

Similar work to the last one, shift some hormonal and endocrine levels, certain neurotransmitters would stay altered for a few days, with the bonding process supporting the elevated levels. Primary and secondary nodes on-line, link node coming up. Yes, she knew, she chided one of the AIs, females had a higher computational demand for hormonal balancing. Especially since with this one lactation is desired as part of the binding process with the male. Recommendation for a high bandwidth link node to accompany subjects for initial binding process -- agreed.

Relay from shipboard AIs -- what did that meddlesome mob want now? Retargeting recommendations -- and Carla liked them! Retargeting the pair, with small but interesting changes recommended. Carla actually sent her thanks! Not only would this be more fun for them, it cut down on her work! Initiate changes in the female and retrieve the male!

*

Paul strode slowly through the industrial arts exhibits. Good to see that a few schools in the area still taught such things. Carpentry, cabinetmaking, plumbing and wiring -- those couldn't be outsourced to Bangalore, not yet, and hopefully not ever.

He paused, frowning a bit, patting his pockets. Wasn't sure what it was, but he was certain he'd left something in Strega Amalia's tent. He walked across the fairgrounds quickly.

"Hello?" he called from outside the tent.

"Come in, my dear," the friendly voice invited.

Paul went in. There before him stood a beautiful young woman with a full figure.

Patty turned and looked at a handsome man standing in front of her.

Time seemed to stop for both of them, and in that fold of time, Strega Amalia's voice spoke to each.

Paul learned that Patty was his to hold and to protect; he needed to provide her with a place to live, and she would turn that place, a house, into a home.

Patty learned that Paul would hold her and protect her, giving her a place to stay, but she needed to turn that house into a home, and to hold and heal her Paul. For all his strength and skills, he needed to be held and loved. She was filled with memories and sensations -- but how could they be memories if it hadn't happened yet -- squeezing and holding him, suckling him into submission, riding him to ecstasy, holding him and being held.

Paul and Patty looked into each others eyes, and flowed into a kiss, their arms going around each other, roaming over each other.

"I give you my blessing, my children -- go!" she told them, hands on their shoulders, then kissing each on the forehead.

Paul and Patty stood outside the tent. They hugged each other, parting with a sigh. "I've got the station wagon in the lot across from the entrance. How many trips do you think it will take to move you?" Paul asked.

Patty stepped closer, resting her head on his shoulder, still feeling dizzy, holding him for comfort and more. "We'll probably be done before they realize I'm gone," she sighed.

He put his arms around her and kissed her forehead. He would protect her.

Patty held him gently, feeling safer already. Safer and something else -- she couldn't wait to get him in bed...

*

“Want the pork barbecue for dinner?” Ross offered, his arm around Katy. She giggled, holding the bear he’d won for her. They knew they’d been spotted by someone -- another carny told that game operator something, and shortly thereafter, Ross won the bear.

“That sounds great,” Katy agreed.

“And after? We’re off shift,” Ross offered.

“We’ll just have to see,” Katy tempted, knowing what she wanted. From the looks Ross was giving her, he wanted pretty much the same...

*

Patty sighed, putting down the last box. Three trips and they were done! Three trips and she was out of that place, a note on the refrigerator telling her now-ex-roommates she’d moved out. They’d even dropped by the local post office where she’d filled out a change-of-address form.

And such a spacious house! So nice! She could see a woman’s touch in the past, with years of a bachelor. She was so looking forward to all those challenges! But now...

Carrying the last of her things upstairs to the master bedroom, that bed looked so inviting...

“Paul, I thought I’d take quick shower before dinner,” she offered.

“Okay -- the red and blue towels are clean,” he said, smiling.

She sat him on the end of the bed, then slipped off her shoes. She unbuttoned her blouse, turning slowly as she did to give him a good view. She slipped off her slacks, and standing in front of him, reached behind to undo her bra. She caught his eyes in hers. Taking off her bra, she saw his gaze lower, and heard his sigh. She stepped closer, slipping a hand behind his head, pulling him to where he belonged. Oh the thrill that shot through her when he latched on to her nipple! She held him, moving his head, making both of them moan. Just holding him to her sent her into orgasm, and his arms around her just made it better.

She pushed him back farther on the bed -- her shower could wait. It looked like that shower could hold two easily, and there was only one way to find out!

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