

# **Slaves of Eden**

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# Slaves of Eden

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The United States said North Korea fired first. China claimed it was France. The United Kingdom had it on good authority that Russia launched the first missile. In the end it did not matter where it came from, only that the thirty-seven years' long world war that ensued was the most devastating in human history. They say war never changes, and at the most base level – that being one group of people senselessly killing another over ideological differences and want of territory rightfully belonging to someone else, that is true. But the multi-megaton nuclear missiles, high-powered machine guns, stealth bombers and elite soldiers of today is a far cry from the sword and bow wielding armies of the Crusades.

Satellites, and with them the ability to communicate at the speed of a telephone call were the first to go. Power grids were hit with strategic precision turning out the lights, internet and everything else requiring electricity to function. In a matter of hours the world was plunged into darkness. Panic set in. Riots broke out. And if millions lying dead in the streets was not bad enough, more were murdered because someone else wanted something they had. Martial law was declared on a national level but that did little to stop those hell bent on furthering the chaos.

But not all was lost. The tension rising for years, several government agencies working in conjunction with the wealthiest, most influential men and women in the nation secretly began work on a vast, self-sustaining underground vault complex capable of comfortably housing fifty thousand people for up to century they dubbed Project Eden. Powered by a small nuclear plant it came complete with a state-of-the-art air and water filtration system capable of screening out the tiniest of microbes. Food was grown in extensive greenhouses using specialized lights the came as close to natural sunlight as humanly possible. And while meat was available it was strictly rationed to keep the supply of livestock thriving for as long as possible.

Five thousand men and ten thousand women were carefully selected based on a series of strict parameters ranging from age and ethnicity, to education and medical records. Another five thousand men and women from all across the work spectrum were chosen not as the future of mankind, but as teachers of such. Though geniuses in their respective fields they were still young enough to. And then, on the fifteen of May, 2063 – seven hours after the first bomb fell, the doors of Eden closed, giving twenty thousand people a chance for a future and leaving the rest of the country to fend for itself.

Scared and confused college aged men and women were ushered to Eden's stadium where games and other such competitions would be held for entertainment. President Gabriel Clarke – the nation's youngest president ever elected at thirty-five years, sixty-four days stood on the small stage center field and took in the faces she would spend the rest of her life getting to know before addressing them.

“I wish I could say this is a drill but I pride myself on being as truthful as possible and there is no reason to sugarcoat or lie about the state of things as they now are. Our worst nightmare has come true. The first bomb fell on American soil just over nine hours ago and five more made it through our defenses minutes later. I want to assure each and every one of you that you are safe here in Eden. Even if outside forces knew where to strike we are nearly five hundred feet underground and not even the most powerful nuclear weapons can reach us here. We are completely self-sustaining with enough resources to last fifty thousand of us about a century. If we only had to worry about the fighting and radiation we would be out of here in five to ten years depending on how many bombs were dropped, but unfortunately, nuclear winter could keep us here much longer.”

Taking a moment to watch the faces growing increasingly concerned, President Clarke continued. "I know that each of you is thinking about the family and friends you left behind and I sympathize. I may be the President of the United States but that does not make me above the law." She thought about fighting back the tears, but as thoughts of leaving her loved ones behind formed in her head she let them fall. "I'm a wife and mother. I'm a sister and an aunt. I am here in the safety of Eden while my family...my husband of fourteen years, my son Jason and daughters Emily and Alyssa, everyone I ever loved and cared about are out there." Showing just how human she truly was she dropped to her knees and openly sobbed for several long minutes as a stunned and sympathetic crowd helplessly watched.

In the time it took for Gabriel to compose herself the crowd of sat in solemn silence as. Standing after several minutes she smoothed out her skirt and blazer. "I am not telling you this to garner sympathy, but to let you know that each and every one of us has made sacrifices in the hopes of saving humanity. That being said, you've all no doubt noticed there are two women for every man in Eden. That was not a mistake. Frankly put, if we are locked in here for more than five years and things look as if we'll be in here decades or longer it will become our responsibility to ensure humanity doesn't die with us. Get to know your fellow vault dwellers. Make friends. Ladies, find a man you're willing to have children with but don't get too attached because to maintain genetic viability you'll each...we'll each be required to have children with no fewer than three men. And yes, I'm included in that but don't come knocking on my door anytime soon."

The first state of the vault address went on for another two hours as President Clarke took and answered as many questions as she could. Not holding back, she answered them honestly and to the best of her ability. In that time several more bombs dropped all along the eastern and western coasts. In seconds cities it took decades, centuries to build into major metropolises were reduced to rubble. Millions lay dead and as many more were injured. Not holding back, President Clarke gave her fellow vault dwellers the news as it came in. The reaction was as expected but she felt no need to hide the stark reality from those she would spend the next three to seven years governing.

