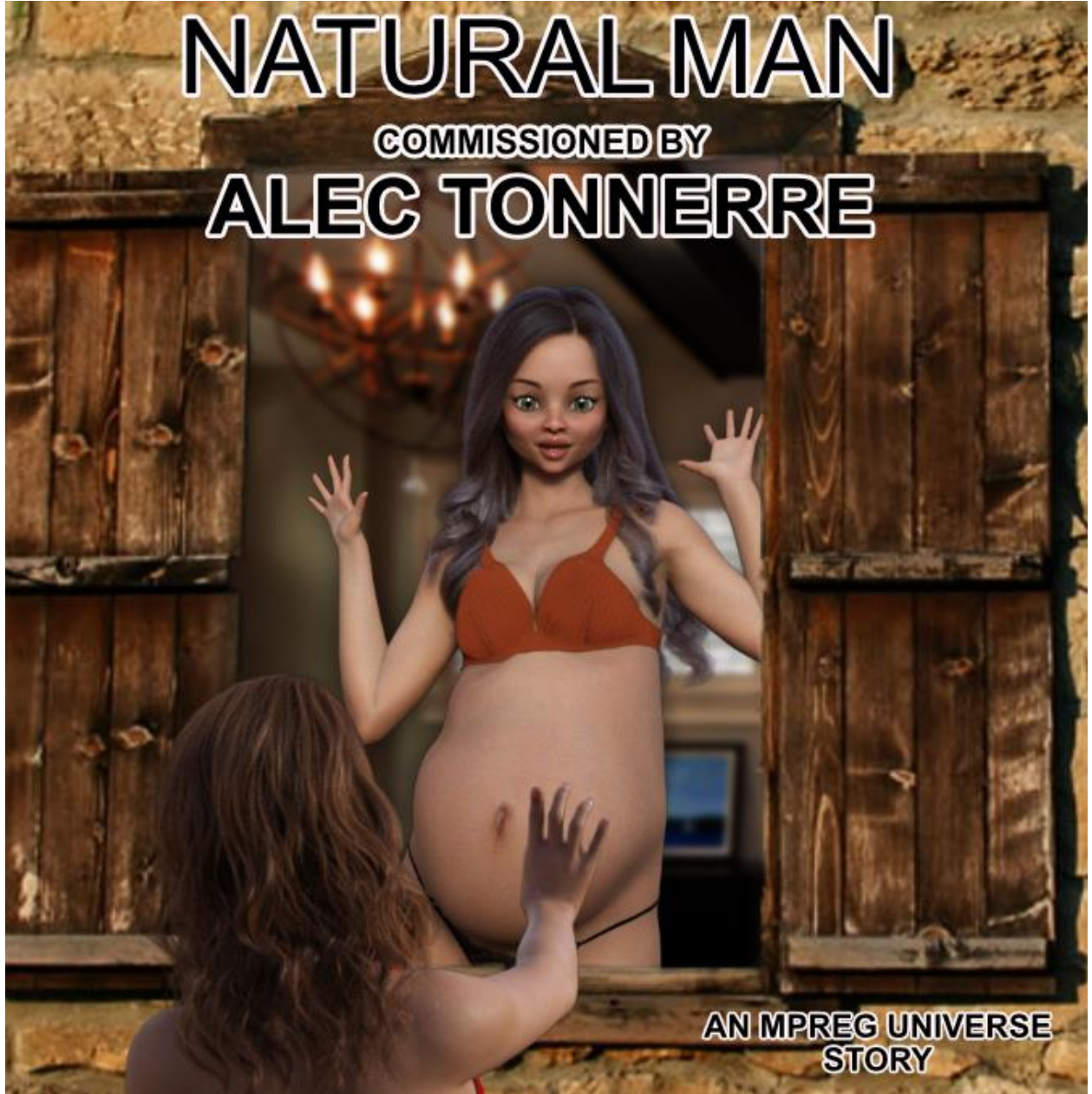


NATURAL MAN

COMMISSIONED BY

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AN MPREG UNIVERSE
STORY

The following material is rated

R

Mature Readers

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If there were a single word to describe the mood at Curie Park on this breezy, spring day, it would have been joyful. Teeming with pretty little men chatting amiably in their soft voices, some pregnant, and some now pushing strollers under the shady trees, it was a celebration of the new motherhood, the motherhood of men.

A stage had been set up, and a large screen on which were projected the words “Happy Man Mother’s Day.”

Alec, pushing a double stroller where his newborn twins nestled, smiling, spotted his old friend, Nick, chatting with a few other men. “Nick!” Alec called in his little voice, waving.

“Allie!” Nick squealed, excusing himself from his conversation and pushing his own triple stroller over to meet Alec. The two hugged, their soft milk swollen breasts pressing together. Each quickly turned his attention to the other man’s babies. “Omigod,” Alec said, gazing down adoringly. “They’re all so pretty!”

“Yours are adorable,” Nick said, unable to resist the urge to touch a soft cheek. “They’re growing so fast!”

“I know!” Alec said. “Miles has so much hair, and what a pretty color!” “He’s going to be a lady killer,” Nick said, putting a hand to his chest. “Wow. Look at you! The baby weight has come right off!”

“Me? What’s your secret?”

The men admired each other’s now slender waists, taut tummies. They wore short shorts and tank tops. “I loved carrying my babies,” Alec said. ‘Don’t get me wrong, but I was ready to have them out of me.’

“I get it,” Nick said.

“Hey, boys!” A bright, feminine voice called from the stage, a voice everyone immediately recognized as belonging to the singer Thugzz.

Turning their bright, pretty faces to the stage, the men all cheered and clapped. Thugzz, who’d been something of a gangster rapper before he became an mpreggo, smiled and shook his wide, round hips, raising his slender arms above his head. He’d lived posted his whole pregnancy on social media and even the birth of his babies, becoming the voice of the mpreggo pride movement in the process and, like Nick and Alec, he’d worked off his baby weight and now had a tight, curvy figure.

Music began to thump from the speakers, and recognizing the opening bars of Thugzz ode to motherhood, all the men squealed. Thugzz began to sing, and all the mpreggos danced and sang along:

You say that my babies make me less of a man
Well let me tell you something you silly trad
I had morning sickness for five straight years
Mothered my babies never sipped a beer

Proud! I’m more than a man.
Proud! Of my mpreggo clan
Proud! To be a mother
Proud! I shout it out loud

The song went into a dance break, but just as the crowd started to get into it, there was an electronic crackle and a voice shouted over a megaphone: “You are all freaks!”

A large group of trads wearing camouflage pants and t-shirts that read “Natural Man” came marching into the park, shoving the little mpreggos aside. The mpreggos began to boo.

