The Yield

by Brent Clark Palmer

The Chariot, Book 9; Vulpes Parvaes, Book 40

Chapter 1: The Bait

The morning light in the apartment was the particular shade Penelope Stephens preferred— soft enough not to strain the eyes, bright enough to reveal every clean line of the space she had chosen. She stood at the bathroom mirror in a thin silk robe the color of fresh cream, the belt tied loosely at her waist. The robe parted slightly as she lifted her arms to pin her hair, and she watched the movement of her own body with the detached approval she gave to anything that performed as it should. Her breasts were small and firm, the nipples a pale rose that tightened briefly in the cooler air before settling. The line of her abdomen was flat and taut from years of disciplined movement; her hips curved just enough to balance the narrowness of her waist without excess. She turned once, studying the long line of her back and the way her shoulder blades moved under smooth skin. Everything was as it had always been: efficient, symmetrical, superior.

She let the robe fall open a moment longer, then closed it and tied the belt with a precise knot. The fabric whispered against her thighs as she walked into the kitchen.

Sora was already there, standing at the counter with her back to the room, pouring coffee into two mugs. The sound of the liquid was steady, unhurried. Pippy crossed the space without hurry, her bare feet silent on the heated floor. She took the mug Sora offered without comment and lifted it to her lips, inhaling the dark, bitter scent before she drank.

“You left the reading light on in the living room again,” Pippy said after the first swallow. Her voice was clear, the consonants crisp. “I turned it off when I came in last night. Some of us actually notice when electricity is being wasted.”

Sora set her own mug down and turned. She was smaller than Pippy, her dark hair pulled back in a simple knot at the nape of her neck. Her eyes were the kind that seemed to absorb more than they reflected. She wore a plain gray sweater and dark trousers that did nothing to draw attention to her figure.

“I was still using it,” Sora said. Her tone was even, almost flat. “I came back for my notes.”

Pippy took another sip and let her gaze move over the stack of books Sora had left on the far end of the island. Most of them looked old, the spines cracked, the pages probably annotated in cramped handwriting that no one else would ever read.

“You know, if you spent half as much time finishing what you start as you do accumulating sources, you might actually finish that thesis before the decade ends.” Pippy set her mug down and leaned one hip against the marble. The silk of her robe shifted against her skin, cool and pleasant. “Some of us have actual

deadlines that affect more than our own small corner of the world.”

Sora’s mouth moved in the smallest suggestion of a smile. It did not reach her eyes. “I finish what matters,” she said quietly.

Pippy laughed once, a short, bright sound that held no real warmth. “Of course you do.” She reached for the newspaper that had been delivered and unfolded it with a crisp snap. The pages smelled of ink and paper. She scanned the headlines without really reading them, already composing in her head the comments she would make in seminar later that week. The article on genetic ethics was particularly weak; she could dismantle it in under two minutes.

Sora moved around the island and began gathering her books into a canvas tote. The sound of paper against canvas was soft. Pippy did not look up until Sora spoke again.

“There was something for you in the mail yesterday,” Sora said. She reached into the tote and placed a thick cream envelope on the marble between them. “It looked important. I left it on the counter last night, but you must have missed it.”

Pippy glanced at the envelope. No return address. Only a small silver embossed circle with a stylized A inside it. She recognized the weight of the paper even before she touched it— expensive, the kind that did not bend easily.

“Probably another recruitment attempt from one of those mid-tier fellowships that think they can buy prestige by association,” she said, but she picked it up anyway. The paper was cool and substantial under her fingers. She slit the flap with her thumbnail and drew out the brochure inside.

The cover was charcoal with silver lettering.

AETHERIS

Institute for Advanced Genetic and Endocrine Research

Confidential Participant Recruitment

She opened it.

The interior was all clean typography and restrained images: a woman in a white coat reviewing floating data, a suite that looked more like a high-end hotel than any medical facility Pippy had ever seen. The text was elegant, almost understated.

*The Aetheris Institute seeks a limited number of exceptional individuals for a

groundbreaking study in genetic expression and hormonal optimization. Candidates are selected on the basis of superior cognitive profiles, physical baseline markers, and demonstrated achievement. Participation involves a short residential phase with intensive monitoring and advanced protocol

administration. Compensation for the initial phase is $275,000, with structured performance incentives available for extended contribution. All information is strictly confidential.*

This is an invitation-only opportunity. Your profile has been identified as meeting preliminary criteria.

Pippy read the last line twice. Her thumb rested on the compensation figure. The number was large enough that most people would have felt their pulse quicken. She felt only the quiet, steady confirmation she had come to expect whenever the world arranged itself correctly around her.

She had always known her genetics were not average. Her mother's family had carried clean metabolic function and longevity like inherited jewelry; her father's line produced people who thought in clean lines and elegant proofs. She herself had never needed to fight for standing. Concepts arranged themselves for her. Her body responded to training and nutrition with the same reliable efficiency. She was twenty-two and already further along than most people twice her age would ever reach.

Of course they had found her.

She closed the brochure but did not set it down. The weight of it in her hand was satisfying.

Sora watched her without speaking. The morning light caught on the edge of her mug and threw a small, bright shape across the marble.

"Well?" Sora asked after a moment. Her voice was still quiet, but there was something underneath it now—something Pippy did not pause to examine.

"Well what?" Pippy said. She opened the brochure again and read the compensation line a third time. "It's clearly selective. They wouldn't have sent it if they hadn't already done the preliminary work. My cognitive markers alone would place me in the top fraction of a percent. The physical baseline is simply confirmation."

She looked up. Sora was still watching her, that same small, unreadable curve at the corner of her mouth.

"You should call," Sora said. "It suits you."

Pippy felt the flicker of irritation that always came when Sora spoke as though she understood the shape of Pippy's life. She closed the brochure and set it on the counter with deliberate care.

"Of course it suits me," she said. "Some of us were built for more than quiet accumulation." She let the words hang for a moment, then added, softer, "You could apply too, if you wanted. Though I doubt they'd find your profile as

compelling. You’re very… steady. That has its uses.”

Sora’s eyes did not change. She picked up her tote and slung it over one shoulder.

“I’m not interested in being optimized,” she said. “But you should go. It would be a waste not to.”

She left without waiting for an answer. The door to her room closed with its usual near-silent click.

Pippy stood at the island for a long moment, the brochure under her hand. The apartment was quiet except for the distant sound of traffic and the soft hum of the refrigerator. She could smell her own perfume rising from the warmth of her skin beneath the robe—the clean, expensive scent she had chosen because it did not announce itself too loudly. She lifted the brochure again and read the entire text once more, this time allowing herself to feel the small, bright satisfaction that came with being correctly identified.

She carried the brochure to the desk in the corner of the living area and set it beside her laptop. The morning light had shifted; it fell across the cream paper in a clean rectangle. She opened her laptop, found the number printed on the back of the brochure, and dialed.

The line rang twice before a woman’s voice answered—polite, efficient, already expecting her.

“Good morning, Aetheris Institute. How may I assist you?”

“This is Penelope Stephens,” Pippy said. She kept her voice level, the consonants precise. “I received an invitation to participate in your genetic and endocrine study. I’d like to arrange the intake consultation.”

There was a brief pause, the sound of keys tapping.

“Ms. Stephens,” the woman said, and there was a note of recognition in her voice that Pippy found deeply satisfying. “Yes, we have your profile flagged. Dr. Daria Stone has availability tomorrow morning at ten. The address is on the brochure. Shall I confirm you for that slot?”

Pippy felt the small click of validation settle behind her sternum. She looked out the window at the city skyline, the buildings sharp against the morning sky. Everything was arranging itself exactly as it should.

“Yes,” she said. “Confirm it. And please let Dr. Stone know I’m looking forward to discussing how my markers might contribute to the work.”

“Of course, Ms. Stephens. We’ll send a confirmation to the email on file. Is there anything else I can assist you with today?”

“No,” Pippy said. “That will be all.”

She ended the call and set the phone down beside the brochure. The apartment was still quiet. She could hear the faint sound of water running in Sora’s room—probably the shower. Pippy stood and walked to the window, the silk robe moving against her legs with each step. The city spread out below her, full of people moving through their small, necessary lives. She placed one hand on the glass. The surface was cool under her palm.

She thought of the compensation figure again. Two hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars for the initial phase. Performance incentives beyond that. It was not the money that mattered most—though the money was substantial. It was the confirmation. The Institute had looked at the shape of her mind and the architecture of her body and had seen what she had always known was there.

She turned back to the desk. The brochure lay open to the page with the elegant promise of exclusivity. She closed it, placed it in the top drawer, and sat down in front of her laptop. There was still work to do before the day began in earnest. Seminar notes to refine. An article to finish annotating. A life that continued to move forward at the precise speed she had always set for it.

Behind the closed door of Sora’s room, the water kept running. Pippy did not think about it. She opened the article she had been meaning to finish and began to read, her attention already cutting through the weaker arguments with clean, practiced efficiency.

The brochure remained in the drawer, its weight and promise exactly where she had placed them.

She would go tomorrow. She would sit across from Dr. Daria Stone and discuss the ways her superior genetic and cognitive profile could advance their work. She would sign whatever needed signing, because people like her did not need to read every line when the outcome was already clear.

The morning light moved slowly across the desk. Pippy turned a page, made a note in the margin, and did not look up when Sora’s door opened and closed again, the sound of her leaving the apartment barely registering above the quiet scratch of pen on paper.

