

Intermission Four – Milagros / Jake

Operation: Funnel Cake – Case Files IB2323 & OB646

IB2323 – Feb. 1st, 2021 – 1st Contact – San Carlos de Bariloche, Argentina

Milagros Herrera arrived at the tented outdoor temporary building with a certain level of trepidation, but there had been enough talk about how people were being offered a new life and being guaranteed safety from the virus that had been ravaging the country, leaving them almost entirely without men.

The sign on the side had both an Argentinian flag and a United States flag on it, and she had gotten a notice at work that she needed to report to this tent today, so here she was. Milagros was in her early 30s and had mostly been highly focused on her career at INVAP as an electrical engineer specializing in large scale mechanics and robotics, but the fact that she was a woman had been holding her back, and she had grown sick and tired of being passed over because she was good looking and single. She wasn't model beautiful, but she was prettier than she felt was good for her career. Long black hair that she usually kept up in a bun, a decent figure, a good bust and excellent cheek bones had meant that people were constantly talking about how she should get married and leave the heavy work to the men.

All of them could jump into the ocean for all she cared.

Milagros wandered into the tent and found there was a line of women there all of whom were being talked to one at a time by two people at the end of the line. The two people at the end were both military women, one from the Argentinian army and one from a United States military group called the Air Force, and both women had a laptop in front of them.

When she stepped into line, she was handed a pamphlet that seemed almost like science fiction, detailing how a vaccine had been discovered for this dreaded DuoHalo virus, but that it could only be given to women, and that women could pass on that resistance to their sexual partners. She'd seen clips from the *60 Minutes* story on YouTube, but she'd thought it sounded so silly that it had to be a prank. Now, looking at the pamphlet, she had to wonder what else she might have been wrong about.

"Name?" the Air Force woman, who had a nametag on that said 'Collins' said to her when she reached the front of the line.

"Herrera. Milagros Herrera," she said proudly. "What's this all about?"

"Survival of the country," the Argentinian, whose nametag read Gomez, said to her. She clicks a few things on her laptop and then uses her mouse to flick a file from one laptop to the other. "Here's her file."

Collins looks at the file and nods. "Potential candidate."

Gomez sighed. "Of course she is. Fine, make your case."

Collins looked up at Milagros and offered her a smile. The American woman was a small blonde with her hair cut short, but there was something warm and friendly about her. "Miss Herrera, I'm with the United States of America, and we're here to offer you an opportunity, if you're interested."

"What kind of opportunity?"

"You're smart, you're well-educated, you're attractive and I think you'd make a fine US citizen. We're offering you a chance to be a part of a program called Operation: Funnel Cake, where we are trading some of our male citizens to other countries, in exchange for some of their under-utilized female citizens," Collins said casually. "Let me guess – you've been passed over for promotion several times here at work because you're a woman and you don't have a

husband.”

“I mean, yes, a little,” Milagros said.

“So, your choice, Miss Herrera, is this – you can stay here and be partnered up with someone here at INVAP, or you can immigrate to the United States immediately and partner up with someone in my country. Now, keep in mind, in the United States, you’ll still be expected to work, but it will be in the field which you’ve already proven quite resourceful in, and I imagine you’ll find the climb up the ladder to be significantly less fraught with problems. There’s also significantly less people here for you to choose from, so I imagine that if you consider moving to the United States, you’ll be much happier. As part of the Operation, we’re offering free relocation and a significantly wider selection of partners to choose from.”

“How does it work?” Milagros asked Collins.

“Well ma’am, we give you what we call the Oracle questionnaire, and then we run it against the database back in the States,” Collins said. “It’s going to be targeting a specific area of the country where we’re focusing people with your particular skillset. If you agree, we’ll begin relocating you to that area, and once you’re there, you’ll be presented with a list of men who are of high compatibility with you for you to choose from.”

“Why not present that list to me here?” she asked.

Collins frowned. “Because we don’t know who’ll still be alive and who’ll be dead by the time we finish relocating you. This virus is serious fucking business, ma’am.”

Milagros had to spend a long moment considering things before she asked her next question. “Don’t you expect those of us who move to get lonely in your country without friends or family?”

Collins smiled now, and Milagros wondered if she’d tipped her interest away too much. “Not at all, ma’am! See, that’s the beauty about how Funnel Cake works. If you decide you want to be traded to my country, you can bring a number of your friends and family with you. Now, we don’t recommend you have family members as a part of your Team, but we keep everyone in a Cake cluster within sixty miles of each other, at a bare minimum. You can even request they be part of your new Team. They’ll relocate with you, sharing your cabin and transportation so you’ll be with them the whole time from the moment you leave here to the moment you depart to meet your new partner.”

“They’re…” Milagros started and then stopped, sighing. She needed to be honest, she decided. “They aren’t as educated as me. My best friend, she’s a chef in a local restaurant. My sister, she is a stock clerk at the local grocery store.”

Collins nodded, waving her hand. “That’s absolutely okay, Miss Herrera. You see, you’re what we would call ‘the get’ in this case, and whatever it would take to ensure you’d be happy in your new home, we’re going to do. Your best friend and your sister would get jobs where they’d be happy, and they’d be close by, so you could see them all the time. They don’t have boyfriends or husbands?”