“Who the hell do you think you are?” Thugzz screamed from the stage. “You are not welcome here!”

Bannister Groat, the leader of the NM, marched onto the stage, shouting into his megaphone, “You have nothing to be proud of! The Equal Ploughshares have turned you into mockeries of the natural order!”

Nick and Alec, fearful for their babies, pulled their strollers back under a large oak as others scattered, booed.

“Get off my stage!” Thugzz shouted, but Bannister yanked the microphone from his small, soft hands as some of his men grabbed him and picked him up off his feet, dragging him away.

“Kill the music,” Bannister shouted, and his men went over and shoved the DJ to the ground, then smashed his sound system with billy clubs, sending sparks and smoke rising into the air.

“Why aren’t the police doing anything?” Nick asked, his hands on his cheeks as he scanned the perimeter of the park, where a dozen cops stood, watching, smirking.

“They’re trads,” Alec hissed.

Bannister stood at the front of the stage and smiled down at all the terrified mpreggos. Small. Soft. The sight of them sickened him. “You will never be normalized,” he shouted. “You will always be freaks. You should be hiding in shame!”

Next to Bannister stood a ten-year-old boy with a hard look in his pale green eyes. He nodded at each of his father’s words.

Chapter Two

“I’m doing this for you,” Bannister said as he navigated his black, F-150 along the streets, making his way home. “For your generation.”

“Mpreggos are freaks,” Ban Jr. said, because that’s what he’d been taught, because he knew that’s what his father wanted him to say.

“That’s my boy.” Bannister pulled his trucks up to the gates of Fortress 7. A sign above the gate read, “Natural Community. Mpreggos not welcome here.”

The gatekeeper, an assault rifle strapped across his chest, came out of the guard house. “How’d it go?”

“Jack,” Bannister said. “It was glorious.”

“Hoo-rah!”

The gate swung open, and Bannister’s truck grumbled as he shifted into gear and pulled through the gates. “We can’t allow this sickness to become normalized,” Bannister said, repeating the doctrine he’d been instilling in his son since the MPREG virus had first been spread. “But those sad things? They aren’t the real enemy.”

“The real enemy are the Equal Ploughshares,” Ban Jr. said.

That earned him a pat on the knee. “Good boy.”

“We’re home,” Bannister called as he and his son made their way into the living room, pausing to take off their combat boots, then arranging them neatly next to the door.

Bannister’s wife, wearing a house dress, pearls, her hair up, came floating into the room. With the mpreggo curse reshaping gender roles,

threatening the whole order of the world, the Natural Men and their women had committed to what they considered hard core traditional roles. Men were men. Women were women. That was the way, they felt, nature intended it.

“How was it?” Janet asked, smiling brightly, walking up to her man, tilting her head back and accepting a kiss, putting her hand to Bannister’s stubbled cheek.

“Glorious,” Ban Jr. said.

Janet patted him on the head.

“What is that I smell?” Bannister said.

“Roast,” Janet said. “You’re favorite. To celebrate.” “That does smell good,” Bannister said.

“Thanks,” Janet said. “I better go check on the potatoes.” She turned and left. Bannister watched her go, enjoying the sight of her long legs propped up in heels. She was a good cook, an excellent housekeeper. She was what a woman was meant to be.

“Go get cleaned up,” Bannister said, giving his son a pat on the back.

“Yes, father,” Ban Jr. said, heading up the stairs.

Bannister headed down to his basement bunker, crammed full of computers, flat screen TVs, a short-wave radio. In one corner he’d set up a studio with a desk, lighting, cameras and a banner that read Natural Man. He checked his hair, his teeth, then fired up the lights, turned on the camera and began to live stream, eager to capitalize on the social media buzz he was sure his event had created.

“I’m Bannister Groat,” he said as he began his broadcast. “And I am a Natural Man. Today, we struck a blow for liberty,” he announced. “We struck a blow for the natural order.”

He had a laptop on his desk, opened to his livestream. Glancing, he saw the number of viewers clicking up, up up to over 400,000 people, and the comments box was going crazy as were the emojis– there were a lot in support, and just as many opposed.

“Fascist! Bully! You broke the law!”

Others seemed to come from mpreggos, themselves. “Why can’t you leave us alone?” Or, “I hope you die!”

Bannister smiled. He enjoyed the posts from his supporters, but he feasted on the hate. The more they hate me, he thought, the more that proves I’m right.

“A prophet, they say,” Bannister continued, “is never welcome in his own country. I am a prophet, and I speak in the thunder of truth.”

The family gathered for dinner: Bannister, Ban Jr, Janet and their daughter, Rose. “Let’s say grace,” Bannister said, just as he did every night, and he and his wife reached to hold hands with their children. They each grasped only empty air when they reached for Rose’s hand.

“Rose,” Bannister said, his voice taking on a hard edge.

“Unh!” Rose gasped, rolling her eyes dramatically. “This is so stupid!”

“Another word,” Bannister said, “and you can go to bed without supper.”

Rose clamped down, but she shot her father the dirtiest of looks her 13year-old heart could muster.

Teenagers, Bannister thought, thinking he was going to have to be very stern with this one. She had a defiant streak that was not suitable for a young lady, not at all.

Florence cleaned her pistol, a Springfield Hellcat, as she watched the news reports on the incident at Curie Park. She seethed as she watched all the men in their camo pants and “Natural Man” t-shirts bullying the little mpreggos. Did they really think that made them real men?

Her phone buzzed. Not her real phone, but her unlicensed burner phone. It was a text message: Phase II. Bannister Groat.

Florence paused her TV, freezing the image of Bannister Groat standing there on stage, shouting. He had a square jaw bristling with stubble, broad shoulders, a hard, muscular chest.

“Oh,” Florence said as she looked him over. “You’re going to make such a good little mommy!”

Florence applied the press on nails, one finger at a time. When she was done, she held up her taloned hands and examined the tips of her nails. Barely visible were a series of tiny needle points, and under the nails, small packets. She looked at herself in the mirror: bouffant hairdo, pearls, a simple, throwback house dress. She thought she looked perfectly ridiculous, emphasis on perfectly. ****

Bannister and his crew had set up a table outside the local Super Mart. They had buttons and t-shirts, signup sheets for new recruits to the cause. He spotted the women approaching, making her way through the small

crowd that had gathered, some shouting in protest. She had a nice figure, a pretty face, and she was dressed the way a woman should dress, and her face was done up right. He wondered if she was a groupie and got a little excited about maybe getting a little action. It was normal for a real man to have a couple girls on the side. His wife understood. Not, of course, that he ever mentioned it to her. Women were possessive of their men and naturally craved monogamy— it was genetic, but he was a bull, programmed to spread his seed far and wide.