Chapter 2: The Clinical Intake

The car that collected her from the apartment was black and silent, the interior smelling of leather and the faint, clean trace of whatever polish they used on the wood trim. Pippy sat with her back straight, the cream envelope containing the brochure resting on her lap. She had dressed carefully: a tailored wool coat over a silk blouse the color of bone, trousers that moved cleanly with her legs, and low heels that clicked once against the pavement when she stepped out at the gate.

The driver did not speak beyond confirming her name. The gate opened without sound, and the car followed the curve of the drive through the same manicured grounds she had seen in the brochure photographs.

The building revealed itself gradually—pale stone, tall glass set in clean frames, nothing that announced its purpose too loudly. A woman in a simple charcoal uniform met her at the entrance and took her coat with a quiet “Welcome, Ms. Stephens.” The lobby was all soft lighting and pale wood. There were no signs, no waiting patients, only the low sound of filtered air and the distant, precise click of someone’s shoes on stone.

“Dr. Stone is ready for you,” the woman said, and led her down a wide corridor where the light fell evenly and the air held a faint, expensive scent like citrus and cedar.

Dr. Daria Stone stood when Pippy entered the consultation room. The space was larger than an ordinary office, with a wide desk of dark wood and a low seating area arranged around a table that held only a carafe of water and two glasses. Dr. Stone wore a charcoal suit that fit her frame with the same quiet precision as everything else in the facility. Her dark hair was pulled into a low knot, and when she smiled it was warm without being familiar.

“Ms. Stephens,” she said, extending a hand. Her grip was firm and brief. “Thank you for coming so promptly. Please, sit wherever you’re most comfortable.”

Pippy chose the chair that gave her the best view of the room. She crossed her legs and rested one hand on the armrest, the wool of her coat sleeve smooth under her fingers.

Dr. Stone sat opposite her and opened a slim folder. “I won’t waste your time with unnecessary preamble. Your profile—cognitive sequencing, genetic markers, academic and professional history—places you in an extremely rare category. We see very few candidates whose baseline data align this cleanly across every metric we screen for. Superior neural efficiency, exceptional metabolic response, physical symmetry that suggests optimal genetic expression. You are, quite simply, the kind of participant this work was designed around.”

Pippy felt the familiar, quiet satisfaction settle in her chest. She inclined her head the precise degree that acknowledged the assessment without appearing to require it.

“The protocol itself is focused on hormonal optimization and its measurable effects on sustained cognitive performance under controlled load,” Dr. Stone continued. “We administer a carefully calibrated sequence designed to enhance plasticity and expressive biological markers while monitoring every variable in real time. The residential phase removes external variables so we can observe clean data. Compensation for the initial twelve weeks is two hundred and

seventy-five thousand dollars, with structured performance incentives should your biology prove as responsive as we expect. Extensions are offered only to those whose markers continue to exceed projections."

She slid the folder across the low table. The contract inside was thick, the pages dense with technical language and numbered clauses.

"Take your time," Dr. Stone said. "Everything is written in the precise language required for experimental work. The liability sections are standard. The confidentiality provisions are strict. There are provisions for extended phases and for the handling of any biological material generated during the study. Nothing that should concern someone of your discernment."

Pippy opened the document and read the first several pages with the same focused attention she gave any text worth her time. The stipend figure was confirmed in clear numerals. The residential requirements were described in terms that matched the suite in the brochure. She saw the phrase *performance-based extensions* and the careful language around *expressive biological markers*. She did not need every mechanism explained to recognize that the study had been designed for people whose bodies and minds already operated at a level most could only aspire to.

She signed on the final page with a steady hand. The pen was heavy, the ink dark and even. When she set it down, Dr. Stone smiled again, smaller and satisfied.

"Excellent," she said. "We'll begin the baseline assessments this afternoon. Before we move you to your suite, there are two administrative details we handle immediately for every residential participant."

A woman in a soft gray uniform entered without knocking. She carried a folded garment of pale, fine fabric and a small labeled container.

"For the accuracy of the initial biometric baselines and all subsequent monitoring," Dr. Stone said, "we store personal clothing and provide facility garments. It eliminates variables in temperature, fabric weight, and fit that could affect readings. Your coat, blouse, trousers, and undergarments will be catalogued and held securely. You'll receive them again at the conclusion of your participation or at any point you choose to withdraw, though we hope the data will keep you with us for the full term."

The woman in gray stepped forward. Her expression was polite and impersonal. "If you'll step behind the screen, Ms. Stephens, I'll assist with the change."

Pippy rose. The request registered as efficient rather than strange. She had signed the contract; this was simply part of the protocol she had agreed to. Behind the screen she removed her coat first, then the silk blouse. The air in the room was slightly cooler than she expected. Her nipples tightened briefly against

the lace of her bra before she unhooked it. She stepped out of her trousers and handed each item over the screen. The woman in gray took them without comment, folded them with care, and placed them into the labeled container. When Pippy emerged in the provided garment—a soft, long-sleeved robe of pale fabric that fastened at the side with discreet ties—she felt the difference immediately. The material was lighter than her own clothes, almost weightless against her skin, and it moved with her body rather than shaping it.

Dr. Stone continued as though the exchange had been entirely ordinary. “We’ve also coordinated with your university registrar. An academic leave has been formally arranged for the duration of the residential phase. Your advisors and seminar instructors have been notified that you are participating in an intensive, invitation-only research opportunity requiring full focus. All academic responsibilities are suspended until you return. The Institute handles these notifications directly so participants are not distracted by external obligations.”

Pippy felt a small, bright click of validation. They had already anticipated her needs. She would not have to explain herself to anyone. The thought of returning to campus after the study, carrying the prestige of having been selected for work this exclusive, settled into her with quiet satisfaction.

“Thank you,” she said. “That’s efficient.”

Dr. Stone inclined her head. “We try to remove every obstacle that might interfere with clean data collection. Your suite is ready. If you’d like to make any calls before we begin the afternoon assessments—family, a roommate, anyone who might wonder where you are—we can do that from here or from the suite.”

Pippy considered for a moment, then nodded. “My roommate. She should know I won’t be returning to the apartment for a while.”

The woman in gray brought a slim phone on a small tray. Pippy took it and dialed the number she knew by heart. The line rang twice before Sora answered.

“Hello?”

“It’s me,” Pippy said. She kept her voice level, the way she always did when delivering information she considered important. “I’m at the Institute. I’ve signed the contract and they’re moving me into a private suite for the residential phase. They’ve arranged academic leave so I can focus completely. My clothes have been stored for monitoring accuracy—they provided facility garments instead. It’s all very professional.”

There was a brief silence on the other end. When Sora spoke again, her voice held a note of genuine pleasure that Pippy found oddly touching.

“That’s wonderful,” Sora said. “I’m so happy for you, Pippy. It sounds exactly like the kind of opportunity you deserve. Of course I’ll watch over the apartment and

your things while you're gone. Just let me know if there's anything specific you want me to handle—mail, plants, anything. And I'd love to visit you at the lab if they allow it. Whenever you're settled, just tell me when would be good."

Pippy felt a small flicker of surprise at the warmth in Sora's tone. The girl was usually so quiet, so difficult to read. Perhaps she was finally beginning to understand the scale of Pippy's life.

"I'll let you know about visiting once I have the schedule," Pippy said. "They're very organized here. Everything is arranged so I can concentrate."

"I'm glad," Sora said. "Really. Take care of yourself in there. And congratulations."

Pippy ended the call and returned the phone to the tray. Dr. Stone was watching her with that same calm, professional attention.

"Everything all right?" she asked.

"Yes," Pippy said. "She's going to handle things at the apartment. She even offered to visit."

Dr. Stone smiled. "Some participants find it helpful to maintain a connection to their outside life, at least at the beginning. We can arrange supervised visits if they fit within the monitoring windows. For now, let's move you to the suite and begin the baseline work."

The suite was exactly as the brochure had promised—larger than her apartment bedroom, with a wide bed dressed in pale linens, a desk already stocked with the books and papers she had requested be brought from home, and a sitting area that looked out over the private grounds. The monitoring equipment was discreet: a few sensors on the nightstand, a tablet for daily reporting, a small camera in the upper corner that Dr. Stone had already explained was for safety and data integrity only.

Pippy stood at the window for a moment after the staff had left. The pale robe moved against her legs when she shifted her weight. The fabric was softer than she had expected, almost silky, and it left her arms and the upper curve of her chest more exposed than her own clothes had. She could feel the faint coolness of the room's air against her skin. She placed one hand on the glass. The surface was cool and smooth under her palm.

She turned back to the desk. The tablet was already powered on, a simple welcome message displayed. She opened the symptom log as instructed and entered the first entry with the same precise attention she gave every task.

Baseline day. No discomfort. Mild awareness of temperature differential from personal clothing. Cognitive focus intact.

She set the tablet down and looked out the window again. The grounds were quiet. Somewhere in the building, staff were cataloguing her coat, her blouse, her trousers, her undergarments. Somewhere else, the university registrar was processing her academic leave. Sora was probably already moving through the apartment, handling whatever small tasks needed handling.

Pippy felt the low, steady thrum of forward motion. Everything was exactly as it should be. She was where she belonged—selected, accommodated, already contributing to work that would matter.

She sat at the desk and opened her laptop. There were still notes she could refine before the afternoon assessments began. The pale robe settled around her as she leaned forward, the fabric cool and light against her skin.

She did not look at the small camera in the corner.

She told herself the faint warmth beginning to spread across her chest was simply the temperature of the room or the simple fact of being attended to by competent professionals.

She was still Penelope Stephens. She was still in control.