Milagros sniffed a little bit. “My best friend, Sofia, she had a boyfriend but he died of the disease in the summer.”

“That’s okay, that’s totally fine. A lot of people have very similar stories,” Collins said. “And I don’t want to put any pressure on you, but we’re only going to be here until tomorrow afternoon, so if you want to go, you’ll need to show up before then, because I need to be moving on with the rest of my team, as we continue to look for candidates.”

“This Oracle questionnaire,” Milagros asked. “Have you used it?”

Collins grinned and nodded. “I have indeed, ma’am.”

“And are you happy?”

Collins giggled a little bit and then nodded slowly. “Honestly, I met the love of my life through it, and the sex, well, they told me the sex was going to be mind blowingly good, but I thought they were full of shit until I met up with George. Fuck, just thinking about him is giving me the chills. So yes, ma’am, I can enthusiastically recommend the program without any form of reservation or hesitation, and assure you, you will not two weeks without being sexually satisfied for the rest of your life if you decide to take part.”

Milagros considered herself an excellent judge of character, and the woman, Collins, didn’t show any of the telltale signs of being a liar. In fact, the sort of distant, glassy-eyed look the Air Force woman had gotten for a second when thinking about her man had only sort of reaffirmed everything she’d been reading about this Quaranteam serum in the pamphlet while she’d been waiting, and all of that lined up with what she’d see in the *60 Minutes* story last month. While it all seemed a bit too good to be true, Milagros found herself hoping that maybe, just maybe, it would turn out to be a good thing.

“If I change my mind when you’re transporting me to the United States?” she asked them.

“You have right up until the moment of imprinting to change your mind, Miss Herrera,” Collins said. “Now, keep in mind, if you’re injected and change your mind then, you may be somewhat pressed for time in deciding on a new partner, but that’ll be explained to you before you’re injected with anything, and you have the right to change your mind anywhere along the way between here and there. Does that mean you’re considering—”

“I’ll be back here tomorrow morning with my sister, my best friend and our bags,” Milagros said as she turned around. “Be ready to send us on our way to your country.”

OB646 – Feb. 1st, 2021 – 1st Contact – Hattiesburg, Mississippi

Jake McCready absolutely hated his fucking life. When the pandemic had hit, he’d done his best to keep from getting sick, but he couldn’t afford not to work, so he’d just done the best he could with masks and avoiding people, and so far, it had left him alive, although he almost wished he’d just fucking died instead.

During the evening, Jake was a pizza delivery driver for Dominoes, dropping pizzas off on people’s doorsteps before backing away. People were a lot stingier with fucking tips when they didn’t have to take the pizza directly from you, but at least some people were pre-tipping before the pizza even arrived, so the money wasn’t awful. It wasn’t *good* by any stretch of the imagination, but it wasn’t awful either.

That wasn’t Jake’s only gig, either. He also worked the midnight shift at the local 7-11, starting at 11 at night and working until 9 in the morning, although people very rarely came into the place. He almost thought his boss was just going to call one day to tell him not to bother coming in, but that call never seemed to come.

What pissed Jake off the most, however, was that his dealer had died early on in the pandemic, and now Jake didn’t know who to score weed or meth from anymore. He didn’t need the stuff to function day-to-day, but the weed certainly made the dull times easier to take and the meth made the long hours fly by faster. He’d resorted to buying skunk weed from Little Nikki Grover, the town’s only hooker who had decided to start a second business selling pot when she couldn’t give handies out to drunks behind the Denny’s.

He wasn’t a good-looking guy; he was used to that. He’d been described as slimy, skeezy,

slippery, weasel-looking, rat-faced, snide, and thuggish. He kept his hair in a mullet, so it didn't get in his eyes, but didn't let anyone think he was a fucking pushover. He had a short black pencil mustache because he thought it made him look tough. He had a tattoo running down the length of his left arm from shoulder to wrist that said in stacked single letters: W-I-N-E-R. Occasionally people would laugh when they saw it, but nobody ever told him why.

Jake had been busted for minor possession charges a couple of times, but the first time had just been a fine and the second time had been community service that Jake had begrudgingly put up with just to fucking get through it.

At least Jake knew there was a light at the end of the tunnel.

Yesterday, a guy from the Air Force had come into the 7-11 and given Jake his personalized link to take the Oracle test. Like everyone else in the country, Jake had seen the news stories, and heard all the talk about it, and knew that once he took it, they were going to be delivering women for him to fuck not long after. He just hoped they didn't send him anyone too mouthy or bitchy, because Jake already had an ass full trying to deal with customers, so he didn't need to take that shit when he got home.

Most of the test Jake had just checked no because he wasn't interested in most of that freaky shit, although he did mark that he liked telling people what to do, and he liked being taken care of. If he was lucky, he thought maybe one of his partners might be one of the girls from one of the strip clubs up in Jackson, but knowing the sort of shit luck he usually had, he felt like he'd probably be given a bunch of women who he would have trouble even looking at.