“Mr. Groat,” the woman said as she approached, batting her eyes. “I just want to tell you how much I admire you and the good work you’re doing to preserve the natural order.”

She had a sweet, feminine Texas accent. Groat nodded. “It’s my calling to protect little females like yourself.”

“Oh!” Florence said, clutching her pearls. She reached out for a handshake.

Bannister frowned and stared at her outreached hand. “Women don’t shake hands with men,” he said, flatly.

“Oh. I am so sorry,” Florence said, kicking herself. She should have known that. “It’s just...”

“You should sign up for our mailing list. You can meet a lot of fine women who can teach you the proper manners befitting of a woman of your refinement.”

“I would love that,” Florence said. She needed to find some way to inject him with the nanites, but the mission called for her to do it in a way that wouldn’t tip him off. The EP wanted his pregnancy to come as a surprise. Bannister put a hand on the small of her back and guided her to the table,

then hovered over her as she filled out a fake name and contact information.

When she got done, she turned so their bodies were almost touching, and she tilted her head back and hooked a strand of her hair behind her ear. Smiling, trying to look bashful, she said, “Can a girl ask for a selfie?”

“That you can, darling.”

Florence pulled her phone out of her purse. Bannister took it from her. “Let me.”

As he lifted the phone and the two of them smiled up into the camera, Florence brushed his hand with her own, and at the same time she pressed her breasts into his side. Bannister felt a tiny sting like a gnat bite, but her gambit worked, as his mind focused intensely on the feeling of that soft, firm breast pressing against him.

He handed her phone back and smiled, touching her arm. “You should come to our next picnic,” Bannister said. “You and I could get to know each other.”

Florence giggled. “I’d like that.”

Part II

Bannister rushed into the Civic Center bathroom, knelt at the toilet bowl and puked. When the nausea had passed, he wiped his mouth with toilet paper and stood, flushing the toilet. Fuck. He’d been getting sick every morning lately. He’d have to get to the doctor one of these days.

Going to the sink, he washed his hands, then cupped them to gather some water and rinsed his mouth out. He put a hand gingerly to his chest. It had been aching something fierce lately. Probably the same thing that was making him sick. He hated doctors, though.

Outside, he could hear the crowd chanting, “Bann-is-ter! Bann-is-ter!”

Gathering himself, he pushed his shoulders back, and strode out of the bathroom. “You okay?” Mary, his assistant, asked.

“Never better,” Bannister said, wincing as his voice cracked.

“He’s on his way,” Mary called into her headset.

Bannister stormed off toward the stage. Mary watched, concerned, because it looked like— was there just a little curve to his hips now? No, she decided. Not Bannister. If he were vulnerable to the nanites, he would have caught it by now.

The lights went down. The crowd hushed. As Bannister charged out onto the stage, Natural Man, the group’s anthem, began to thunder from the Civic Center sound system. Bannister strode along the front of the stage, reaching out to touch the hands of his admirers, and as he did so one particular man caught his eye. He had thick, black hair, piled high, a bushy beard, and big, green eyes.

Bannister felt his heart leap at the sight of the man, but he shook it off and went to the microphone. “My name is Bannister Groat,” he shouted, “and I am a natural— “*crack*” *man*.” The last word had come out highpitched, as if it had been spoken by a girl. Bannister cleared his throat. “Got a little throat infection,” he said, coughing, concentrating, trying to keep his voice from cracking again.

His eyes were drawn to that man again, the one with the green eyes. He couldn't stop looking at him, and as he did, he felt his nipples start to ache.

Focus, bro, he said to himself as he pushed all that from his mind and went into his spiel.

Bannister was in the backyard, trimming the bushes. Each time he moved his arms, he felt his chest sway or bounce. Looking down, he was ashamed to see this sweat soaked shirt clinging to the two little cones that had popped out on his chest. He'd been doing extra pushups, or trying to, but his arms seemed so weak anymore that he often just ended up holding a plank instead.

"Daddy" he heard his daughter, Rose, call.

He turned, and she snapped a picture with her phone.

"Hey!" He said. "What the hell?"

"Can't a proud daughter take a picture of her daddy?" Rose said, smirking.

"Not by *surprise*." Bannister's voice cracked again.

Rose, giggling, started to walk away, then paused, looking over her shoulder, and said, "Let me know if you want to borrow one of my training bras."

"Young lady!" Bannister shrieked, and when he got upset these days, he found himself speaking in that higher, little girl register. Rose just disappeared around the corner of the house, running away in a trail of laughter.

"I'm going to have to do something about her insolent attitude,"

Bannister thought, tugging at his shirt, annoyed at the way it was sticking to his soft chest. Training bra. He stared down at the cones thrusting out from his chest. Did he have breasts? Was he—

But no. That was ridiculous. He just needed to work out harder. He would deal with Rose.

Later, though. Right now, he needed to get these bushes trimmed. It was one of his responsibilities as a man.

Back in her room, Rose tested out a couple filters, got the picture just how she wanted it, then posted it to social media. She hash-tagged it: #bannistergroat. #naturalman. #mpreggo

It went viral.

It wasn't long before Bannister could no longer deny his pregnancy. His belly swole, his hips widened, he grew shorter and shorter, and his face changed, the hard angles and square jaw melting away to soft features, big eyes, plump lips.

His wife took charge, made the appointment and he found himself laying on an examination table as the doctor smeared jelly on his swollen belly, and then the ultrasound, the sight of the babies growing inside him.

He began to cry.

Janet, his wife, looked at what had been her man in disgust. "You're a freak," she said.

"I know," Bannister answered in his soft, little voice. "I know."

Chapter Three

Bannister lay out on the couch, a box of bon bons balanced on his belly. On the screen in front of him, a pair of gorgeous people, a man and a woman. "If you take one more step, I'll scream," the woman said.

"No, you won't," the man said, taking the forbidden step, then cupping the woman's chin, tilting her head back.

"I swear," the woman said, "I will. I'll scream."

"You won't scream," the man said, eyes hard. "Because you want this more than I do." With that, he leaned down and kissed her, and she put her hands on his chest, sighing into him, and Bannister sighed and imagined it was he in that man's strong arms, he getting kissed like that...

He felt his bare nipples getting hard. He'd taken to lounging around in just a thong.

"Hey, boy," Rose called as she strode into his room. She was holding something behind her back, had a big smile on her face.

"Hey," Bannister said, tensing as he draped a slender arm across his breasts. He turned the TV off, not wanting his daughter to know he'd been watching his soaps. Rose was constantly making fun of him since he'd changed, teasing him. He knew something was coming.

