

CHAPTER ONE

NIN DIDN'T KNOW what to expect when they crash-landed in the patch of green behind the dwelling. A wave of heat blasted him when he opened the cockpit door. The second thing Nin noticed was the odd smell of chlorine coming from an unusually small pond—they'd landed next to an odd-looking body of water. As far as he could tell from the star map, they arrived at a planet called Earth. Nin walked through the ship with everything strewn about to the shuttle bay.

"Is everyone okay? Any injuries?" Nin yelled over his shoulder to Ferrix and Xavi.

"Yeah." Ferrix rubbed his temples and followed Nin to the shuttle bay. "Where are we?"

"I am confirming we are on Earth." Nin lacked his usual enthusiasm, even though he tried his hardest to mask it. He pressed a re-

lease, and stairs extended from the ship's side to the grass below the shuttle bay.

"Where are we on Earth?" Xavi, the loudest of them, followed Nin and Ferrix, who descended the stairs to disembark the ship.

Nin touched the digital screen on his wristband. The ship's AI-powered computer, F.U.C.K.D.E.E.P, which stood for First Universal Conscious Knowledge Desk Early Edition Program, whirled to action. "You're in a town called Media, which is 21.9 miles from a large city called Philadelphia," the ship's computer responded briskly.

"I'm starving!" Xavi stepped onto the patch of green. "F.U.C.K.D.E.E.P, what is there to eat?"

The computer returned with results that usually varied from somewhat helpful to downright sassy: "If you are ever in Philadelphia, the Philly Taco is a delicacy you should try. You can find it in the city I mentioned, but I wouldn't recommend it. As they say on Earth, its reviews are a mixed bag."

"I love tacos!" Xavi punched Ferrix in the arm, gaining his attention and a scowl. "Remember when we got stuck on that planet in the Epsilon Eridani system. They had the most radical tacos!"

"The Philly Taco is a cheesesteak wrapped in a slice of pizza," F.U.C.K.D.E.E.P clarified. "It sounds horrifying."

Ferrix wrinkled his nose. "Man, that's gross! Do the people of this planet willingly eat that?"

"I don't care. I'm going to fall over if I don't eat something soon," Xavi whined.

Nin frowned. "It sounds oddly intriguing and equally disgusting."

It didn't take long for the shock of their situation to settle in. Until Ferrix repaired the ship, they would be stuck on Earth. Nin considered the mission--they needed to find suitable mates to take back to Erion, or their species wouldn't survive. Nin didn't anticipate the power of Earth's gravitational pull, and he'd crash-landed in a town far too populated.

A woman in a sleek business suit walked out of the dwelling and stared at them with a perplexed look.

Nin sensed Ferrix tense beside him. Ferrix always clenched his fists before releasing the blue energy blades that could easily claw an enemy to death, but this female with the strange leg coverings didn't appear threatening. Nin shot him a look to stand down so they wouldn't scare her.

Ferrix nodded, unflexing his fists to keep himself in check.

Nin cleared his throat. "Sorry to barge in like this, but we could use some help. I'm Nin, and this is Ferrix and Xavi." Nin gestured toward his brother, Ferrix, and Xavi. "I hate to say it, but we've been marooned."

Rae kept her expression neutral. Why on Earth would three gorgeous men be standing in her backyard? Were they men? And what about that *thing* next to the pool? It appeared to be a flying vehicle, but nothing Rae had ever seen. *Breathe. They aren't aliens.* There must be a rational explanation, but either way, she would be late for work, and her nightmare boss didn't need an excuse to shitcan her. Rae eyed the flying vehicle again. Maybe she should test her theory that perhaps they weren't from this planet.

Rae folded her arms over her chest. "So, you're stranded on Earth."

Nin nodded slowly. "Yes, we need some help until we can repair our ship."

Rae rolled her eyes. "Let me call someone. I've got a great mechanic!"

"Good luck with that. It'll take me a few

days before I can get us back online.” Sarcasm dripped from Ferrix’s voice.

Rae needed to make an appointment with her therapist because her anxiety had turned into a full-blown delusion, complete with hot alpha-male alien hallucinations. Three gorgeous men landed in her backyard, and part of her wanted to be whisked away from her terrible marketing job and boring life. Wait. Rae pinched her arm. No dice. They still stood there staring at her with those reflective eyes that made her stomach flip with ridiculous high school giddiness.

“I’m sorry. I don’t mean to be rude, but I need to get to work or wake up. Nice meeting you, but I’ve gotta run.” Rae turned around, whirling toward her kitchen door.