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Escorted out of the stadium by armed security, Gabriel went back to her room. She was exhausted. The thought of leaving her husband, children, parents and friends behind devastated her and she took absolutely no pleasure knowing she would live in relative comfort while they fended for themselves in the chaos of World War Three. Leaving Secret Service at the door, she entered the living room of her suite and stared at the concrete walls. Sure, they might have been painted her favorite shade of light grey to match the modern furniture and been decorated with pictures of her family and achievements but she had never felt more of a prisoner.

A handsome fit man of eighteen wearing jeans and a tee shirt walked down the short hallway leading to President Clarke's quarters. For obvious reasons the area was completely off-limits to all but a select few individuals so it came as no surprise to him that the men standing guard at her door drew their guns and aimed them at his head and chest.

"This area is off limits," the Secret Service man on the left called out, his baritone voice calm and commanding. "Stop where you are or we will shoot."

"Of that I have no doubt," the young man said as he stopped and put his hands up to show he held no weapons. "I'm actually authorized to be here. I'm going to get my ID from my pocket so please don't shoot me." When neither man pulled the trigger, he slowly reached into the front

right pocket of his jeans and pulled out the plastic card containing all of his information. “May I approach or would you like me to throw it?”

“You may approach but know that any sudden moves will be met with deadly force.”

“Understood.” Walking as non-threatening as humanly possible the young man approached the two armed men and then held out the ID for one of them to take. “You’ll also want to take a look at the ring on my right hand,” he said as he turned his hand around so the men could see the gold band with the seal of the president of the United States. “My name is Dax Peterson and I’m here to fulfill my duties.”

The two men knew exactly what the Ring on Dax’s finger meant and though their faces reflected little to no emotion they were each a little bit jealous of the young man’s luck. “I’m sorry, but President Clarke is in no condition to take visitors at the moment but when she’s ready you’ll be the first to know,” the Secret Service Agent on the right said.

“I completely understand, believe me, I do, but this authorizes me free and unrestricted access to President Clarke and I would like to see her if only to talk about what comes next.”

“What comes next is you turn around and go back to your quarters or wherever else you wish to go that isn’t here,” the agent on the left said, his voice more than a little threatening. “And if I see you in this area again...”

The door behind them opened and Gabriel poked her head out to see what the commotion was all about. “What’s going on out here gentlemen?” Seeing the young man standing in front of her security team, she smiled. “And who might you be, young man?”

“My name is Dax Peterson and I’m here to see you,” Dax said as he once again held up his ring.”

Her cheeks turning pink, President Clarke cleared her throat. “Please, come in.”

“Thank you Ma’am.”

“Madam President, with all due respect this man has not been cleared and may pose a direct threat to your life. We cannot...”

“This man has been cleared and is to be permitted in my quarters whenever he likes. Is that understood?”

“Yes Ma’am.” Gritting his teeth, the Agent on the left gave Dax a scathing look as he walked passed them.

Dax walked into the living room of the President’s quarters. The door closed behind him and he took a moment to let reality sink in before saying anything.

“Can I get you something to drink, Mr. Peterson?”

“No thank you Ma’am. I know now is about the worst possible time to do this but given the circumstances I feel it is better to get it over with now rather than waiting five years.”

“And what brings you to that conclusion Mr. Peterson?”

“Please call me Dax, Ma’am. And not to toot my own horn but when it comes to statistics I’m something of a prodigy. Bombs have all but destroyed the eastern and western coasts of the country. Several more have struck further inland and have no doubt crippled the power grid and infrastructure. It doesn’t take a genius to know World War Three has begun and with nuclear missiles being used the chances of us leaving in the five year timeframe you suggested is approximately one-point-six percent. You know as well as I do what this ring around my finger means, Ma’am, and forgive my bluntness but if we taint until you’re forty then there’s only a five percent chance of pregnancy versus the twenty percent chance you have at thirty-five.”

Standing in front of the couch, Gabriel found the young man’s forwardness a breath of fresh air and remained silent as he continued to make his case why they needed to begin her

breeding sooner rather than later. Most woman would have balked at the notion of having sex with another man while her husband and children were in a warzone but not her. A pragmatist through and through, she knew he was right and even if he was not she, like every other woman now locked safely in Eden had one purpose above all else. Taking her blazer off, she lay it over the arm of the couch. "You're right, Dax, this is the worst possible time to be doing this but you're also right that there's no time like the present. Unbuttoning the top two buttons of her blouse, she took a deep breath. I have a feeling we're going to be seeing a lot of each other so there's something you need to know. Alyssa, you may come out."