The tablet on the desk chimed once with a reminder for the first baseline blood draw. Pippy closed her laptop, stood, and walked toward the door without hurry, the soft robe moving with her steps.

Chapter 3: The First Modifications

The suite was quiet when Pippy returned from the afternoon baselines. The pale robe still moved against her skin with each step, lighter than anything she usually wore, the fabric whispering across her thighs and the undersides of her breasts. She had spent nearly two hours in the assessment rooms—blood drawn, measurements taken with cool metal calipers and digital scanners, her posture photographed from multiple angles while she stood, then sat, then lay on a padded table. The staff had been efficient and impersonal, their hands gloved and precise. Dr. Stone had reviewed the initial readings with the same calm satisfaction she had shown earlier.

“Your markers are already shifting in the expected direction,” Dr. Stone had said, scrolling through the data on her tablet. “Excellent responsiveness. We’ll begin the first active phase of the protocol this evening. It will be a low-dose introductory infusion to allow your system to acclimate. Nothing dramatic yet. Just enough to begin expressing the targeted biological markers.”

Pippy had nodded, already framing the coming hours as another confirmation of her suitability. She sat at the desk now, the tablet open to the symptom log, and entered her observations with the same clean precision she applied to every academic task.

Post-assessment. No significant discomfort. Mild elevation in core temperature noted during scans. Cognitive clarity maintained.

She saved the entry and stood. The robe shifted again, the side ties brushing the outer curve of one breast. She looked down at herself. The garment was modest by design, but it left more of her body exposed than her own clothes had—the upper swell of her breasts visible when she moved, the line of her abdomen and the smooth skin of her hips and thighs open to the room's even air. She had not asked for anything else. The protocol was clear: variables removed.

A soft chime sounded from the door panel. Pippy crossed the suite and opened it.

A nurse in the same soft gray uniform stood there with a small rolling cart. On the cart were sealed vials, tubing, a portable infusion pump, and a folded monitoring mat. Behind her stood another staff member carrying a low, padded platform on sturdy legs.

"Ms. Stephens," the nurse said. "We're ready to begin the first treatment. May we set up in here?"

"Of course," Pippy said. She stepped back to allow them entry. The room smelled faintly of the citrus-cedar scent that seemed to follow the staff everywhere.

The nurse worked quickly and without wasted motion. She positioned the padded platform near the center of the suite, adjusting its height so that it sat at a comfortable level for someone kneeling. The second staff member placed it with quiet efficiency, then stepped back.

"For this phase of the protocol," the nurse said, turning to Pippy, "we require full nudity. Clothing, even facility garments, can interfere with accurate dermal temperature mapping, skin conductivity readings, and visual assessment of tissue response during the infusion. If you'll remove the robe, we can begin."

Pippy hesitated for only a fraction of a second. The request registered as clinical necessity rather than anything else. She had already signed the contract. She had already allowed her personal clothing to be stored. This was simply the next logical step in clean data collection.

She untied the side fastenings of the robe. The fabric parted. She slid it from her shoulders and let it fall down her arms. The air in the suite moved across her bare skin. She handed the robe to the nurse. The woman took it and placed it on the cart.

Pippy stood nude. The air touched her everywhere—the undersides of her breasts, the small of her back, the cleft between her buttocks, the sensitive skin of her inner thighs. Her nipples tightened briefly in response to the change in temperature, then settled. She catalogued the sensation the way she catalogued every variable: expected, manageable, part of the process. The nurse gestured to

the padded platform. “For optimal placement of the posterior sensors and to allow natural spinal curvature during the infusion, we position participants on hands and knees. It also permits real-time observation of musculoskeletal response and even distribution of the compound. If you’ll kneel here and lower to all fours, I can attach the monitoring leads.”

Pippy stepped forward. The platform was firm but padded, the surface cool under her palms when she placed her hands on it. She lifted one knee, then the other, settling into position. Her back arched slightly as she adjusted her weight. Her breasts hung beneath her, the nipples pointing downward, the new sensitivity registering as a low, diffuse awareness. The air moved across the exposed curve of her ass and the parted lips of her sex. She felt the vulnerability of the posture, but framed it immediately as scientific necessity. This was how the most precise data would be collected. This was what an ideal participant did.

The nurse worked around her without comment on her body. Cool adhesive sensors were placed along her spine, across the backs of her thighs, and at the base of her neck. Each one registered as a small point of pressure, then a faint electronic hum. A blood-pressure cuff was wrapped around one upper arm. The infusion line was prepared with quiet efficiency.

“You’re doing beautifully,” the nurse said, her tone professional and approving. “Your compliance is excellent. Many participants require more coaching to maintain this position comfortably. Your baseline musculoskeletal tone is clearly superior.”

Pippy felt a small pulse of satisfaction at the praise. She held the position, hands flat, knees spread at a width the nurse had adjusted for sensor access, head lifted enough to see the suite around her. Her breasts swayed slightly with each breath. The ache that had begun earlier in the day was still mild, but it had deepened into a low, steady warmth that seemed to pool behind her sternum and spread outward.

Dr. Stone entered as the nurse was priming the pump. She carried her tablet and wore the same calm expression she had shown since the first meeting.

“Ms. Stephens,” she said. “Thank you for your cooperation. This first infusion is deliberately conservative. You may feel a gradual warmth, perhaps some increased sensitivity in the chest and abdominal regions as the compounds begin to express the targeted markers. That is expected and desirable. If anything becomes sharply uncomfortable rather than simply noticeable, you tell us immediately. Otherwise, we want you to observe and report everything.”

“I understand,” Pippy said. Her voice was steady. From her position on all fours she had to tilt her head slightly to meet Dr. Stone’s eyes. The posture made her breasts hang more fully, the weight of them pulling gently at the skin. She did

not shift or cover herself. There was nothing to cover with.

Dr. Stone stepped closer and placed one gloved hand lightly on Pippy's lower back, just above the curve of her ass. The touch was clinical, assessing. "Your posture is already ideal for this phase. The natural spinal alignment you're maintaining will give us excellent readings on how the compounds affect core engagement and postural stability. We may ask you to hold this position for periods during future treatments as well. It appears to suit you."

Pippy felt the warmth of the hand through her skin. She did not pull away. "If it produces the cleanest data, I'm happy to maintain it."

Dr. Stone's mouth curved in the small, satisfied smile Pippy was beginning to recognize. "That's exactly the attitude that makes you such a valuable participant."

The infusion began with a faint coolness at the IV site in the back of her hand, followed by the slow, steady warmth the nurse had described. It spread from her chest outward—first a diffuse heat behind her breasts, then a deeper, pulsing awareness that made the tissue feel heavier, more present. Her nipples, already tightened from the air, grew more sensitive with each passing minute. The skin across the upper curves of her breasts seemed to stretch slightly, a sensation she noted and filed away as positive response.

She remained on all fours. The position became more noticeable as the warmth built. Her breasts hung and swayed with the small movements of breathing. The air continued to move across every exposed surface—between her legs, across the tight pucker of her anus, along the undersides of her thighs. She felt the faint beginnings of moisture at the entrance to her sex, not from arousal in the way she usually understood it, but from the simple fact of sustained exposure and the body's automatic responses to temperature and position. She catalogued that too.

Dr. Stone and the nurse monitored the readouts on the tablet and the pump. They spoke in low, technical voices about "marker expression rates" and "dermal conductivity shifts." Occasionally one of them would adjust a sensor or check the line. Their hands moved over Pippy's body with the same detached efficiency they might have used on any piece of equipment—palpating the swell beginning to form in her breasts, pressing lightly along her abdomen, checking the temperature of her skin with the back of a gloved finger.

"You're responding faster than projected," Dr. Stone said after twenty minutes. "The tissue in the chest is already showing increased vascular response and early volumetric change. Excellent. This suggests your genetic baseline is processing the compounds with very high efficiency."

Pippy felt a flush of pride that had nothing to do with the warmth spreading through her. She was outperforming expectations. She was the ideal subject.

The infusion continued for another forty minutes. By the end, the warmth had settled into a low, constant throb centered behind her breasts and radiating down into her abdomen. Her nipples felt tight and oversensitive; even the movement of air across them registered as distinct points of sensation. The weight of her breasts had increased noticeably—she could feel the new heaviness pulling at her chest with every shift of position. When the nurse finally disconnected the line and removed the sensors, Pippy remained on all fours for a moment longer, breathing through the residual ache.

“You can rise whenever you’re ready,” the nurse said. She did not offer the robe. She did not bring any other covering. She simply packed the cart with the same quiet efficiency she had shown from the beginning.

Pippy pushed up from the platform and stood. Her breasts settled into their new shape, heavier than they had been that morning, the skin across them stretched smooth and warm. She looked down at herself. The nipples were darker, more prominent, the areolas slightly larger. She lifted one hand and cupped the underside of her left breast experimentally. The weight filled her palm more fully than it had before. The ache deepened at the pressure, then eased into something that was not quite pain.

She did not ask for clothing. The protocol had been clear. Variables removed. Accurate monitoring required.

Dr. Stone made a final note on her tablet. “We’ll repeat a low-dose infusion tomorrow morning and begin the graduated increase in the evening. You may feel some continued sensitivity and gradual volumetric change overnight. Sleep will help. The suite is equipped with monitoring that will alert us if anything moves outside expected parameters.”

Pippy nodded. She stood nude in the center of the room, the air touching her everywhere, her breasts heavy and warm, the low throb in her chest and abdomen a constant presence. She did not cross her arms or shift to hide any part of herself. She was still Penelope Stephens. She was still the participant whose markers exceeded projections.