"I brought you a present," Rose said as she approached the mpreggo who had once been her father.

Bannister sighed. "And?"

Rose brought her hands around to reveal she was holding a baby doll wearing a bonnet and a little dress. "Madeline," Rose said, "one of my old dolls. I thought you might want to play with her, you know, since you're going to be a mommy."

The doll? Bannister could not deny that she was adorable, with her little nose and big eyes, and those tiny legs. Since becoming pregnant, he'd become obsessed with babies— he'd never noticed how beautiful they were before— but he couldn't let Rose know. He was too ashamed. "Why can't you just leave me alone?"

"Leave me alone!" Rose mocked, raising her own little 13-year-old voice to an even higher register, matching his tea kettle tones. She handed him the doll, which he accepted, resisting the urge to hug it to his breasts, kiss its pudgy cheeks. Instead, he set it aside while Rose started to play with his hair.

"I love your long, pretty hair," Rose said.

"Stop it!" Bannister squealed, trying to push her hand away.

"Stop it!" Rose once again echoed his feminine protestations. She grabbed his wrist and forced his arm down, reveling in how much stronger she was than him now. Seeing the shock and humiliation in his eyes as his daughter showed her strength, Rose smirked, and letting go of his arm, she brushed the bangs from his forehead and cupped his cheek. "I'm gonna braid your hair," she said. "We can pretend we're sisters!" "I'm still your father!" Bannister squeaked.

Rose laughed out loud. "You're not even a man," she said. "You're less than a woman. Less than a girl. You're an mpreg. You know who taught me that?"

Bannister closed his eyes. "Me."

"That's right. Now sit up and let's give you some braids."

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Once Rose had left, Banister went back to watching his soaps, only now he had his baby doll balanced on his belly. She was so cute, he just wanted to kiss her and kiss her. The TV went to an advertisement. A bunch of smiling mpreggos wearing short shorts and tight little t-shirts sitting around in a circle. "Hemaze classes," a woman's voice cooed. "Because you don't have to deliver your babies alone."

He heard footsteps on the stairs, and thinking it was Rose come to taunt him again, he turned off the TV, sat up, tossed his braids back over his narrow, round shoulders.

Instead of Rose, Janet, his wife, walked into the room. Whenever she looked at him, she had a look of disgust on her face, and it hurt him to know how much she hated him now. "I've arranged for a personal trainer to come and see you three times a week," she announced.

"But, I don't—"

"I understand in your delicate condition you are inclined to recline," she said, sternly. "But it is not good for you babies. She is also a nutritionist, and we are going to put you on a mommy diet."

"Um, well, maybe..."

"Stop! How many times do I have to explain to you the facts of life? You are scatter-brained now. You can't think for yourself. That's why I will do your thinking for you." She crossed her arms and stared.

"Yes, Janet. Thank you."

"I'm not doing any of this for you," Janet said. "You're a repulsive failure of a man. However, I do owe it to your babies to make you into a fit mother."

Bannister lay on his side, his body sheen with sweat. He was opening and closing his legs, doing clamshells, and his inner thighs were burning. "Don't you give up," Denver, his personal trainer shouted. "You want to have tone thighs, right? A thigh gap? Keep working, boy!"

Bannister did not much care at this point, really, about having a thigh gap, but Denver was so pushy, so demanding, he didn't dare disappoint her. "Unh! Unh!" He gasped, forcing himself to keep going.

"Two more!"

Bannister squeezed out the last two clamshells, and then gasped.

"Thank God."

"Oh, you're not done. Not by a long shot," Denver said taking his hands and pulling him to his feet. "Treadmill!"

"Can't I just catch my breath for a sec?" Bannister said. "I'm so tired."

"If it doesn't challenge, it doesn't change. Now, start running!"

Bannister climbed onto the treadmill, and Denver started it up. As he began jogging, he felt his breasts and butt bouncing with every step. Whenever he worked out, his boobs ached for hours afterward, and they were already aching now. He draped an arm across his little tits, trying to keep them from jiggling so much.

"How many times do I have to tell you to wear a sports bra?" Denver said, shaking her head.

"Men don't wear bras," Bannister hissed.

"Men don't have tits," Denver countered, then shrugged. "You want to go through life with aching boobies, be my guest."

Bannister didn't answer. He hated the workouts for so many reasons, but mostly because his wife had just ordered him to do them without even asking him how he felt. He found motivation, though, in the fact that exercise was good for his babies. He'd looked it up. Bannister's maternal instincts had gotten stronger and stronger. He would do anything for his precious little ones.

Janet and Rose sat on the couch, watching the news. Rose lay with her head in Janet's lap. "Have you heard from Ban Jr?" Rose asked. She missed her little brother.

"I heard from Grandpa," Janet said. "He's doing well. Making friends at his new school."

"I wish you didn't have to send him away."

"We can't have him, at this young age, being exposed to an mpreggo, especially one who used to be his father."

"Why can't we send Bonnie away?" Rose asked. She and Janet had begun to refer to Bannister as Bonnie.

"We've talked about this," Janet said. "We have an obligation to Bonnie's babies."

"Meanwhile, the Equality Ploughshares have continued their rampage of targeted attacks," the news anchor, Holly Jones, said. On the screen, two images appeared. The first showed a distinguished looking older man in a suit. The second showed what appeared to be a pregnant woman, trying to hide her pretty face from the camera. Beneath each picture read the words, "Former Senator Archie Newsome."

"Senator Newsome had been known as a staunch opponent of Mpreggo

rights, while also continually voting against expanded parental leave bills,” the anchor, Meredith Pine said with a smirk.

“I guess for him, this comes as a real kick in the kidneys,” her co-anchor, Kylie Clark said, also smirking. “I wonder if this will change his mind about family leave?”

“I doubt it,” Meredith said. “He’s probably too busy dealing with morning sickness.”

“And leaky breasts!”

The women laughed. “In related news,” Meredith continued, “the glass ceiling is officially broken.”

A graphic appeared showing a rise in the number of female CEOs. “With one third of all men now either in the family way, or having transitioned to full-time mothers, corporations have had no choice but to turn to the very talented women in their ranks to fill top positions.”

“Yeah, us,” Rose said.

“I’m not sure women make the best leaders,” Janet said.

“Still?” Rose answered, forever annoyed at her mother’s backward attitudes.

“What happened to Bonnie doesn’t change anything.”

“It does for *her*.”

Chapter 4

Sardines. Bannister craved them all so intensely, he could smell them, even taste the salty brine, though he’d actually never had sardines. Also, he needed marshmallows. And Olives. Green olives. Picking up the baby

monitor, which they were using like walkie talkies, he called, “Janet? Janet, you there?”