He was torn between being optimistic and daydreaming about beautiful women being sent his way and being realistic and thinking that his two counts of drug possession and his lack of a high school diploma were going to be what kept him from getting any of the good pussy, but fuck it, he thought to himself, I'm alive and I've got a dick that works, and that's more than most of the men in this fucking country.

Jake was putting new steak and cheese rolls on the griller when he saw the Air Force HumVee pull up in front of the 7-11, his excitement completely quashed when he saw only one woman get out of the vehicle, and she was in uniform, as she walked into the store. "Mr. McCready?" she asked. "Are you in here?"

"Yeah yeah," Jake said, sliding another pizza into the oven, so there would be hot and ready slices waiting in the glass case if anyone came in and wanted them. "Something wrong with my application? I notice you don't have any trim for me with you."

"Yes, Mr. McCready, that's why I'm here," the woman whose nameplate said "Gabriel" read. "Your government has a proposition for you, one which we think is in both your interest and ours."

"Dunno if I believe some assholes in Washington give a shit about me, lady, but go ahead. Tell me what the scam is."

"No scam, Mr. McCready. Just a choice. You've got two options in front of you. Your first is that you decline what I'm offering, and I go back to the base and bring three women to be paired with you for as soon as you're off shift."

"That doesn't sound too bad."

"That's the thing, Mr. McCready – your profile has proven significantly difficult to match people up with, and so we're resorting to extremely long reaches in terms of compatibility scores with the Oracle system to even get vaguely sustainable matches."

"What the fuck's that supposed to mean?"

"Most good Teams have 80-90% compatibility scores, Mr. McCready. Those higher than

that are exceptionally lucky, and when that score gets below, say, 60%, we begin to grow very concerned.”

“So what’s the highest match score I got?”

“34.6%.”

“That sounds pretty fucking dire, lady,” Jake sighed.

“That’s the thing, Mr. McCready,” Gabriel told him. “We have another option, one which we think will be much more to your liking. It’s part of a program we’re calling Operation: Funnel Cake. You see, there are a number of other countries around the world that, quite frankly, just need men for breeding stock. We are giving you the chance to volunteer to enroll in the program to become one of those. You would move to a foreign country, and you would no longer be expected, or in fact even *allowed*, to have a job.”

“You’re fucking kidding, right?” Jake asked, restocking the cigarette stand.

“No, Mr. McCready, I am not,” Gabriel said. “You would be taken care of for life. You’re likely to get much more attractive partners over there, and we expect the compatibility would be significantly higher, simply because the countries you might be sent to have experienced serious losses of their male population. Your entire role in life would be to breed with your partners, impregnating them in order to help raise a new generation.”

“I don’t speak no foreign languages,” Jake said. “Shit, I ain’t even speak English so good.”

“No worries, Mr. McCready, at least one member of your Team overseas will speak English and will serve as your interpreter for the rest of your Teammates,” Gabriel said. “And it’s a chance for you to be regularly hooking up with the sort of women who wouldn’t normally even give you the time of day, Mr. McCready.”

“And they gotta fuck me, if I do this?”

“They do, Mr. McCready, and you’ll have to fuck them as well,” Gabriel said. “The world needs children, and you would be helping to father a new generation.”

“What sorts of places y’all sending folks like me to?”

“Europe, South America, Africa, southeast Asia... lots of people are looking to get their hands on American studs.”

“And I can come back here any time I want?” Jake asked.

“No, Mr. McCready, I’m afraid that if you join the program, you will become a citizen of whatever country you move to, and in doing so, will renounce your American citizenship.”

“Fuck that,” Jake said. “Can’t be worth that.”

“Well, Mr. McCready, that is your decision to make, and if you don’t want to relocate, I can go back to base and get the first of your partners, who I imagine will be indicative of who you’ll be paired with. Her name’s Virginia Rhodes.”

At the very name, Jake’s dick tried to crawl up inside of his gut and take refuge. Virginia ‘Ginny The Virgin’ Rhodes was certainly the least attractive woman Jake had ever laid eyes on, and she was certainly even more of a mess than he was. Blane, Jake’s old drug dealer, had stopped selling Ginny meth when all of her teeth had fallen out and she couldn’t give even halfway decent head no more. She was ugly, she was foul-tempered and worst of all, she was strong like a fucking ox. Jake immediately wanted to lock himself in the 7-11’s freezer and never come out.

“Wait, wait, wait,” Jake said. “Do I get any say in where I’m going?”

“I’m afraid not, Mr. McCready, but I can tell you that the last five men I’ve sent overseas as part of this program have thanked me once they were settled in their new homes.”

Jake knew that he was probably being sold a load of horseshit, but if it was that versus the rest of his life being stuck with Ginny Rhodes, he would take dumpsters of manure all day long. “Fine, what do I need to do?”

“Pack a suitcase and stand outside your apartment tomorrow morning, when someone’ll come pick you up and take you to the relocation center. Remember, you aren’t coming back, so take anything with you that you want.”

“Great. Swell. See you tomorrow morning.”