“I’ll be ready,” she said.

Dr. Stone and the nurse left. The door closed with a soft, final click.

Pippy remained standing for a long moment. She walked slowly to the window, feeling the way her breasts moved with each step—the new weight, the way the undersides brushed the upper curve of her abdomen, the way her nipples tightened again in the cooler air near the glass. She placed both hands on the

window ledge and leaned forward slightly, letting her back arch. The posture felt natural after the time spent on all fours. Her breasts hung forward, swaying gently. The ache pulsed once, deep and slow.

She stayed like that for several minutes, breathing through the sensations, cataloguing them.

When she finally turned away from the window, she did not look for the robe. She did not look for anything to cover herself with. She walked to the bed, climbed onto it on hands and knees first—because the position still felt like the one that had produced the cleanest readings —and then lowered herself onto her side. The sheet was cool against her bare skin. Her breasts settled against each other and against the mattress. The throb continued, low and steady.

She closed her eyes.

Tomorrow the dose would increase. The changes would continue. She would hold the all- fours position again if that was what produced the best data.

She was still in control.

The ache in her chest deepened once more, and she pressed her thighs together without thinking, the movement instinctive, the resulting pressure both relieving and strangely sharpening the sensation.

She did not reach for any covering.

She slept.

Chapter 4: The Swelling

Pippy woke to the ache.

It was no longer the low, manageable warmth of the previous evening. It had deepened overnight into something heavier, more insistent, centered behind her breasts and radiating outward in slow, rhythmic pulses. She lay on her side for a moment, breathing through it, and tried to catalogue the changes the way she had catalogued every variable since arriving.

Her breasts were visibly larger. The skin across them felt stretched tight, warm to the touch when she lifted one hand to assess. The weight had increased enough that they settled differently against each other and against the sheet beneath her. Her nipples were darker, more prominent, and so sensitive that even the faint movement of air across them registered as distinct points of sensation. When she shifted to sit up, the new heaviness pulled at her chest and sent a sharper throb through the tissue.

She told herself it was expected. Superior baseline markers processing the compounds at an accelerated rate. The protocol was simply expressing the targeted biological changes more efficiently in her than it would in an average

participant. The ache was data. The increased volume was confirmation that her genetics were responding exactly as the Institute had projected.

She stood and walked slowly to the window. Each step made her breasts sway and settle with a weight that was impossible to ignore. The ache pulsed once, deep and slow, as if in answer to the movement. She placed both hands on the ledge and leaned forward slightly, letting her back arch. The posture eased some of the pressure on her chest. She stayed like that, breathing, until the worst of the throb subsided into a constant, low demand.

A soft chime sounded at the door. Pippy did not move to cover herself. There was nothing to reach for. She remained at the window as the nurse entered with the morning cart.

“Good morning, Ms. Stephens,” the nurse said. Her tone was the same calm, professional one she had used the night before. She glanced at the readouts on the wall monitor, then at Pippy’s posture. “The overnight volumetric increase is within the upper range of projected response. Some participants find the developing tissue weight creates temporary discomfort in the upright position. Many discover that assuming a hands-and-knees posture helps redistribute the weight and reduces pressure on the chest and spine. Would you like to try it while I prepare the infusion?”

Pippy considered. The suggestion sounded almost too simple, but the ache was already building again with each breath. She stepped away from the window, lowered herself to her knees on the padded mat the nurse had placed, and moved forward onto her hands. The position shifted the heavy weight of her breasts downward. They hung beneath her, swaying slightly as she settled her weight. The ache eased almost at once—not gone, but redistributed, the pressure no longer concentrated in the same way.

The nurse made a note on her tablet. “That’s very good. Your body is already adapting well to the postural adjustments that support optimal marker expression.”

Pippy remained on all fours while the nurse prepared the line. The air moved across every part of her exposed body—the undersides of her now-heavier breasts, the curve of her ass, the sensitive skin between her thighs. Her nipples, pulled downward by the new weight, throbbed with each small movement. She kept her breathing even and focused on the readouts the nurse was reviewing aloud: tissue response rates, conductivity shifts, early volumetric data that continued to exceed projections.

The infusion began. The warmth spread faster this time, deeper, settling into the already swollen tissue and making it feel even fuller, tighter. Pippy’s breath caught once as a particularly strong pulse moved through her chest. She lowered

her head slightly, letting her back arch more, and the ache lessened again. The position helped. It was a practical adjustment, nothing more.

She was still rationalizing when the door chimed again.

Sora entered with the nurse who had greeted her in the corridor. The staff member spoke to her by name, casual and familiar.

“Ms. Sanders. Good to see you again. She’s responding well this morning.”

Sora smiled at the nurse—small, polite—then turned her attention to Pippy. She crossed the suite without hesitation and stopped beside the padded mat. Pippy, still on all fours, lifted her head to look up at her former roommate.

Sora reached down and gave Pippy’s rear a gentle, proprietary pat, her hand warm and brief. Then her fingers moved to the back of Pippy’s head and scratched lightly behind one ear, the same way someone might greet a well-behaved animal. The touch was casual, almost absent- minded.

“Hi, Pippy,” Sora said. Her voice was quiet, steady, the same even tone she had always used. “I hope I’m not interrupting the protocol. The staff said it was a good time for a short visit.”

Pippy felt the pat and the scratching with a flicker of surprise. Sora had never been physically demonstrative before. The touches were oddly familiar, almost affectionate, yet delivered with the same calm practicality Sora brought to everything. Pippy remained on all fours, the ache still pulsing in her chest, and tried to reconcile the gesture with the quiet girl who had stacked books in their apartment.

“You’re not interrupting,” Pippy said. Her voice came out slightly breathier than she intended. “They’re monitoring the response. It’s… progressing faster than expected.”

Sora nodded. She crouched down so she was at eye level with Pippy, one hand still resting lightly on Pippy’s upper back between the shoulder blades. The position put Sora’s face close to Pippy’s hanging breasts. Sora did not stare; she simply registered the visible changes with the same observational calm she had always shown.

“I brought a quick update on the apartment, since you asked me to keep an eye on things,” Sora said. “Your mail is sorted—mostly university notices and one from the fellowship office that I left on your desk. The plants are watered. I moved the stack of books you had on the coffee table so they wouldn’t get knocked over when the cleaning service came through. Everything’s fine there. No issues with the lease or anything like that.”

Pippy blinked. Sora’s tone was so genuinely helpful, so matter-of-fact and organized, that it took her a moment to respond. She had expected… she wasn’t

sure what she had expected. Quiet resentment, perhaps, or the usual flat distance. Not this calm, competent caretaking.

“That’s… very helpful,” Pippy said. “Thank you.”

Sora gave a small nod, as if the thanks were unnecessary. Her fingers continued the light scratching behind Pippy’s ear for another moment before she straightened. She glanced at the nurse, who was still monitoring the infusion readouts.

“Everything looks good from here,” Sora said to the nurse. “She seems comfortable.”

The nurse smiled. “She’s been very cooperative with the postural adjustments. Excellent participant.”

Sora’s mouth curved in the smallest smile—professional, pleased on Pippy’s behalf. Only the tiniest flicker at the corner of her eyes suggested anything else, and it was gone almost before it appeared. She did not smirk. She kept her expression exactly as it should be for someone visiting a friend who was participating in important research.

“I won’t stay long,” Sora said, turning back to Pippy. “I just wanted to see how you were settling in and let you know the apartment is fine. If there’s anything specific you need handled while you’re here, just have the staff message me. I’m happy to take care of it.”

Pippy searched Sora’s face for the usual quiet reserve, the slight distance that had always existed between them. It was still there, but softened by something that looked like genuine usefulness. Sora had never been this engaged with Pippy’s life before.

“I appreciate it,” Pippy said. The ache pulsed again, deeper this time, and she shifted her weight on her hands and knees to ease it. Her breasts swayed with the movement. “The study is demanding full focus. Knowing the practical things are handled helps.”

Sora reached down once more and gave Pippy’s rear another gentle pat, almost like sealing the arrangement. “Of course. That’s what roommates do.”

She said goodbye to the nurse, exchanged a few quiet words about timing for the next visit, and left. The door closed behind her with the same soft finality as every other door in the facility.

Pippy remained on all fours after Sora was gone. The ache had not lessened with the visit; if anything, the movement and the conversation had drawn more attention to the heavy, swollen tissue hanging beneath her. She lowered her head and let her back arch further, breathing through the deep, rhythmic demand in her chest. The position helped. The nurse had been right about that.

She told herself the visit had been useful. Sora was being practical. The apartment was being looked after. Everything was still under control.

The ache pulsed again, slower and heavier, and Pippy's breath caught. For the first time since arriving, the rationalization felt thinner than the sensation itself.

She stayed on her hands and knees, the weight of her breasts pulling downward, the air moving across every inch of her exposed skin, and waited for the next adjustment the protocol would require.

Chapter 5: The Shift in Tone

The ache had become constant.

It no longer came in waves that Pippy could catalogue and set aside. It was a deep, steady throb behind the heavy, swollen tissue of her chest, pulsing with every breath and every small shift of her body. Her breasts had grown markedly larger overnight and through the morning. The skin was stretched tight and warm, the curves full and pendulous. When she moved, even on her hands and knees, they swayed and pulled downward with a weight that made the ache sharpen into something closer to demand. Her nipples were dark and stiff, so sensitive that the air itself felt like a constant touch.