”What?” Janet said, her voice tense, irritated.

“Um, I’m kinda craving sardines?” Bannister said, wincing in anticipation of her annoyance. There was no answer at first. Just silence. He could picture Janet, clenching her jaw, trying not to scream at him.

“Sardines?” Janet said. “Really? Why don’t I bring you something we actually have in our cupboards right now? How about some peanut butter and pickles?”

Bannister bit his lip. He’d been obsessed with peanut butter and pickles, but not today. “Um, the babies,” he said, because he knew that tended to move Janet off her mark. “They really want sardines.”

Janet sighed so loud it almost shook the baby monitor. “Fine.”

“Oh,” Bannister added, “also marshmallows and green olives?”

“Fine,” Janet said. “Over and out.”

Bannister turned the baby monitor off, then once he was sure no one could hear him, he squealed. His cravings drove him insane, and he couldn’t even think until they were satisfied. Not that thinking was his strong suit these days. He had full on mommy brain and found it hard to concentrate on anything that wasn’t baby related.

He was laying out on the couch, as usual. On the TV, he had Supernatural playing with the sound off. He just liked to look at the Winchester brothers. They were both so hot, though he was most definitely on team Dean. He grabbed his smart pad and logged into mpreggproud chat room. The others were talking about Primes— trad males who had

been recruited by the Equality Ploughshares and groomed to make the perfect helpmates for mpreggos.

“The massages!” expectant232 wrote. “He knows just where and how to touch me! Bliss!”

“Ugh!” Bannister wrote. “I wish!”

“It doesn’t have to be a wish,” expectant 232 answered. “You need to get away from Cruella deThrowback!”

Bannister had opened up a few weeks back, complaining about the way Janet treated him, and the other boys had nicknamed her Cruella, kept telling him to get away from her, to find himself a man.

He couldn’t, though. It was— scary— the thought of taking on a whole new life, hooking up with a guy? Him? The fact that he wanted and needed the touch of a man made it even more terrifying for him. He was already the laughingstock of the whole Natural Man movement, and he couldn’t face the thought of what would be said about him if it came out that he’d hooked up with a guy.

He chatted away, though, envious and impressed by these other boys, the ones who’d just done it, taken the leap, somehow accepted what they’d become. They all seemed so happy.

Thunk. Thunk. He heard footsteps on the stairs and quickly turned off the TV, closed the chat and opened a book— in case Janet got a glimpse of what he was doing. The door opened and Janet walked in, looking exhausted and annoyed. She wore jeans and a flannel shirt, boots. Tossing the bag from the grocery store into the coffee table in front of the couch, she glared at Bannister, shaking her head from side to side. “And?”

“Thanks,” Bannister said in a small voice, grabbing the bag, eagerly pulling

the can of sardines out, his mouth watering at the sight of it. He felt one of his babies kick.

“My mother warned me not to marry you,” Janet said. “I wish I’d listened.”

“That’s not fair!” Bannister said.

“You know the only men who go mpreggo are the ones who wanted it,” Janet said, echoing the Natural Man doctrine.

“I never wanted this,” Bannister said, softly.

“Well, you sure are milking it for everything it’s worth,” Janet said. “I have to get back to work. You know, because someone has to pay the bills. She left, but the stinging comments lingered. Bannister hated the fact he’d failed as a man, that his wife had been forced to become the breadwinner.

He opened the sardines, lifted one of the slimy fish from the can and slurped it down. Oh, my God, he thought, tearing open the bag of marshmallows. To die for! He’d have to share his latest craving with the others. They were always joking about their cravings, morning sickness.

He felt so alone, it was good to chat with some other mpeggos, some men who knew what he was going through, even if they, like him, were really just disgusting freaks.

Right?

Janet had gone back to her office, gotten back to the bookkeeping. The Natural Men had hooked her up with a job when Bannister had fallen from grace. She was a real woman, and they felt that they owed it to her, to her kids. That had been kind, but she had come to avoid the other wives, the ones with real men for husbands. There was always a look of pity in their

eyes, and she felt deeply ashamed of Bannister. She despised the helpless, needy thing he'd become, lounging around in his things, watching TV all day, expecting to be waited on hand and foot due to his "delicate" condition.

As she got to work crunching numbers, she found herself thinking about ways she could punish him for being such a failure of a man. The numbers weren't good. The number of new recruits had slowed to a trickle, and the new leader of the NM, Frank Law, had toned down their media presence, their aggressive demonstrations. He wouldn't say it, but he didn't want to make himself a target for the EP and end up like Bannister.

Bannister, Janet thought. Bonnie. She'd ruined everything.

"Hey," Rose said as she walked into the basement carrying two large gift bags. "Happy birthday!" She had a big smile on her face, and Bannister smiled back, cringing inside because he was sure something awful was coming. Still, it touched him Rose had remembered his birthday.

Rose handed him the bags. "Open them!"

The tops of the bags had been stuffed with tissue. Bannister pulled it out, then lifted one of the gifts— a ball of yarn with knitting needles sticking out of it. "For me?" He asked, the man he'd been sick with shame.

"So you can make little hats and blankets for your babies!" Rose said, sitting on the edge of the couch, rubbing his huge, distended tummy.

The thought of making little hats for his babies filled Bannister with a surge of maternal warmth, and even though he knew Rose was sticking it

to him, he couldn't help himself, and a tear rolled down his cheek. "Thank you! This is so thoughtful!" The bags were filled with balls of yarn in pinks and powder blues, a book on knitting.

Rose smirked. "It's something fun— for mpreggos," she said, patting him on the head now. "I knew you would love it, Bonnie."

Bannister had become used to Rose's taunting. He didn't even think of her as his daughter anymore. He couldn't even pretend he was a father now. In fact, her earlier claim had seemed to come to pass. He felt like they had become something like sisters, after all.

And he, impossibly, was the little sister.

Chapter Five

The needles in Bannister's hands clicked as he worked, whispering knit one, pearl two... knit one, pearl two... He'd decided to start by making a blanket, mostly because it seemed easiest to just make a rectangle. It made him feel good to be doing something for his babies, though he realized he might have enough blankets and hats and mittens for 100 babies by the time he finally gave birth to his little bundles of joy. He figured he could always donate them to other moms or mpreggos. Not every man was lucky enough that he didn't have to work.

"Are you kidding me?" Janet said as she walked into his basement room. "Knitting? It's bad enough you're an mpreggo, do you have to start acting like a woman now?"

"What else am I supposed to do?" Bannister said, setting his knitting aside, embarrassed his wife had caught him. Janet had been changing.