Alyssa Clark was the President's oldest daughter and by all account not supposed to be in Eden but then again her mother was the President of the United States. Strings were pulled and under cover of darkness the eighteen year old was secreted in before anyone else. She was just getting dressed after a shower so was only wearing a lacy pink bra and panties as she stepped out of her bedroom with head bowed slightly to hide her embarrassment at being seen by a man she did not know.

"HOLY FUCK!" Dax exclaimed. Catching himself, he apologized. "Sorry Ma'am. I wasn't aware your daughter was here."

"No need to apologize. And as far as everyone here is concerned, she isn't. Is that understood?"

"Yes Ma'am."

"I'm serious, Dax. If word gets out that I pulled favors to get her here it'll cast doubt on my ability to govern and not to toot my own horn but that's the last thing any of us wants. That being said. You were not chosen to breed me."

"MOM!" Alyssa exclaimed.

"It's far too late to start acting surprised now, Alyssa. This young man has been hand-picked to be your mate and you will do everything in your power to make him happy. Is that understood?"

"Yes Ma'am."

"And you," Gabriel turned her attention back to Dax "you will do everything in your power to make my daughter as happy as possible. Is that understood?"

"Yes Ma'am. But what about you? Don't get me wrong, your daughter is a stunningly beautiful woman but is her mother and as you said at the meeting you are not above the rules. Let me breed both of you and I think we'll get along just fine."

"Deal," Gabriel readily agreed. "You may have sex with both of us whenever you like but never together. If you even hint at it you'll be tossed out of Eden. Is that understood?"

"Yes Ma'am."

"Please, we're going to be lovers so call me Gabriel. Alyssa, why don't you take Dax here to your room?"

"Yes mother."

"I promise to do everything in my power to make her comfortable," Dax said as he followed the young woman into her bedroom. The door closed behind him and he watched as Alyssa dropped on the bed in tears. Stepping in a few feet, he felt for the young woman and the position she now found herself in. He would have been lying if he said he did not want to take her right then and there, but he was no rapist and would never touch a woman without her consent and he wanted her to know that so he walked to the small desk in the corner, pulled out the chair and sat down as far away from the bed and half-naked woman as possible. "You have nothing to fear from me, Alyssa. I will not have sex with you unless you ask."

That seemed to calm Alyssa's nerves a bit and with tears still streaming down her red cheeks she looked at the man that would father her children. "T-Thank you. I know what I have to do but that doesn't make it any easier."

"I understand. There's no rush so why don't we spend the day getting to know each other?"

"R-Really?"

"Of course. If it'll make you more comfortable you can finish getting dressed or I can strip down to my boxers. Your choice."

Alyssa sat and stared at the handsome young man sitting nine feet away and while she wanted to like him did not know him well enough to form such an informed decision. "You've seen me half naked so it's only fair I get to see the same."

"Fair enough."

"I'm curious, you seemed in a hurry to have sex with my mother so why wait with me?"

"You want an honest answer?"

"Please."

"Well, first of all I didn't know you were here. But more importantly, it comes down to age. You're young and in the prime of your life. And while thirty-five is hardly old, your mother's chances of conceiving drop considerably at her age and older so the sooner we start the better. That being said, I'm not going to lie to you, Alyssa. After we talk and get to know each other I'm going to spend the night breeding your mother."

"No you're not."

"That's why I'm here, Alyssa."

"You're also here to breed me."

"Are you saying you want me to breed you?"

"I'm saying my mother is mourning the loss of our family and..."

"So are we all," Dax snapped back more angrily than intended. Before boarding the jet to fly out here I lived in Albany New York. Do you know where the first bomb fell? Your mother is the President of the United States so don't you dare sit there and pretend like your family isn't hiding in another shelter somewhere deep underground. MY FAMILY IS DEAD!" he shouted. "And the only consolation I have is that they went quickly."

"I'm so sorry."

"Thanks, but I'm the one that should be apologizing. We've all lost someone we care about and while your family is most likely safe there's little chance of ever seeing them again so why don't we just step back and start over?"

"I'd like that."

Hearing everything, Gabriel sat in the living room and smiled knowing she had made the right decision in choosing Dax to be her and her oldest daughter's mate. Getting up, she walked to the closed bedroom door and lightly knocked before poking her head in. "I'm going to take a shower now if you'd like to join me," she said to the young man sitting on the opposite side of her daughter's bedroom.

"Go ahead," Alyssa said with a nervous smile. "I'll be here when you're done with my mother."