IB2323 – Feb. 2nd, 2021 – Departure – San Carlos de Bariloche, Argentina

At six in the morning, Milagros, her sister Martina and her best friend Sofia arrived at the relocation center, each with a single suitcase in tow, as per instructions. Martina had been a harder sell than Sofia had, as her sister spoke poor English and had never even considered moving away from where they’d grown up, but with Milagros being completely convinced she was leaving, her sister had come around eventually, and the three had spent the night packing all their things. Milagros had told her sister they were going to have new lives, better lives, free from worrying about drug lords threatening to rape them or sell them into slavery.

There were about a dozen other women beyond them, and in each cluster of them, Milagros recognized many of her most talented and brightest coworkers from INVAP, giving them smiles and polite waves. She only knew them in passing, not well enough to consider them friends, but still, it was a welcome sight. Seeing people that she knew and respected making the same decision only helped reinforce that she was doing the right thing.

The long lines of yesterday were gone, and it seemed like the tent was packing up, but just past eight, the woman from the Air Force, Collins, came to bring everyone into the tent and into a small briefing area, with a large screen projector.

“Hello and welcome!” she said, as her words were being translated live into Spanish on the screen behind her. “My name is Major Collins, and I am the Unit Commander for this division of the Operation: Funnel Cake Discovery and Relocation Force. You are here because you have been invited, directly or through one of your friends or family, to join the United States as citizens and to be paired up with men there. Let me give you a brief rundown of what we’re doing here today.”

Major Collins gestured to a table on her right which had a dozen or so silver laptops on it, each with a Post-It Note on top of them. “Each person who received a *direct* invitation from *me* to join us will be handed one of these laptops. On top of them is a note with what it called a bundling number. Each member of your party, starting with you, will take the Oracle test, but at the beginning, you will be asked for your bundle number. This is where you type in the number on that note. You will have to enter it twice, to ensure there’s no mistake, because that number is vital. It guarantees that you and the rest of the people you personally brought with you will be relocated to a place no further than 120 miles from each other, at the maximum. There are currently three major locations being considered for your relocation, but by using the bundling system provided, we ensure that you will stay accessible to your friends and family that you have brought with you here today. Moving you as a network isn’t just in your best interests, it’s also in ours, because studies have shown that having local connections will help stabilize you, and allow you to integrate better into your new home.

“Also on that Post-It Note are your user ID numbers, four per note, as per my discussion with each of you yesterday. You should take note of your ID number, because you can also use it to enter into the ‘shared’ options, which the test will ask of you. If you put another user’s ID

down in your ‘possible shared options,’ this means you are telling our system that you would not mind sharing a male partner with that other person. We typically do not recommend doing this for family members, but sometimes you have a girl friend who you wouldn’t mind also being a girlfriend, if you know what I’m saying,” she laughed, and a few seconds later after the translation popped up, much of the room laughed with her. “Keep in mind, this is entirely optional, even the bundling number. If you’re simply bringing along a friend or family member, and she finds the idea of having a better match more important than being close to the rest of you, she doesn’t have to enter the bundling number – she can simply choose to leave it blank. It isn’t recommended, but we aren’t deciding anything for you.”

Collins began to pick up the laptops and hand them out one at a time. “The Oracle test is full of a lot of terms you may not know, so you will find opened in a second browsing tab a detailed explanation of each of the terms, allowing you to decide whether those things are turn ons, turn offs or have absolutely no impact on you. Remember, this test is confidential, and no one is judging you for your kinks, ladies, so I cannot stress to you enough that it is in your best interests for you to be as honest as you can about what you do and do not like, emotionally, mentally and sexually. Whether you want a soft-spoken man who isn’t afraid to spank you in the bedroom or a loud boisterous man who’s going to follow you every instruction when the bedroom doors are closed, there’s somebody out there who will be a good match for you. As long as you are honest. We aren’t mind readers here, so if you lie to the questionnaire, that lie just became your reality for the rest of your life. Don’t lie. You are only hurting yourself and your partners.”

The women had been looking on as Collins talked, but when the Air Force officer stopped, they would gossip among themselves a bit. “Now the test usually takes between 30-45 minutes per person but with the language barrier, we’ll call it an even four hours to get all of you through the tests. During that time, I’ll be wandering around, answering any questions you might have, about the program, about the Serum, about what the process is like... anything you want to know, I am here to answer. But all of that can be done while you’re taking the tests. So, let’s begin!”

Milagros found that the opening portion of the test was about what she’d expected it to be – a basic quiz regarding her age, height, weight, physical statistics before getting to the bundle question, where she entered the large number on the scrap of paper twice. They had decided Sofia would take the test second and Martina would take the test last, and the idea of having Sofia around all the time brightened Milagros’ outlook on life, so she put Sofia’s ID number down under possible shared partners before moving on to the meat and potatoes of the questionnaire.

As expected, the test drilled down into subsections of human sexuality she’d never even *heard about* much less considered, and despite the fact that she considered herself a very well-educated woman, she found herself having to resort to looking at the detailed explanations more often than she’d expected to, usually to just say ‘turned off by’ on the slider. It also opened her eyes to understanding why the instructor had been so adamant in drilling home the point that this was only of concern between them and their future partner, because she felt like this was an intense amount of information to have about any one person.