She'd gotten her hair cut in an angular, masculine style— actually, it was the exact same haircut he'd had before he'd become a man. She'd been working out, too, getting lean and hard. Her arms now rippled with muscle, and her shoulders had gotten bigger, her breasts smaller. She had a body like a female MMA fighter.

“Come on,” Janet said. “You’ve been cooped up in here for days. You need some fresh air.”

“The stairs are so hard for me.”

“I’ll help you, Bonnie.” Janet took Bannister’s hands and helped him get to his feet. He put one hand on the small of his back and draped the other across his belly as his wife took his elbow and steered him toward the stairs. It still felt strange to him to walk next to his wife. She was so much taller than him now.

Bannister climbed the stairs, step by step. Thanks to his workouts, even carrying his maternal burden, he was able to make it up the stairs fairly easily, though his legs ached a little, and his heart rate had risen. He actually feared the stairs more because their house had a lot of windows, and he felt exposed up there, worried the neighbors might see him in his condition.

“Come on, come on,” Janet said, leading him toward an open window, the curtains billowing in a gentle breeze. Outside it was bright and sunny, the cloudless sky a pale blue.

“Someone might see me,” Bannister said.

“Don’t be ridiculous,” Janet said, leading him closer and closer to the window. “Besides, the sunlight and fresh air are good for your babies.” “Oh. Okay,” Bannister said. He would do anything for his babies.

Outside the window, lined up against the house, were Janet's friends, wives from around the neighborhood, wives of Natural Men. They could hear the conversation, and they glanced at each other, amused.

Janet pushed Bannister closer and closer to the window. He struggled a little— just enough— that she found herself getting turned on as she maneuvered him up to the window, then pushed him so his face was pressed against the glass and swollen belly pushed right out the window and into the sun.

“What are you doing?” Bannister squealed.

“Look!” Janet said as the first of the wives stepped into view, put her hands on his belly and rubbed. “Say hello to your daddy,” she said, laughing and stepping back as another woman and then another stepped forward, rubbed Bannister's belly and said, “Say hello to your daddy.”

At the same time Bannister felt himself growing sick with shame as the women saw him in this state, rubbed his belly, his nipples started to grow hard. Feeling his belly rubbed was such a turn on! And the babies seemed to like it, too, as he felt them kicking, turning, almost dancing in his belly. “Oh! Oh!” Bannister panted as the women kept rubbing, one after another.

“Omigod!” Bannister screamed as milk began to squirt from his rockhard nipples, splashing across the glass of the upper window, and all the mothers, who now stood in a semi-circle outside the window, began to laugh and cheer.

“Thanks, girls!” Janet yelled, and they all waved as Janet lifted Bannister and cradled him in her arms. Bannister, shocked and surprised at his wife's power, flustered, blushing, confused, threw his arms around her neck.

Janet carried Bannister to their bedroom, lay him gently on their bed, then climbed onto him, grabbing his panties and yanking them down to his knees. She attacked like a starving tiger, showering him with kisses, fondling his soft flesh, and Bannister just lay back, panting and gasping and then once more screaming, “Omigod!” as his whole body was shaken with a thunderous surge of pure pleasure.

After, they spooned. Bannister lay on his side, Janet behind him, one arm draped over his small, firm breasts. Bannister traced one finger along the length of a thick vein that rose along the length of her forearm.

“I never expected this,” Janet said. “I never thought I would enjoy having you like this. I never realized just how much I would love being the man.”

Bannister smiled. He totally understood. He’d never expected to find he loved being hers.

Chapter Six

Peeking out from one of the basement windows, standing on a step ladder, Bannister wiped his tears as the realtor fixed the word “Sold” to the sign outside their house. Being pregnant had made him totally hormonal. He cried over anything, but this was, he thought, something worth crying about. This house, the neighborhood, the Natural Men— they’d all been part of his dream for a better future for his son, for all Trads.

One of his babies kicked. “Ow.” I know. I know, he thought. Man plans and the Equality Ploughshares laugh.

Bann lowered himself onto the couch and picked up the controller, clicking on the news. “Colonel Miranda Erins, Director of Communications for the Pentagon, announced today that males would no longer be trained for or asked to serve in combat positions in any branch of the United States military. The scene cut to the Pentagon:

“With over 50% of the male population now mpreggo, males are simply too valuable to put at risk. Furthermore, with the evolution of the MPREG virus as a biological warfare agent, we can no longer rely upon the males we train remaining serviceable members of their units, able to perform their assignments. It costs a great deal of money to train a soldier, and women are simply more reliable.”

Cut back to the studio. Miranda and her co-host, Jane, smiling. “We have to protect our men,” Jane said.

“Especially the ones having babies.”

They both laughed. Miranda turned back to face the camera. “Noted Men’s Rights Congressman, Harvey Klinger, who previously threatened hearings if the Pentagon went forward with this long-rumored policy change, seemed positively docile when asked about the announcement.

Cut to Klinger on the steps outside the capitol building. “I have the utmost confidence in the leadership of the Pentagon to do what’s right for America,” he said.

“Did the Equality Ploughshares threaten you?” a reporter shouted.

“No further comment,” Klinger answered, and then rushed down the steps, where a female chauffeur opened the door to his limousine for him.

“And we get the doors for *them*,” Jane said.

They exchanged a glance and Miranda raised an eyebrow. “I think

Harvey would make a wonderful mother.”

Bannister clicked the TV off. Jane came wandering down the steps. Bannister glanced at the clock and smiled. “Time for your daily rubbing,” Jane said with a smirk. “If I have to,” Bannister said softly, toying with his long hair.

“You have to,” Jane said, grinning. “Not that I could stop you if I tried.” She knew he’d come to love it, need, rely on it, and she loved all of that. “Don’t worry,” she said as she helped Bannister up the stairs. “I’ve already talked with some of the women in our new neighborhood, and they are all so excited to start getting in on the belly rubs.”

Bannister didn’t answer, but he couldn’t hide his smile.

Bannister, struggling to lean over, picked up a small box from amongst the large stacks of their belongings. “Stop!” Rose said, her hands on her hips.

‘It’s really light,” Banister answered.

“You know mother’s rules,” Rose said. “A boy in your delicate condition should not do any lifting.”

“But—”

“Put it down,” Jane said, coming into the room. She and Rose both wore jeans, flannel shirts, and they were moving boxes along with a bunch of men from the neighborhood. Bannister, on his wife’s order, wore nothing

but a G-string, his bare little breasts jiggling with every step. It shamed him to have all the men he once led see him like this.

He remembered the argument when she'd explained her new rules to him. "I'm a grown man!" He squealed, standing there with both hands at the small of his back, his belly thrust forward.