She had stopped trying to stand for long periods. The upright posture concentrated the pressure in ways that made thinking difficult. On all fours the weight redistributed. The ache eased enough for her to focus, if only briefly. The nurse had noted the improvement in the readings without comment, simply adjusting the sensors along her spine and the undersides of her breasts while Pippy held the position.

Dr. Stone's visits had grown shorter and less frequent. The woman who had once sat across from her in an elegant office now appeared only for quick reviews of the tablet data, her questions clipped and technical.

"Your tissue response continues to exceed projections," Dr. Stone said during one brief appearance. She stood beside the padded mat where Pippy knelt on all fours, gloved hands checking the placement of monitoring leads. "Volumetric increase is rapid but stable. The protocol is expressing the markers efficiently. We're moving into the next optimization phase this afternoon."

Pippy tried to ask about the intensity of the ache, about whether the swelling was within safe parameters, about when the discomfort might be addressed with something more than postural adjustment. The words formed clearly in her mind. What came out was a soft, questioning sound—half grunt, half whine. She stopped, startled, and tried again. The same limited noise emerged.

Dr. Stone did not react with concern. She made a note on the tablet. "The accelerated phase sometimes affects higher vocal function temporarily. It's a

known side effect of the compounds when they're titrated this aggressively. We'll introduce an optimization device this afternoon to manage it cleanly. It will be removed once the intensive period stabilizes."

The explanation was delivered with the same calm certainty as every other part of the protocol. Pippy told herself it made sense. Temporary interference with complex speech to allow focus on the physiological data. She was still the ideal participant. The changes were simply the cost of superior responsiveness.

By afternoon the staff had changed.

The crisp white coats and quiet efficiency of the early days were gone. The people moving through the suite now wore heavier practical garments—thick rubber aprons over simple clothing, sturdy boots, gloves that looked made for handling rather than precision. They spoke less. When they did speak, the language was more direct.

A heavier-set woman with short hair and callused hands entered with a small case. She set it on the cart without ceremony.

"Time for the vocalizer," she said. Her tone was matter-of-fact. "Keeps the subject from straining vocal structures during high-output phases and lets us measure involuntary responses without conscious overlay interfering with the data. Temporary for the accelerated period. Standard optimization."

Pippy was already on all fours on the mat. The ache had built again with the morning's activity, and the position was the only one that kept it from becoming unbearable. The woman opened the case and removed a slim, flexible device—something between a collar and a light harness that fit around the lower face and throat. She fitted it with efficient movements, adjusting straps until it sat snug against Pippy's jaw and neck. There was no pain, only a firm, even pressure.

"Try to speak," the woman said once it was secured.

Pippy formed the words in her mind—*This feels unnecessary. I can still participate clearly.* What emerged was a soft, muffled grunt that carried no consonants, no structure. She tried to raise her voice. The sound stayed quiet, limited to a low whine or grunt. She could make noise. She could not shape words. She could not call out.

The woman checked the fit once more. "Good. It's calibrated to your baseline. You'll be able to signal basic states—discomfort, need for adjustment—but nothing complex. Keeps everything focused on the biological data. We'll review it daily. Should come off once the phase stabilizes."

Pippy's thoughts raced. *Temporary. They said temporary.* She tried to nod, to show understanding, but the device restricted even that small movement into

something closer to a dip of the head. The ache pulsed, heavy and insistent, and for the first time the rationalization felt thin against the reality of the device around her throat and the way her body had already begun to demand more than her mind could comfortably contain.

The woman packed the case and left. Another staff member in the heavier apron remained to adjust the monitoring leads. Pippy stayed on all fours, breathing through the ache, trying to form a sentence in her head and hearing only the soft, limited sounds that escaped when she tried to voice it.

She was still attempting to shape a clear protest when the staff member stepped to the side of the room and made a call on the facility phone. The voice was low but audible in the quiet suite.

“Yeah, it’s me. Just wanted to let you know—she’s in the post-vocalizer phase now. Thought you’d like the update. She’s handling the positioning well. Output’s still climbing. I’ll keep you posted on the next readings.”

There was a pause while the person on the other end responded. Pippy could not make out the words, only the tone—calm, familiar, as if this were a routine check-in.

“Will do,” the staff member said. “She’s still got that intellectual edge trying to push through, but the device and the ache are doing the work. Talk later.”

The call ended. The staff member returned to the cart without looking at Pippy, adjusted one of the sensor leads along her lower back, and made a note on the tablet.

Pippy remained on her hands and knees. The ache throbbed in time with her heartbeat, deep and rhythmic, the swollen weight of her breasts hanging heavily beneath her. She tried once more to speak—to ask what was happening, to demand clarification, to reassert that she was still Penelope Stephens and this was still a clinical study she had chosen. The sound that came out was a soft, helpless whine.

The staff member did not react. She simply continued her work, pragmatic and unhurried, as if Pippy’s limited attempts at speech were exactly what the protocol now required.

The ache built again, slower and heavier than before. Pippy lowered her head, arched her back further to ease the pressure, and stayed in the position that had become the only one that allowed her to think at all.

She could still think. She could still understand what was happening.

She simply could no longer say it.

Chapter 6: The Introduction of Marlene

The transfer happened without explanation.

Two staff members in the heavier rubber aprons entered the suite mid-afternoon. One carried a lead clipped to the side of the vocalizer harness. The other simply placed a broad hand between Pippy's shoulder blades and guided her forward off the padded mat. She was already on all fours—the position had become the only one that kept the deep, constant ache from sharpening into something she could no longer breathe through. When the hand pressed, she moved.

The hand stayed on her as they walked her out of the suite and down a corridor that no longer looked like the pristine facility she had entered days earlier. The lighting was harsher. The floors were smoother, easier to clean. The air smelled faintly of something sweet and heavy that she could not name.

Every few steps the hand on her back shifted. Sometimes it slid lower, resting briefly on the curve of her ass before giving a light, guiding pat. Each time it did, a warm spark of sensation moved through her. The ache in her chest was still there, heavy and demanding, but the touch sent a different kind of throb lower, between her legs. She felt herself grow slick. The response was immediate and involuntary. Her hips shifted once without her meaning to, and a soft, helpless whine escaped the vocalizer.

The staff member did not comment. The hand simply stayed where it was, occasionally squeezing or stroking as if checking the give of muscle and tissue. Each squeeze sent another small wave of unwanted warmth through her. Pippy tried to form the word *stop*. What came out was a quiet, broken grunt.

They brought her into a larger, more open space. The walls were concrete. The lighting was overhead and functional. There were several low, sturdy enclosures—holding areas rather than rooms. She was guided into one of them. The floor inside was smooth and slightly warmer than the corridor. The lead was clipped to a ring set into the wall at a height that kept her on all fours if she wanted to stay comfortable. She stayed.

The staff members checked the sensors still attached to her body, adjusted one lead that had shifted during the walk, and left without speaking to her.

Pippy remained where they had put her, breathing through the ache and the lingering slick heat between her thighs. She tried to hold onto the shape of her own thoughts. *This is still the study. They are moving me for the next phase of monitoring. The device is temporary. The changes are data.* The words felt thinner than they had even an hour earlier.

A door on the far side of the space opened.

The woman who entered was nothing like Dr. Stone. She was broad-shouldered and solid, with short-cropped hair and skin that had seen years of sun and work.

She wore a heavy rubber apron over practical clothes and boots that thudded softly on the concrete. Her hands were large and calloused. She carried a tablet, but she looked at Pippy first, not at the screen.

“New one,” the woman said, more to herself than to anyone else. Her voice was low and pragmatic. “They said you were coming along fast.”

She stepped into the enclosure and crouched beside Pippy without ceremony. One rough hand came up and cupped the heavy, swollen underside of Pippy’s left breast, lifting it to test the weight. The touch was not gentle. It was assessing—fingers pressing into the tight, warm flesh, thumb brushing across the stiff, oversensitive nipple. A sharp spark of pleasure shot through Pippy’s chest and straight down between her legs. She clenched involuntarily. More slickness gathered. Her breath caught in a soft, high whine.

The woman nodded to herself, as if the response confirmed something.

“Good capacity already,” she said. “Tissue’s filling out nice and even. Yield potential looks strong.” She shifted her hand to the other breast, repeating the same firm, evaluating squeeze and lift. Pippy’s nipple throbbed under the rough pad of her thumb. Another wave of unwilling pleasure moved through her. She tried to pull away and only succeeded in arching her back, which pushed her breast more fully into the woman’s hand. The ache in her chest mixed with the new, sharper pleasure until she could not tell where one ended and the other began.

The woman’s other hand moved lower, sliding between Pippy’s thighs without hesitation. Calloused fingers parted her and checked the slick heat there with the same practical assessment. Pippy whined again—louder this time, the sound caught and softened by the vocalizer. Her hips rocked once before she could stop them. The fingers pressed, testing resistance and give, and the pleasure that followed was so sudden and deep that her arms trembled.

“Responsive,” the woman noted. She withdrew her hand and wiped it on her apron without fuss. “That’ll help with the let-down when we get to full harvest. Some of them fight it longer. You’re already showing good signs.”

Pippy’s thoughts were fracturing. *Harvest. Yield. Capacity.* The words did not belong in a clinical study. She tried to shape a protest, to demand to speak with Dr. Stone, to reassert that she was a participant with rights and understanding. The only sounds that came were soft, desperate grunts and a thin, pleading whine. Her body betrayed her again when the woman’s hand returned to her rear, giving it a firm, appraising pat that sent another jolt of unwanted sensation through her.

The woman—Marlene, Pippy heard one of the aproned staff call her from the doorway— straightened and made a note on the tablet.