Collins had been stopping and answering questions, often through translation, but Milagros’ group waited until she was done taking the test, and Sofia had started. “Major Collins?” Milagros said, waving her hand up in the air.

The Air Force administrator came over with a soft smile. “Yes, Miss Herrera, what can I

do for you?”

Milagros was impressed that the woman remembered her name from yesterday, considering the half a dozen or so others she must have had to remember. “The *60 Minutes* story that aired in your country... how much of that was accurate and how much of it was propaganda designed to keep your populace from losing hope?”

“We didn’t include anything in that story that wasn’t true,” Collins told her. “There were a few things that were left out, simply because they were too complicated to get into within that hour, but they’re all gone over in the pamphlet you were handed yesterday.”

“But all the things about the improved orgasms? None of that was propaganda?”

Collins laughed a little bit and fished her cellphone out of her pocket. “I haven’t had a chance to show anybody this yet, but I was told if I was asked about the program, having it at the ready might be useful. Watch and see for yourself.”

On the Major’s cellphone was a video of her filmed from the neck up only, clearly enjoying some sexual experience, before the Major was hit with what looked like the most intense orgasm that Milagros had ever seen. Then the Major seemed to pass out and started muttering “imprinting” over and over again, and Milagros could only smile and nod. “And since then?”

“Not *quite* as strong as that, but pretty damn close, and that’s still miles better than what I used to be getting,” the Major said with a sly grin as she took her phone back. “Plus, the fella I’m shackled up with? I don’t know that I’d have ever found him if I hadn’t been part of Oracle.”

“Why’s that?”

“He and I didn’t really run in the same social circles. I’m career military; he’s my little nerdling, a database administrator for a company on the east coast, but he can work remote, so he’s here with me. We like a lot of the same things, but we’re from two completely different worlds. We’d never have *found* each other. So yeah, it might sound weird, but I fucking love this program, I fucking love my man and while I can’t guarantee you’ll be happy with whomever you pick, I think it’s going to bring a lot of joy into your life.”

“And even if we go with you, we can still change our minds?”

“Right up until the very last moment, the point of no return, the moment you’re imprinted.”

“Then we’re still with you.”

OB646 – Feb. 1st, 2021 – Departure – Jackson, Mississippi

The Air Force truck had picked Jake up a couple of hours ago, him and his one suitcase, and driven them several miles to the city of Jackson, the largest nearby metropolitan area. There were five of them on the truck, but Jake hadn’t liked the look of any of the other guys, so he didn’t try and start conversations with any of them.

The relocation center was on an airstrip, and Jake could see they had several of the big fucker planes resting down the runway a little bit. The truck drove past them and came to a small building that looked like it might be a converted small plane hangar.

When they get off the truck, each of them is slapped in the chest with a sticker, not even having their name on it, just some kind of identifier. Jake’s read “OB646.” Nothing else. Not even date of birth or blood type.

As he’s being ushered into the main room, Jake grabs one of the guards to ask her a question. “So, what are they going to do about my truck, my apartment, all of my shit?”

“You were told to bring anything with you that you thought was vital,” the guard told

him. “Everything else is going to be sold off at auction. You aren’t coming back for it.”

“It’s still *my* shit, man,” Jake sighs. “Look, am I going to be allowed to come back and visit or—”

“All questions will be answered during the video, so go take a seat, linen jockey.”

Jake knew that was probably an insult, but wasn’t entirely sure quite why, so he didn’t push the matter any, and just moved to take a seat. In addition to the four other guys who’d been with him on the truck, another half a dozen or so arrived within the next half hour and were given name tags and told to sit their asses down. This process repeated once more. With fifteen guys in chairs, the room went dark and a screen at the front started to come to life.

Jake didn’t like the feel of the whole thing. It reminded him of the night he’d spent at county lockup, like the whole place was one bad comment away from everything spiraling completely out of control and could erupt into violence at a moment’s notice. But nobody wanted to break the quiet, and once the film started, Jake hoped it would be enough to keep everyone in check.

The opening credits said “Operation: Funnel Cake & You” and disappeared as the camera faded in on what looked like one of the shittiest looking dive bars in what had to be one of the shittiest looking areas of America that Jake had ever seen. A caption popped up saying “Hoboken, New Jersey” before the camera turned to focus on a somewhat scummy looking bruiser with greased black hair, his arms crossed over his chest, and at least half a dozen gold chains hanging around his neck.

“Hey, yo! My name’s Frank Marscipone, and I’m here to walk you through what your next couple’a weeks are gonna be like as youse guys work your way through the Funnel Cake program. Youse guys was probably just like me – shitty life, shitty job, no real prospects and yet, when it came time for the government to come hook me up with hot chicks to keep me alive, they toldja they was runnin’ low on the lookers. So they gave youse guys two options, like they done given me. Your first is stay in your shit life and take whatever dicey broads they got laying around, or go work abroad as a breeding stud.”