"No, uh, hon," she'd said. "While we have this nice little honeymoon before the babies come, and with you having serious mommy brain, you're following wifey's rules."

"But I—"

"Bonnie," she'd said. "You can't think right now. I will do your thinking for you."

There had been a sense of finality to her voice, and he'd given up. There was no point arguing. Besides, he'd found himself craving ice cream and sardines again, and he needed to eat.

"Don't make either one of us ask again," Jane said, her voice taking on an icy calm that made Bannister tremble.

Bannister put the box down. "I just want to help."

"Well, you can't. In fact, to keep you out of the way, I want you to follow behind me."

'Follow behi—"

"Just do it!"

Jane picked up a box. Rose picked up a box. They headed out toward the U-Haul, and Bannister meekly followed, feeling useless and bloated and ashamed.

Once the U-Haul was loaded up, Rose helped Bannister climb into their SUV. Then, she and Jane took the front seats. Bannister stared back at the house, watching it recede into the distance, and he started sobbing.

“For the love of God,” Jane said, glancing in the rearview mirror.

“Here you go, sweetie,” Rose said, handing Bannister some tissues.

“You could have at least asked me before you sold the house,”

Bannister whined as he dabbed at his tears.

“We had no choice but to leave the neighborhood,” Jane said, “because *you* got pregnant.”

“It’s not my fault!”

“It kinda is.”

Bannister looked at the screen, where a map showing their route was glowing. Behind it, stuck to the dashboard, was a statue of the Virgin Mary. “Where are we even moving to?” Bannister asked. His wife had gone and found a new house without even so much as asking him for his thoughts about the move. He couldn’t totally blame her. He was scatter-brained these days.

“You’ll find out,” Jane said. “I want it to be a surprise.”

As they drove along, they passed a small encampment of homeless mpreggos, boys who’d been kicked out of their houses when they’d gotten in the family way. Many of them were teenagers. Bannister had seen on the news a lot of Trad Dads simply couldn’t deal with the idea that their sons

were mpreggos and kicked them out of the house, or made it so unbearable they ran away.

Poor boys, Bannister thought. He couldn't even imagine how hard it would be to have to carry his babies without anyone to support him. It made him a little more grateful to Jane. Sure, she was a royal bitch about it, but at least she was taking care of him and the babies. His own parents wouldn't even talk to him. The sad scene of the homeless mpreggos reminded him why he put up with all of Jane's rules, her attitude and condescension.

He had to do whatever it took. He had little people growing inside him that depended on him now.

As they drove along, Bannister closed his eyes and drifted off to sleep. He was always so tired these days. He dreamt of Curie Park, the day he'd busted up the mpreggo gathering, only now he was one of the proud young mothers, pushing his babies around in a baby carriage. His breasts, heavy with milk, ached, and he knew his little darlings would be wanting to feed soon. He'd found himself dreaming about breast feeding a lot these days...

"Wakey wakey," Janet called, and Bannister snapped awake. "We're here."

It was another gated community, and the front entrance actually bore a striking resemblance to their old one, only the sign read "Welcome to Maternus."

"Maternus?" Bannister said, wiping the sleep from his eyes.

"It's an mpreggo village," Rose said, looking back from the front seat. "We'll fit right in!"

They pulled up in front of the new house, a pretty, sprawling ranch. It looked sturdy and safe, as did the neighborhood. The U-Haul was already

there, the Trad men carrying boxes. Bannister followed Jane as she went to the truck, grabbed a box and headed into the house, carrying it down a hall and into a bedroom. “This will be your room,” she said, putting the box down.

Bannister started crying again. “No more stairs,” he sighed, touching Jane on the arm. “Oh, my God, I’ll never have to struggle up a flight of stairs again. It’s so hard and—” Bannister stopped himself. He hated how weak, how unmanly he sounded.

“Whatya think of the house?” Janet asked.

“It’s wonderful,” Bannister said. “You did well.”

Rose chucked him on the chin. “Didn’t I tell you? You don’t need to worry that pretty little head of yours about anything. I got this.”

Part II

Janet double-checked the numbers on her report, then triple-checked before filing the document. She’d always been meticulous but had found herself obsessing more and more about getting all the details in her life right ever since she’d lost her husband. She truly felt like Bannister, the man she’d married was gone just as assuredly as if he’d had a heart attack. That weak, needy mpreggo was not the man she’d married.

Pulling out her phone, she checked her lists— on her way home she needed to pick up the dry cleaning, grab a few things from the grocery store so she could cook dinner. Tired from her long day at work, she didn’t know where she would find the energy to cook, but she had no choice. The family

wouldn't feed itself, and there was no way she'd pollute their bodies with fast food. Ever since she'd gone back to work, she felt like she needed a wife.

It was while Janet pushed her shopping cart along the produce aisle that Florence made her approach. She sidled up to Janet, who'd been squeezing grapefruit, trying to find the perfect one, and idly mentioned, "Cherries are in season."

"What?"

"Cherries," Florence said, pointing toward the bags of plump red cherries stacked up next to the grapefruit. "I love it when cherries are in season. I love baking cherry pie for my family."

Janet glanced at the woman. A line dress. Pearl necklace. Heels. She looked okay, and she baked. Janet smiled. "Maybe I'll pick some up," she said. "I have the best recipe— it was my grandmother's."

"That's wonderful," Florence said. "It's so important we honor tradition."

Janet nodded.

"And yet..."

Uh oh. Janet started to step away, but Florence caught her wrist.

"Ever since my husband went mpreggo, I don't have a big strong man around the house anymore. Sometimes, I wish I could do what he used to do."

Though she was nervous, Janet found herself nodding in empathy. "I understand. My husband— he's expecting as well."

Florence took both of Janet's hands in her own and squeezed before turning and walking away. Janet looked down to see a pill bottle in her own

hands labeled Nano 2.0. “Do your research,” Florence whispered over her shoulder before turning the corner with her own cart.

Nano 2.0? Janet stared for a moment, then it hit her. That woman was one of them: an Equality Ploughshare. Wondering if she should report her to the authorities, Janet hurried after her, heels clicking furiously, but when she turned the corner, she found only the abandoned cart. Florence was gone. She thought about throwing the pill bottle away, but instead, glancing around to be sure no one had noticed the exchange, she slipped it into her purse.

Later that night, after dinner and the usual battle with Rose to get the petulant teenager to help with the dishes, she went to her office and going into full, secure privacy mode, she searched for Nano 2.0.

The first hit was a video from the dark web that claimed to be directly from the EP. Janet clicked, and the familiar shadowy figure appeared.