“Marlene Nelson,” she said, as if introducing herself to livestock rather than a person. “I handle the practical side once they move out of the fancy rooms. You’ve got good early numbers. We’ll keep you here a day or two while the swelling stabilizes, then shift you to the main floor. You’ll do fine if you keep responding like that.”

She gave Pippy’s rear one last proprietary pat, then scratched briefly behind one ear the way Sora had done. The touch was casual, almost affectionate in its roughness. Pippy’s body answered with another clench of pleasure she could not control. A soft, broken sound escaped her.

Marlene looked down at her with the same calm, evaluating gaze she might have used on any animal whose output she was responsible for.

“Settle in,” she said. “They’ll bring feed soon. Keep drinking. The ache gets worse before it gets better, but the position helps. Most of them learn that quick.”

She turned and walked out of the enclosure. The door closed behind her with a solid, final sound.

Pippy stayed on her hands and knees, the lead keeping her from rising even if she had wanted to. Her breasts hung heavy and swollen beneath her, the nipples still throbbing from the handling. Between her legs she was slick and warm, the pleasure responses lingering like an aftertaste she could not swallow. The ache in her chest was still there, deep and demanding, but it had changed. It was no longer only discomfort. It was something that wanted to be answered.

She tried one more time to form a clear thought. *I am Penelope Stephens. This is a study. I signed a contract. They said the device was temporary.*

The words slipped. What remained was simpler, more immediate.

Full. Heavy. Hands. Feels…

She lowered her head, arched her back to ease the worst of the pull on her chest, and stayed in the position that had become the only one that made sense. The concrete floor was cool under her palms and knees. The air moved across every exposed part of her. Somewhere down the corridor she could hear the low, rhythmic sound of machinery starting up.

She did not know what it was for.

She only knew that her body was already preparing for it.

Chapter 7: The Stall

The concrete stall was smaller than the holding enclosure. Thick steel bars formed the front. The floor was slightly sloped toward a central drain. A heavy ring was bolted low on one wall. Pippy was led inside on all fours, the lead

clipped to the ring so she could move only a short distance in either direction. The staff in rubber aprons worked quickly and without conversation. One adjusted the sensors still attached to her body. Another checked the fit of the vocalizer. A third ran a broad hand along her spine and down to the heavy, swollen curve of her ass, giving it a firm pat that sent a sharp spark of pleasure through her. She clenched and whined, the sound soft and broken.

The ache had become unbearable.

Her breasts hung low and painfully full, the skin stretched so tight it shone. Each small movement made them sway and pull. The deep, primal throb behind them had sharpened into something that felt like a demand her body could no longer ignore. She could feel the pressure building inside the tissue, the faint warm trickle that escaped one nipple and ran down the curve of her breast before dripping onto the concrete. She tried to shift her weight to ease it and only succeeded in making the ache worse.

One of the staff spoke into a wall panel. “She’s ready. Udders are tight. Let’s get her on the machine before she starts leaking everywhere.”

The machinery was wheeled in on a heavy cart—industrial, stainless steel, with thick transparent hoses and two large, soft-rimmed cups connected to a central pump unit. It hummed to life with a low, steady vibration that filled the stall. Pippy’s breath caught. The sound seemed to travel straight into the ache in her chest.

They positioned her carefully. One staff member guided her forward so her heavy breasts hung directly over the cups. Another reached beneath her and attached the cups one by one. The soft rims sealed around her areolas with a firm, sucking pressure that made her gasp. The first pull came almost immediately—strong, rhythmic, mechanical. The relief was instant and overwhelming. The deep pressure inside her breasts began to ease as the machine drew the warm, rich flow into the hoses. At the same time, a powerful wave of pleasure rolled through her. Her nipples throbbed in time with the suction. Slick heat gathered between her legs. Her hips rocked forward involuntarily. A long, broken whine escaped the vocalizer.

The machine settled into a steady rhythm. Each pull eased the agony and replaced it with something deeper, narcotic, impossible to fight. Pippy’s arms trembled. Her head dropped lower. The ache that had dominated her thoughts for hours was finally being answered, and her body responded with helpless, rolling pleasure that made her clench and drip onto the concrete beneath her.

The machinery had been humming for only a few minutes when the outer door opened again. Sora entered with two dairy staff members. One of them carried a small glass filled with warm, opaque liquid that still carried a faint steam. They

stopped just outside the stall bars. Sora's eyes went straight to Pippy—on all fours, breasts sealed to the machine, body moving in small, involuntary twitches with every pull. A slow, deeply entertained smile spread across Sora's face. There was no other word for the expression. She looked genuinely delighted.

One of the dairy staff handed her the glass. "Fresh from the first draw. Good yield already."

Sora took it without hesitation. She lifted the glass, examined the color and consistency, then took a slow sip. Her eyes closed briefly in appreciation. When she opened them again she was still smiling, that same entertained, satisfied look.

"This is perfect for her," Sora said, loud enough for everyone nearby to hear. She took another sip, then gestured toward Pippy with the glass. "Look at her. All that arrogance, all that superiority, and this is what she was built for. The machine doesn't care how smart she thought she was. It just takes what her body makes. I've never seen anything suit someone so completely."

The dairy staff chuckled. One of them nodded. "She's responding well. Some of them fight the relief for hours. She leaned into it almost right away."

Sora's enthusiasm was bright and contagious. It filled the space like a warm current. She stepped closer to the bars, still holding the glass of Pippy's milk, and watched the steady rhythm of the machine with open fascination.

"See how her back arches when it pulls? That's not resistance. That's her body finally getting what it needs. I knew this would be good for her. I just didn't expect it to be this… right." She took another sip, slower this time, savoring it. "She's a good subject. Look at that output already. She was always meant to be useful like this."

Pippy heard every word through the haze of the machine's rhythm and the rolling waves of relief and pleasure. The ache was still there, but it was being drained away with every strong, mechanical pull. Her thoughts had narrowed to simple, immediate things: the suction on her nipples, the warm flow leaving her body, the deep clenching pleasure between her legs, the way her breasts felt lighter with each cycle. Sora's voice cut through it all—bright, pleased, certain.

Perfect for her.

She's a good subject.

Pippy's mind, already fracturing, turned the words over and found no resistance left to offer. The machine pulled again. Another wave of relief and pleasure moved through her. A soft, grateful whine escaped the vocalizer. Her hips shifted forward, seeking more of the rhythm. The ache eased further. Her body was doing exactly what it was supposed to do.

Sora finished the glass and handed it back to the staff member with a small, satisfied nod. “Keep her on as long as she needs,” Sora said. “She looks like she’s finally where she belongs.”

She stayed a moment longer, watching the machine work and watching Pippy’s body respond —breasts emptying, back arched, soft sounds of mixed relief and pleasure slipping past the vocalizer. Then she turned and left with the dairy staff, her footsteps light, her posture relaxed and pleased.

The machinery continued its steady, humming rhythm.

Pippy remained on all fours, sealed to the cups, the heavy demand in her chest finally being answered. Each pull sent another wave of relief and involuntary pleasure through her. Her thoughts had shrunk to the simplest possible shape.

Emptying. Good. Machine. Good subject.

The ache continued to fade. The pleasure did not.

She stayed exactly where they had put her, body moving with the rhythm, mind narrowing further with every cycle, while the concrete stall filled with the low, constant sound of the pump taking what she had to give.

Chapter 8: The Ego Death

The feed came in a low, wide trough bolted to the front of the stall. It was thick, sweet, and rich with a heavy, creamy scent that filled the concrete space. Pippy was already on all fours when the staff slid it into place. The lead kept her from rising. She lowered her head and ate because the ache in her chest had returned and the feed was there. Each swallow made the fullness build faster. Her body responded to the calories with immediate, aggressive production. The tissue in her breasts grew heavier again within hours, the skin stretching tighter, the ache sharpening into something that demanded release.

The machine came on schedule. Two large, soft-rimmed cups were attached to her nipples while she knelt in position. The seals formed with a firm pull. The pump started with its low, steady hum. The first strong draw eased the worst of the pressure almost at once. Warm flow moved through the hoses. At the same time, deep, rolling pleasure spread from her nipples through her chest and down into her core. Her hips rocked. Slick heat gathered between her legs. A long, broken whine escaped the vocalizer. She could not form words. She could only make the soft, helpless sounds the device allowed.

The relief was narcotic. It flooded her thoughts and pushed everything else aside. The pain of being full disappeared under the rhythmic suction. In its place came wave after wave of mind-numbing pleasure that made her arms shake and her breath catch in soft, grateful sounds. She stopped trying to hold any other shape in her mind. There was only the pull, the flow leaving her body, and the

overwhelming relief that followed each cycle.

They left her on the machine longer this time. The staff in rubber aprons checked the hoses, adjusted the pressure, and spoke in low, practical voices.

“Good yield today. She’s settling into the rhythm fast.”

“Feed’s doing its job. Production’s climbing.”

Pippy heard the words through the haze. *Yield. Rhythm. Production.* They fit the sensations in her body better than any other words she could reach for. She tried, once, to pull a different thought forward—something about contracts, or studies, or the name she had once answered to. The machine pulled again, stronger, and the thought dissolved into the pleasure. Her back arched. Her breasts emptied further. The ache that had been agony became nothing but background to the deep, clenching relief.

When the machine finally stopped, the staff detached the cups. Her nipples throbbed in the cooler air, still sensitive and wet. One of the aproned workers ran a rough hand along her side and under the heavy curve of one breast, checking the remaining fullness with a practical squeeze. The touch sent another spark of pleasure through her. She whined and pushed back into the hand without meaning to. The worker chuckled softly and gave her rear a firm pat.