Frank looked like the kind of guy who was in between stints at the county jail or maybe the sort of bad luck schmuck who couldn’t get the moxie together to try something major so he kept getting thrown back for not being worth the trouble.

“When da pandemic started, I was working here, at Rat Fink Freddie’s, as a bartender and sometimes cook. We got robbed 9 times in 2019. You’d have thought we got nothing left to rob, but when we didn’t money, they’d rob the guy selling meth around back, or the girls hooking for twenty bucks for ten minutes of joy time. Da owner made me start delivering food from the bar in my own car once we couldn’t let customers into the bar, just so he ain’t go broke, but he didn’t give me gas money or hazard pay or nothing. If you’re thinkin’, ‘Frankie boy! That sounds like it fuckin’ sucked!’ You are fuckin’ A right my friend. It did suck. Then along comes this Air Force chick who tells me it’s time for me to get my government issued girlfriends, and I’m thinkin’, hey, at least my day’s starting to look up a little bit! But wouldn’t ya know it, dey’s gonna fuck me too! After I took their Oracle test, they tell me I ain’t got great prospects here in the states, so they’re gonna trade me to another country. I tell them, fuggedaboutit, I’m a fuckin’ American! Then they tell me how much better my life’s gonna be... So I agree to trade this...” he says, gesturing back to the outside walls of the bar covered in more graffiti than not, “...to this!”

The screen suddenly shifts and suddenly Frank is in a Tuscan villa of some kind, surrounded by fourteen beautiful Italian women, all of them smiling brightly, their ages ranging from what looked to be eighteen to forty, and three or four of them already signs of pregnancy. It

was impossible to miss how a couple of the girls were pressed hard up against Frank in seeming adoration.

“I live in Italy now! My first partner, Bella, her family has owned this vineyard for almost two hundred years, but when her father, brothers and husband died, she was left with almost no reason to go on. Until I came into her life.” The camera followed Frank in a tracking shot that showed him walking along a pathway in front of a giant Tuscan estate, with row after endless row of vineyards in the background. “Now I know what you’re thinkin’ – Frank! It sounds like you’re just working a new shit job instead of the old one, but I ain’t allowed to work, you hear? Sure, I can walk the grounds, inspect shit, learn about how we’re making wine here, maybe even offer some thoughts and opinions, but I’m not allowed to do anything dangerous or even strenuous. I’m not allowed near heavy machinery; I’m not allowed to work in the vineyards or even drive the truck around the estate. None of that shit’s my job no more. All that’s expected of me is knockin’ up alla these hot broads.”

There was a jump cut, but when it came back, Frank was sitting inside a bedroom that looked like a very expensive estate, sitting on a couch, a Playstation 5 controller in his hand. “My daily schedule looks a little like this – sex, gym time, sex, television time, sex, meal time, sex, playing Call of Duty while streaming on Twitch, sex, another meal and then a last round of sex before I crash for the day and get a good night’s sleep. How the fuck could it get any better than this?”

Suddenly there’s some small print white text that scrolls by at a speed too fast for Jake to read it all, but he caught the word ‘atypical’ amidst the fine print, but Jake decides it’s probably of no concern, because if it had been serious or important, they would’ve made it much bigger than just some tiny words at the bottom of a screen.

“Chiara over there is one of my two bodyguards, and everywhere I go, they make sure I’m safe. Chiara! Show ‘em your gun, it’s badass!” The Italian woman laughs a little, and waves dismissively at the camera. “So what are you waiting for! Sign your paperwork and get yourself new home today!”

Jake flags down the recruiter, who crouches down alongside him. “So, I won’t be able to own a gun overseas?”

The recruiter shook her head. “No, son, but you wouldn’t be allowed to have a gun longer anyway, if the MPA passes, and it looks like it’s going to. Men have to be protected and kept safe, and letting them own firearms is just too dangerous.”

He sighed and shook his head. “It doesn’t even feel like America anymore. Get me outta here. I’ll sign whatever you want.”

IB2323 – Feb. 10th, 2021 – Arrival – Indianapolis, Indiana

While the trip took over a week, it mostly seemed to fly by in an instant to Milagros, as having her best friend and her sister with her made the whole trip feel relatively short. The group had made several other stops across Argentina before heading back to the United States, bringing the total number of women in their group up to close to a hundred. They had arrived to a redistribution center in Indianapolis, a town which headquartered Bastian Solutions, one of the largest manufacturers of heavy industrial machinery in the world.

As soon as they’d arrived, they’d been shown a very long video that detailed all the things to expect and know about the Quaranteam serum and its side effects, and Milagros was impressed that not only was the video very thorough, but it was also subtitled in Spanish, for Sofia and Martina, neither of whom spoke particularly good English.

Major Collins had been their shepherd through the whole process and as soon as the video ended, Milagros flagged her over. “Hey Mila, what’s up?” the Major asked.

“So in the video, they talked about a possible regeneration. I’ve always had something of a bad leg, as I get muscle spasms of intense pain now and again. What are the odds I’ll regenerate from that?”