“Nano virus 1.0 has been a huge success,” the woman said, “and has brought about many positive changes to societies around the world, with women stepping into roles as leaders and decision makers. It has now come for the next stage of human evolution: Nano 2.0. As Nano 1.0 changed the bodies and lives of so many men, Nano 2.0 will change the bodies of women.”

The video showed how Nano 2.0 would make Janet taller, stronger. “You will be better equipped than ever to care for your little mpreggo, your family and, of course, his babies.”

Janet closed the video and sat back. The pill bottle sat there on her desk in a halo of light from her desk lamp. *I should probably talk to Ban about this*, she thought. *It's a big change.*

“It’s unnatural,” Ban said, sitting on the edge of his bed in his usual thong, his hands resting on top of his belly.

Janet glanced at his belly. “It’s just a natural next stage in evolution,” Janet said. “Men evolved to be bigger and stronger so they could protect women, especially pregnant women.”

“I’m NOT a woman!”

“No, but you are pregnant and—” she started to say ‘useless’ but corrected herself, “helpless. I need to be able to protect you and Rose if someone breaks into the house.”

“Protect me?” Ban’s eyes actually softened, and without realizing it he started to curl a lock of his hair around his little finger.

“I’ll be over 6 feet tall, stronger than ever. If some creep were to break in here, I could kick his ass.”

“That, um, is important,” Ban said, his voice growing hoarse.

“And what if there were a fire? I could pick you right up and carry you to safety.”

Ban imagined himself cradled in Janet’s arms, being swept to safety while smoke and flames leapt around them. He lay one arm across his breasts, to hide his hardening nipples. “It just seems wrong,” he whispered, even as he began to imagine what sex would be like with Janet if she were so big, strong, while he was so small and soft. He knew he shouldn’t want any of this, and yet he ached for it on a primal level. “You’ll be a freak,” he whispered.

Janet cupped his soft cheek. She could see the look in his eyes, knew what was going on in that pretty little head of his. "I won't do it if you don't want me to," she lied.

Bannister shrugged, lying right back at her. "I'm so scatter-brained," he said. "I just think it's best if you make the decisions."

"I don't want this for me," Janet said, lying once more. "I have to do it for the family."

Bannister's face flushed, his cheeks, the tip of his nose turning pink. "Whatever you decide, you know I support you."

Janet got the Nano 2.0 from her desk, popped open the lid and plopped the big, blue capsule into her hand. She went to the bathroom and poured a glass of water. Janet looked at herself in the mirror. Her head came only to the lower third of the mirror. She was an attractive woman, even at her age, with a pretty face. She raised one of her slender arms, flexed her tiny bicep. She thought about how easily men did things, physical things, how they could reach things from the top shelf she needed a step ladder to reach, even though you would think a kitchen would be designed for a woman's size. All that could change with just one little pill.

She'd mentioned it to Rose. She thought she should. Rose had glanced up from her phone and said, "Cool."

Once she took the pill, there would be no going back. She thought about what Ban had said about her being a freak. She didn't think so. Just as the mpreggo had spread, so, too, would the Nano, and soon she would be just one of a new generation of women, who the Equality Ploughshares had already labeled Amazons.

She would be a superior woman. A wonder woman.

She popped the pill in her mouth, drank the water, and swallowed.

Janet started growing right away, sprouting from 5'6, to 5'8 and then 5'10 in only one month. She and Rose had taken to measuring her next to the kitchen door frame like she was a kid, marking each new gain in height.

She ate voraciously and constantly in order to feed the needs of her growing body. Rose and Ban marveled at the dinner table as she went back for three or four helpings while they daintily picked at their plates. Even Ban, eating for three, couldn't keep up with her.

One night, as she sliced into her third porterhouse, the bloody juices spreading across her plate as she slipped a red, steaming hunk of meat into her mouth and began chewing, Rose said, "Omigod! You eat like a boy!"

Janet wiped some of the juices from her chin with her forearm and said, "Thanks."

Ban stared in wonder at his changing wife, thinking, what a badass!"

Janet found her body changing in other ways. She didn't bulk up like a man, but grew more tone and willowy, with the body of a professional volleyball player, and she started hanging out at the gym, lifting weights, reveling in her newfound power

Ban had to crane his head back more and more and more in order to meet his wife's eyes, and he found himself growing more and more excited as she grew taller. Meanwhile, he was changing as well. He stood in front

of the mirror one night, frowning as he looked at his hips and ass. They'd started getting nigger, fatter.

"What's wrong?" Janet had asked. She was laying on the bed, her glasses perched on the tip of her nose, as she looked at some porn, getting herself extra excited for a night with Ban.

"Everything I eat just goes right to my hips!" Ban complained.

Janet smiled. She'd been pushing extra sugary, fatty foods on Ban as well as lacing his dinner with a special new supplement called "Hips of the Goddess." It seemed a lot of men— and women— were turned on by mpreggos with abundant hips.

There was another change, and it was one neither Janet nor Ban had expected. It had started as a small, sensitive nub that seemed to form above Janet's vagina. Ban had instantly found himself fascinated with it, licking and sucking on it while Janet groaned with pleasure. It kept growing bigger, thicker.

One Year Later

Ban, leg's straight, arms above his head, bent forward, feeling his hamstrings stretch even as his belly came to rest against his thighs. Mommy Yoga. He found it not only calmed him down when he was feeling anxious, but it seemed to calm down his babies, and they had been kicking like crazy. He had Thugzz playing on his phone, and candles flickered around his room— sage. He needed his aromatherapy.

He squealed as he felt a pair of strong hands dig into his soft hips, felt his wife's junk press into his plump rear. "I love your big, bouncy ass," she said, then started grinding into him even as her dick got hard.

Ban moaned softly, pushing his butt back, wanting her, needing her. Janet effortlessly spun Ban around, pulled him close, their bodies fitting together. Ban loved the feeling of his soft breasts pressed against his wife's firm abs. He started up at her: she was now 6' 4" tall, lean and strong. "Hey, handsome," Ban said.

"Beautiful," Janet said, brushing her knuckles against her husband's smooth, soft cheek.

Ban could feel her member, hard as a rock, pressing into his thigh. It was— delicious. He never could have imagined he would come to love this, to love being so small and weak, to wanting and needing his wife inside him, but he'd long ago stopped fighting it.

Janet, too, could never have guessed she would find such happiness, that she would love seeing the alpha she'd married reduced to this helpless little mpreggo, but she did.

"This music sucks," she said as she led Ban toward the bed. "Sari, play Enter Sandman." The deep, dark aggressive music began to play. Ban got on his hands and knees. Janet yanked his panties down and he arched his back and sighed, "Enter me, Sandman!" And then, she did.