“She’s learning. Good subject.”

The words landed inside her like something she already knew. She stayed on all fours, breathing through the lingering throb of pleasure and the slow return of pressure. The feed had already begun rebuilding the volume. Her breasts felt full again, tight and heavy, but the memory of the machine’s relief was stronger than the discomfort. She found herself waiting for the next cycle instead of dreading it.

The schedule became the only structure that mattered. Fullness built. The ache sharpened. The machine was brought in. Two cups sealed. The hum started. Relief and pleasure flooded her until thought narrowed to the rhythm of the pulls. She stopped trying to speak. The vocalizer made complex sound impossible anyway, but even inside her own mind the sentences fractured. What remained were simpler fragments.

Full. Machine. Empty. Good.

Feels… good.

Between sessions she ate from the trough when it was placed in front of her. The rich feed made her body produce faster. The staff praised the increase in yield. They handled her more directly now—lifting and weighing her breasts to check progress, running hands over her flanks and rear to assess condition. Each touch triggered the same involuntary response: a clench of pleasure, more slickness, a

soft whine. She no longer tried to pull away. The position on all fours had become the only one that felt right when the ache built. It let the heavy weight hang and eased the pressure on her back.

Marlene came through once during a session. She stood outside the stall bars and watched the machine work. Pippy was deep in the rhythm, breasts sealed to the two cups, body moving in small, automatic twitches with every pull. The pleasure had her eyes half-closed and her mouth open around quiet, broken sounds.

Marlene nodded once, satisfied.

“She’s past fighting it. Mind’s finally catching up to what the body already knows. Keep her on this schedule. The feed’s working. Yield’s climbing every cycle.”

She left. The machine kept humming.

Pippy stayed exactly where she was, sealed to the cups, the deep, narcotic pleasure of being emptied rolling through her in steady waves. The last coherent pieces of resistance had dissolved hours ago. There was no longer any part of her that could hold onto the idea that this was temporary, or that she was still someone who had chosen to be here, or that her mind could win against the relentless cycle of fullness and relief.

The machine pulled again. Another wave of pleasure moved through her, stronger than the last. Her hips rocked forward. A long, soft whine escaped her. The ache that had once been agony was now only the signal that the machine would come and make everything feel good again.

She lowered her head, arched her back to let the cups work more efficiently, and let the rhythm take what remained of her thoughts.

There was only the pull.

The flow.

The relief.

And the quiet, broken sounds of a body that had finally stopped trying to be anything else.

Chapter 9: The Herd

The individual stall was opened. A lead was clipped to the vocalizer harness and Pippy was guided forward on all fours. The concrete under her palms and knees changed texture as she was walked out of the small enclosure and into a much larger space. The air here was warmer, heavier with the sweet scent of feed and the low, constant hum of multiple machines. Rows of low steel stalls or open positions lined the floor. In each one, another woman knelt or stood on all fours,

breasts sealed to the cups of an industrial pump, bodies moving in the same steady rhythm.

Some were further along than others. One nearby had her head lowered all the way to the floor between her arms, eyes half-lidded, making soft, rhythmic sounds with every pull of the machine. Another farther down the row had a heavier build, her breasts hanging even fuller, the hoses running thick with white flow. They all wore the same vocalizer harnesses. They all made the same limited sounds. There was no conversation. Only the collective, steady noise of the pumps and the occasional soft grunt or whine when a staff member in rubber aprons moved between them to check connections or adjust pressure.

Pippy was led to an open position in the middle of the row. The lead was clipped to a low ring. The two cups were brought and sealed to her nipples without ceremony. The machine started with its familiar low hum. The first strong pull drew a long, broken sound from her. Relief flooded in immediately. The heavy, swollen weight in her chest began to ease. At the same time, deep, rolling pleasure moved through her body—stronger now in the shared space, as if the collective rhythm amplified it. Her hips rocked forward. Slick heat gathered between her legs. She clenched around nothing and whined again, softer this time, the sound lost among the others.

She did not try to look away from the women on either side of her. She did not try to form any thought about who they had been or what this place was. The machine pulled again. Another wave of relief and pleasure rolled through her. Her arms trembled. Her back arched to let the cups work more efficiently. The ache that had once been agony was now only the signal that the machine would come and make everything feel good.

A staff member moved down the row, checking each producer in turn. When they reached Pippy they ran a rough hand along her side, lifted one heavy breast to check the remaining fullness even while the machine worked, then gave her rear a firm pat. The touch sent another spark of pleasure through her. She pushed back into the hand without thinking. The worker made a low sound of approval.

“Good integration. She’s matching the rhythm already.”

The words landed inside Pippy’s narrowing mind like something she already knew. She did not try to hold onto any other shape. The machine continued its steady pull. The flow left her body in warm pulses. The pleasure built and crested in slow, deep waves that made her breath catch and her hips move in small, automatic motions. Around her the other women made the same soft sounds. The pumps hummed in the same rhythm. The air smelled of feed and milk and warm bodies.

When the troughs were brought out later, Pippy lowered her head to eat without being told. The rich, sweet feed filled her mouth and slid down her throat. She could feel her body responding almost at once—more pressure building in her breasts, the ache returning faster than before. She did not question it. She ate until the trough was pulled away, then stayed in position, waiting for the next cycle of the machine.

The staff moved between the rows with practical efficiency. They spoke to one another in low voices about yields and schedules and which producers were responding best. Sometimes one of them would stop at a stall, attach or detach cups, or run assessing hands over heavy breasts and flanks. Each time it happened near Pippy, she felt the same involuntary response— slickness, clenching, a soft whine of mixed relief and pleasure. She no longer tried to separate the sensations into different categories. There was only the body, the machine, and the rhythm.

She stopped trying to speak. She stopped trying to form any thought more complex than the immediate needs of the cycle. Full. Machine. Pull. Empty. Good. The fragments repeated in time with the pumps. When the ache built again she shifted her weight on her hands and knees, arching her back to let her breasts hang more fully, ready for the cups when they came. She did not think about resistance. She did not think about who she had been before the stall. She only felt the growing pressure and the knowledge that the machine would come and turn it into relief and pleasure.

The woman to her left made a long, low sound as her own machine started again. Pippy turned her head slightly and watched the steady movement of the other woman’s body—back arching, hips rocking, breasts emptying into the hoses. It looked the same as what was happening to her. It felt the same. There was no difference between them anymore.

The machine in front of Pippy hummed to life once more. The two cups sealed. The first strong pull drew the ache out of her chest and replaced it with deep, mind-numbing pleasure. She lowered her head between her arms, eyes half-closed, and let the rhythm take her. Around her the herd moved in the same steady cycle. The pumps hummed. The troughs would come again later. The staff would check and handle and adjust. Everything followed the same simple pattern.

Pippy stayed exactly where she had been placed, body responding to the machine with automatic pleasure, mind narrowed to the pull and the flow and the relief that followed. She made soft, broken sounds with each cycle. She did not try to be anything else.

The function was enough.

Chapter 10: Peak Yield

The cycle had become everything.

Pippy no longer tracked time in hours or days. She tracked it in the steady rhythm of fullness and relief. The rich feed was placed in the trough at regular intervals. She lowered her head and ate without being prompted, the heavy, sweet taste triggering an immediate response in her body. Within hours her breasts grew painfully tight and heavy again, the skin stretched smooth and warm, the ache building into a deep, constant demand. When the machine was brought, she shifted forward on her hands and knees, arching her back to present herself for the two cups. She had learned the position that let them seal most efficiently.

The relief when the pump started was always the same overwhelming flood. Strong, rhythmic pulls drew the warm flow from her body in thick pulses. At the same time, deep, mind- numbing pleasure rolled through her—stronger now at peak production, as if her body had adapted to turn the emptying into something even more consuming. Her hips rocked. Slick heat gathered between her legs. Soft, broken whines escaped the vocalizer with every strong draw. She no longer tried to shape any other sound. She only made the noises the rhythm pulled from her.

Her yields had climbed steadily. The hoses ran thick and steady during each session. The staff in rubber aprons checked the collection volumes with approving nods and made notes on their tablets. Production numbers were discussed in low, practical voices as they moved between the rows.

Marlene came through the floor more often now. She stopped at each producer in turn, assessing with the same calm, evaluating hands she had used from the beginning. When she reached Pippy she crouched beside her, ran one rough palm along the heavy curve of a breast even while the machine worked, then gave a firm, assessing squeeze to check remaining capacity. The touch sent a sharp spark of pleasure through Pippy’s chest. She pushed into the hand and whined, the sound soft and automatic.

Marlene watched the steady flow in the hoses for a moment, then nodded once.

“Prime producer,” she said, her tone exactly the same one a farmer would use for a prize heifer at the peak of its season. “Excellent yield. Consistent. High volume. You’re topping the numbers on this row. Keep responding like this and you’ll stay in the top tier.”

The words landed inside Pippy’s narrowed mind like warm approval. *Prime producer. Topping the numbers.* Something in her responded to the praise with a deep, twisted satisfaction. She was doing well. Her body was performing at its highest level. The machine was taking more from her than from most of the

others, and that felt right. She arched her back further, offering her breasts more fully to the cups, and let another wave of relief and pleasure move through her. The pride was desperate and simple. It had nothing to do with who she had been before. It only had to do with this—being emptied efficiently, producing well, earning the low, satisfied tone in Marlene's voice.

The staff around her echoed the assessment in their own practical way.

"Good output today. She's one of the strongest on the floor right now."