The Major frowned a little and sighed. “I’m not going to lie to you, Mila. Not great. The odds of regeneration are around one in ten, although maybe that’s a minor enough thing that the serum will just fix it on its own anyway. We don’t have a lot of control over the regeneration process. I know we’re trying to figure out how to improve that, but we’re not there yet.”

“I respect your honesty, Major.”

“Now, I came by to show you your ten options,” Major Collins said, holding out an iPad tablet for Milagros to look at. “You’ve got access to all their information, so you can see what your Oracle match was, and key things where you match up and any possible points of concern, although all of these men fall between 90% and 97% in terms of matching up with your tastes. Why don’t you start looking through them, see if anybody catches your eye?”

Milagros took the tablet from the Major, fully expecting to find a sea of faces she couldn’t stand but was instead greeted with nearly a dozen good but not great looking men. They were all reasonably handsome in their own right, but they skewed a little bit older than she might have liked, and maybe a little less adventurous, in looking at their profiles, but then she realized, of course, that most of the adventurous men had probably died during the pandemic. Still, they were good looking enough, and she felt like since they were compatible, they might eventually come to love one another.

Eventually, she’s settled on two possible options, but noticed that one of them has a blue dot next to his name, so she turned the tablet to show the Major. “Major Collins, what does this blue dot mean?”

“Ah, that’s the advantage of going last, Miss Herrera,” the Major said with a chuckle. She reached over and tapped the blue dot and a tiny picture of her best friend Sofia popped up. “Your friend Sofia chose this man, so you have that knowledge to aid in your decision, if you want to go with her, or if you wanted to avoid picking someone who is already paired with someone you know.”

Milagros looked at the man’s profile for a while – Nick Fisher, 43, African-American, PhD in Engineering & Robotics from MIT. Prefers his sexual encounters to be slow and tender. Widower, with an eight-year-old son. Lost his wife, a police officer, to DuoHalo in August of last year.

“This one,” she said tapping Fisher’s picture. “This one will do nicely.”

“You’re sure, Miss Herrera? This is your last chance to back out.”

Milagros smiled up at the Major almost a touch patronizingly. “I’d like my shot now, Major.”

OB646 – Feb. 12th, 2021 – Arrival – Cairo, Egypt

The trip from the United States to Cairo had been miserable, having to travel by ocean liner, and even then, they had been restricted to quarters basically the entire time, for their own safety, or so they’d been told over and over again.

Once they’d arrived in Cairo, Jake was greeted by a few female members of the Egyptian military, women dressed in tan shirts and pants with red berets atop their heads. His contact point was going to be Captain Hafez, a no-nonsense woman who led him quickly into the building,

along with the other four Americans that had been sent to Egypt.

He feels a little like he's being rushed, with several things being explained to him all at once, but within the next twenty-four hours, he would be taken to a luxury apartment that would belong to him and would be his home for the foreseeable future. He would be required to always remain within that apartment unless escorted by two members of his personal security team, and even then, he needed to restrict his departures from the apartment to no more than one per week.

Jake thinks the whole thing sounds pretty overblown but is told that his security is paramount and that there have been numerous reports of male abductions across the region, men stolen from one country to be traded to others like hostages.

He isn't thrilled by all of this, but at this point, Jake figured he was too far along to try and call it off, so he simply accepted what they told him and started focusing on what was next, and at least with that, there were nice things on the horizon.

They tell him they have run his Oracle profile against their local database and have come up with a pool of fifty candidates that he can choose from, and they will be sent to his apartment for him to partner up with. His apartment, he's told, is more of a floor of a luxury apartment building and will house up to twenty partners for him.

He is handed a tablet and told to start picking women, with a handful of caveats. He has to pick at least one woman from the first page, as all five of them speak English. He finds two of them to be smoking hot, so he selects both of them and moves on. From the second page, he has to pick at least two, as they're security trained. This is a little harder – the women aren't ugly, but they aren't what Jake would consider easy on the eyes either. Eventually he notices that one of them speaks English, so he picks her and then almost picks the second one at random. The rest of the pool he is given free choice of.

He flips through page after page of pictures and biographies of women, although he barely stops to read any of the text, mostly just focusing on the images. He considers the pool to be full of 6's and 7's, with a couple of 8's and 9's scattered in. There's also a few outliers – a Ukrainian blonde who's been living in Egypt for the last six years, a South African brunette with eyes that practically skullfuck the camera with smoldering intensity, both of whom he picked immediately – but after a while, many of the women almost seem to blend together into a sort of homogenous lump of faces.

After he'd gone through the list, he'd made eight selections, and attempted to hit 'submit,' but nothing happened. After several attempts at poking the button to no avail, he flagged over one of the administrators from the Egyptian Army, who was overseeing the process.

"I can't seem to get it to go."

The woman tapped a bit of Arabic script above the submit button. "You haven't picked enough yet. You must pick at least fourteen."

"Fourteen?" Jake moaned. "I can't handle all that many women being dumped on me at once..."

"They will be paced, but you must pick more. You cannot leave until you pick more."