“Wait!” Nin exclaimed. “We’re stranded. We need your help!”

Hearing that, she stopped in her tracks and turned back around. Her heart was beating rapidly. Rae squeezed her eyes shut and opened them again. Her eyes started to water.

Nin’s eyebrows rose. “Are you okay?”

Nin was delicious-looking, tall, tanned, and muscular. Undoubtedly, he had a fantastic body under his clothes, which resembled military fatigues. His eyes drew her in. She

couldn't tell the color, but they reminded her of moonlight. Rae found herself inexplicably wanting to brush her fingers against his cheek. Just stop it, she commanded her hormones to chill. It had been a while since she'd had sex with anyone. Not since her divorce, but this was ridiculous. Rae started laughing. They stared at her, their foreheads furrowed and their eyebrows raised.

Rae swallowed and took a step backward. "I'm sorry. I think I might be losing my mind."

Xavi tilted his head. "Losing your mind? Where has it gon—"

"I'm sure this is a shock to you," Ferrix interrupted, shooting Xavi a death glare. "We mean you no harm."

Xavi nodded. "We didn't mean to disturb you."

"I am Nin. This is Xavi and Ferrix." Nin said again, gesturing toward the other two men.

"My name is Rae," she responded. "I apologize for not welcoming you, but you're our first aliens in Media." Rae couldn't help but laugh again. It had to be the wildest morning of her life!

Nin's face scrunched up. "We're from a

planet called Erion, and we were on a mission to help our planet, but we crashed.”

“Oh? What’s your mission?”

“We’re seeking suitable partners for mating. Could you tell me about your courtship rituals?” Ferrix asked.

Rae’s mouth dropped open. Her heart pounded in her chest. She felt like she would pass out from the stress of it all. She was so nervous she couldn’t even put a sentence together. She started laughing again and found it impossible to stop. Her belly jiggled; her cheeks hurt from the strain of laughing. There had to be something wrong with her. Either a nervous breakdown, a psychotic episode, or Earth was under an alien invasion. Either way, she would enjoy this moment because she would need to deal with the harsh reality that this was a dream or an unfortunate side effect of her anxiety when she woke up.

Worry etched Nin’s face into hard angles and lines. “Are you quite alright?”

“Yes, I’m fine. You asked me about my courtship rituals.” Rae still laughed and shook her head.

“Yes, of course. I’m sorry, it’s a long story, but we won’t survive unless we find mates who can bear our offspring.” Ferrix’s voice was solemn.

His explanation only made it worse, and she laughed harder. Ferrix frowned.

"I'd love to hear about your courtship rituals. It fascinates me." Nin's eyes gleamed as his gaze dropped to the neckline of her blouse. "When is your mating season?"

She was in the middle of a nervous breakdown, and these men had asked her about dating. It was all too much for her. She thought about her ex-husband. Entertaining the idea of dating after their relationship ended made her eyes water again. Kat had tried to convince her the best way to get over someone is to hop on top of someone else, but Rae wasn't down with that suggestion.

She swallowed the lump in her throat. "Earth doesn't have a mating season."

"But you must have rituals for pair bonding," Ferrix insisted. "Tell me about them. I must understand your mating rituals."

Rae shrugged. "We've never had a problem with a shortage of men. We don't have a mating season, and we don't have any mating rituals."

Nin and Ferrix exchanged glances, some unspoken communication passing between them. Then Nin inhaled deeply, his gaze settling on Rae. A glow emanated beneath his shirt, and his cheeks glowed blue for a sec-

ond. Nin wouldn't stop staring at her as if he would devour her, and Rae swore he sniffed the air again.

Nin sighed. "That is... unfortunate. Perhaps you could tell us more about your customs so we can plan accordingly."

Her horrible job working for Basil flashed through her mind. Rae had a decent home but a hefty mortgage she couldn't afford on her own, not after the divorce wiped her out. Every day was the same excruciating grind, like Ground Hog's Day. Granted, she knew nothing about the three sexy aliens who'd landed in her yard, but their appearance forcibly lifted her from her uninspired life.

Rae stared at the three of them for a few moments until she was sure none would try to kill her or probe her or whatever it was aliens did to humans when they encountered them. She didn't believe in aliens. They didn't exist. Or did they? And they'd asked her to explain the courtship rituals of Earth women.

"Sure, come with me." Rae turned back to the house and gestured for them to follow her. Getting them inside was a good idea considering the neighborhood busybodies in Media, especially Ruth from the homeowner's association.