"Feed's hitting her perfectly. Yield's climbing every cycle."

Pippy heard the words through the steady pull of the machine. They settled into the same narrow space where her thoughts now lived. *Good output. Strongest. Climbing.* She felt the pride again—hot and immediate and tied directly to the rhythm of the pump. Her body was doing what it was meant to do. She was a good producer. The machine confirmed it with every strong draw. Marlene confirmed it with her hands and her voice.

When the session ended and the cups were detached, one of the aproned workers ran assessing hands over her flanks and the heavy undersides of her breasts, checking condition. The touch triggered the same automatic response—slick heat, a soft clench, a quiet whine. Pippy stayed in position, breathing through the lingering throb of pleasure, already feeling the feed beginning to rebuild the pressure for the next cycle.

She lived for the harvest now. The trough. The building ache. The machine. The deep, consuming relief and pleasure that came with being emptied. The low, approving voices when her numbers were high. There was nothing else that mattered. The fragments in her mind had simplified even further.

Full. Machine. Yield. Good. Empty. Pride.

She shifted her weight on her hands and knees, already anticipating the next time the cups would seal and the pump would start. Her breasts felt heavy again, the skin tight, the demand building. She arched her back slightly, presenting herself the way she had learned to do. The position felt natural. The waiting felt right.

When the staff returned with the machine, she moved forward to meet the cups without being guided. The seals formed. The hum started. The first strong pull drew a long, grateful sound from her. Relief and pleasure flooded in. The pride answered with it—simple, desperate, and complete.

She was a prime producer.

Chapter 11: The Investor

The machine was already running when they arrived.

Pippy knelt in position on the concrete, the two cups sealed firmly to her heavy, swollen breasts. The steady, rhythmic pull had been drawing from her for several minutes. Warm flow moved through the hoses in thick pulses. With every strong draw, deep, mind-numbing pleasure rolled through her body. Her hips rocked in small, automatic motions. Slick heat gathered between her legs. Soft, broken whines escaped the vocalizer in time with the pump. Her thoughts had narrowed to the simplest possible rhythm: *pull, empty, good, again.*

She heard the footsteps before she saw them. Heavy boots and lighter ones. Marlene's low, pragmatic voice speaking to someone as they approached the stall.

"…top producer on this row right now. Consistent high volume. The feed is hitting her perfectly. Yield's been climbing steadily since we moved her to the main floor."

Sora's voice answered, calm and even. "Show me the numbers."

They stopped just outside the bars. Pippy lifted her head slightly, the motion limited by the lead and the machine's rhythm. She saw them both. Marlene stood with her tablet, pointing at the readouts. Sora stood beside her, dressed in simple, practical clothes, her dark hair pulled back. She was looking directly at Pippy.

There was no pity in Sora's expression. No recognition of a former roommate or any trace of the quiet girl who had once stacked books in their apartment. She looked at Pippy the way someone looks at a set of figures on a spreadsheet — assessing output, efficiency, and return. Her eyes moved over the heavy, swaying breasts sealed to the cups, the steady flow in the hoses, the way Pippy's body moved with the machine's rhythm. She took it all in with calm, detached interest.

Marlene continued in the same practical tone she used for any high-performing animal. "She's responding well to the schedule. Minimal resistance now. The machine keeps her in the right headspace. Production is excellent."

Sora nodded once, still watching Pippy. "Good. Keep her on the current protocol. I want the numbers tracked daily. If she stays at this level, we'll discuss extending the phase."

Pippy's narrowed mind registered the words in fragments. *Sora. Here. Watching. Numbers. Good.* A faint flicker of something older tried to surface — a memory of an apartment, of conversations, of the person she had once been. It dissolved almost immediately under the next strong pull of the machine. Pleasure flooded in, thick and narcotic, pushing everything else aside. Her back arched. Her hips shifted forward. Another soft, broken sound escaped her. The pride she had learned to feel at high yield answered with it — simple and desperate. She was performing well. Sora was seeing the numbers. That felt right.

Sora stepped closer to the bars, still looking at her like an asset whose performance was being evaluated. She spoke to Marlene without taking her eyes off Pippy.

“Has she maintained the all-fours positioning without issue?”

“Almost from the start,” Marlene said. “It helps with the weight and keeps her in the right rhythm. She leans into it now.”

Sora made a small sound of approval. “Excellent. That’s exactly what we want to see at this stage.”

The machine pulled again. Another wave of relief and deep pleasure moved through Pippy’s body. She whined softly, the sound lost among the steady hum of pumps across the floor. Her thoughts had already narrowed back to the immediate cycle. *Pull. Empty. Good. Sora sees. Good yield.*

Sora watched for another minute, her expression unchanged — calm, calculating, satisfied with the data in front of her. Then she stepped back.

“Keep me updated on the daily numbers,” she said to Marlene. “I want to see if she can sustain this level through the next phase.”

Marlene nodded. “Will do.”

They turned and walked away together, their voices fading as they moved down the row to check the next producer. Pippy stayed exactly where she was, sealed to the two cups, the machine continuing its steady, relentless rhythm. The heavy, swollen weight in her chest eased with every pull. Pleasure rolled through her in deep, consuming waves. The brief flicker of recognition had already dissolved into the simpler, more immediate truth of her body.

She was a prime producer.

The machine confirmed it with every strong draw.

She arched her back further, offering herself more fully to the cups, and let the rhythm take what remained of her thoughts.

Chapter 12: The Payout

The machine had been running for a long time.

Pippy knelt in the stall, the two cups sealed tightly to her heavy, painfully full breasts. The ache had sharpened into something close to agony again, the tissue stretched tight and hot. Every strong, rhythmic pull of the pump drew warm, thick flow into the hoses and sent a deep wave of relief and overwhelming pleasure rolling through her body. Her hips rocked forward with each cycle. Slick heat gathered between her legs. Soft, broken whines escaped the vocalizer in time with the suction. Her arms trembled. Her back was arched as far as the lead

would allow, offering her breasts more fully to the machine.

She no longer tried to think beyond the immediate rhythm. *Full. Pull. Empty. Good.* The fragments repeated with every draw. The pleasure had become the only thing that mattered. It flooded her mind and pushed everything else into the background.

Footsteps approached. Two sets. Marlene's heavier tread and Sora's lighter one. They stopped just outside the stall bars. Pippy could see them through half-lidded eyes, but the machine kept pulling and the relief kept coming, so she did not lift her head.

Marlene spoke first, her voice low and practical. "She's in a strong cycle right now. Yield's been excellent all day. We'll probably get another full draw before we switch her to the evening feed."

Sora was quiet for a moment, watching the steady movement of the hoses and the way Pippy's body moved with the machine. Then she asked, "How many years do you think she'll produce at this level?"

Marlene considered the question the way she considered any livestock matter. "Hard to say for certain. Some of them stay high-output for quite a while if the feed and schedule stay consistent. Others taper off after a few years. Who knows what comes after that. The world keeps changing. This kind of protocol is still new, but it's working. There's going to be a whole class of women like this before long. Efficient. Low-maintenance once they're settled. High and steady yield."

She paused, then added in the same calm tone, "In a way, you're sort of a pioneer by investing in this early. The legal structure we used on her contract is going to become standard. Agricultural classification makes everything cleaner on the back end. Ongoing payments tied directly to output. No complications."

Sora nodded, still watching Pippy with the same detached, spreadsheet-like interest she had shown on every visit. "The fine print handled the reclassification cleanly. Caretaker and owner of record. The stipend flows through without issue."

Marlene made a small sound of agreement. "It does. She's legally property now under the study's terms. You get the full ongoing yield payments as long as she produces. Simple."

The words reached Pippy through the steady pull of the machine. *Years. Produce. Class of women. Pioneer. Legally property. Ongoing payments. Yield.* They tried to land inside her narrowed mind, but the pump drew again, stronger, and the deep, narcotic pleasure that followed pushed the meaning away. Her body responded with another clench of slick heat and a long, broken whine. The ache eased further. Relief and pleasure flooded her until there was almost no

room left for anything else.

She was too heavy. Too full. Too desperate for the next pull of the machine to hold onto the shape of what she had just heard. The fragments dissolved into the rhythm. *Pull. Empty. Good. Again.*

Sora and Marlene continued speaking for another minute, their voices low and practical, discussing numbers and schedules and the next phase of expansion. Pippy heard the sound of their voices but not the individual words anymore. The machine had her. Every strong draw sent another wave of mind-numbing pleasure through her body. Her hips moved in small, automatic motions. Her breasts emptied steadily into the hoses. The pride she had learned to feel at high yield answered with the relief — simple, desperate, and complete.

When the two women finally walked away, Pippy stayed exactly where she was. The

machine continued its steady, relentless rhythm. The ache that had been agony was almost gone now, replaced by the deep, consuming pleasure of being emptied. Her thoughts had narrowed to almost nothing. There was only the pull, the warm flow leaving her body, the relief that followed, and the quiet, broken sounds she made with each cycle.

She arched her back a little further, offering herself more fully to the cups. The position felt natural. The rhythm felt right. The machine knew what to do with her. It took what she produced and gave her the only thing that mattered in return.

The last faint traces of anything else — a name, a contract, a life before the stall — had already dissolved. There was only the function now. Fullness. The machine. Relief. Pleasure. Yield.

She stayed on her hands and knees, sealed to the two cups, the steady hum of the pump filling the stall while her body surrendered completely to the cycle. Her mind was blank. Her old life was gone. There was nothing left to resist with.

The machine pulled again.

She whined softly and leaned into it.