Over the next twenty minutes, Jake read up on each profile a little more, trying to see if he could find key things that would excite him, and eventually he had bumped his partner count up to fourteen, and when he hit 'submit' the button changed to a green bar that read 'submitted!' along with a yellow happy face that did not accurately portray how Jake was feeling.

He was also given a document to sign which renounced his American citizenship and declared himself a citizen of Egypt, subject to all her laws.

After that, the rest of the day was a bit of a blur, as the Egyptian Army women moved

him from the relocation center to a magnificent apartment building that did indeed live up to the hype. He was told that his first batch would arrive tomorrow, and would include Wafaa, his English-speaking partner, and his two bodyguards.

As the Army left him in the comfort of his new apartment, he wondered at what point the Air Force handlers had disappeared and why he hadn't noticed them leaving.

IB2323 – Apr. 15th, 2021 – One-month checkup – Indianapolis, Indiana

“I have to say, Miss Herrera,” Major Collins said, “you’re looking great.”

“Please, call me Mila,” she said with a smile and a laugh. “And you have no idea how right you are. When I showed up to my first day at Bastian, I was expecting to be some fledgling tester or scrap engineer, but instead they made me Senior Engineering Manager in R&D! The people there have been so excited to work with me, and it isn’t at all like my old job, where people would just ignore me because I’m a woman. Here, my coworkers are more interested in my ideas than my tits.”

“How’s things going with you and Nick?”

Mila’s smile widens even more. “Oh, dios mio, I couldn’t be happier. He is a remarkable man – well-educated, reasonable, caring, dedicated and oh so handsome. And you were right, the orgasms are truly beyond even what I could imagine,” she added with a giggle.

“I need to swing by your house and check on your friend Sofia, but I hope you two sharing a partner hasn’t caused too much of a rift?”

Mila shook her head happily. “Not at all. In fact, it seems like both Sofia and I had been harboring a bit of latent curiosity we’d never explored before we paired up with Nick, and now that we have, we’re closer than ever. It also helps that my sister is just on the other side of town, so if I ever need to talk to someone about the old country or how things used to be, I have either my best friend or my sister a stone’s throw away.”

“That’s all great to hear,” Major Collins said, reaching into her satchel to pull out a manilla folder. “Just one last formality then, for you to sign these two sheets of paper, one renouncing your Argentinian citizenship and the other to accept your US citizenship. If you could just sign tho—”

Mila was done signing before Major Collins was done talking.

OB646 – Apr. 18th, 2021 – One-month(ish) checkup – Cairo, Egypt

“Hey Jake, I’m Major Gabriel. Maybe you remember me for your recruitment? I’m just here to do a final check up on you to see how you’re doing,” the Major said to him.

Jake sighed, gesturing for her to come in, although his two bodyguards gave the Major a pat down first, checking for weapons before letting her in. “I mean, I guess I can’t complain too much. C’mon in.”

They moved to sit down in a living room that looked like an overgrown mancave with a television that took up nearly an entire wall, a collection of game consoles below it. “So, Jake, how’ve you been?” the major asked as she sat down in one of the chairs, opening her iPad up to take notes.

“Up and down,” Jake said. “I mean, the apartment is the tits, and I’m banging beautiful women left and right, so that’s great. Most of them don’t speak English, so I have to rely on Wafaa to translate for me quite a bit of the time, and we’ve had some mistakes happen because of translation errors, but we’ve made it all work out okay in the end.”

“Seen much of the city?”

“Nah,” Jake grumbled. “I’m not let out much, although once a week we do go somewhere, just so I can see a little bit more of Cairo. I don’t really have any male friends here, but Wafaa’s been talking about trying to coordinate with other Teams to find some local US expats that I can shoot the shit with. Just hasn’t happened yet.”

“So how would you rate your happiness here on a scale of one to ten?”

“Eight on a good day, six on a bad. I mean, I guess I shouldn’t complain, but I do miss how shit used to be, back when I could just get in my pickup and drive. It’s a nice cage, but it’s still a cage, you know what I’m sayin’?”

“Well, that’s all I was really here for, Jake, so it’s been good seeing you…” Major Gabriel rose to her feet and started moving back towards the door, as Jake moved over, trying to see if he could get her to stay a little longer.

“You don’t have to go already, do you, Major?”

“I’ve got plenty of other cases I have to check in on, Mr. McCready, so while I appreciate your enthusiasm, I’m afraid this is where we part ways.”

“Oh. Okay. Well. You can come back anytime, okay?”

“Sure, Mr. McCready.”

The two hugged and Jake winced a little. “You okay, Mr. McCready?”

“I’m fine – the girls convinced me to get a new tattoo, and it stings a bit,” he said, taking off his shirt to show two words written in Arabic on his back, along with OB646 down in the bottom right-hand corner of his back. “It says ‘Heart of Fire’ and I think it looks bad ass.”

Major Gabriel smiled and nodded. “Thanks for seeing me, Mr. McCready. I’ll be back for the six-month eval later,” she said as she made her way out the door and into the elevator. Once the elevator doors opened, she opened his file and made a note about Jake and his new tattoo, which read “Property of Egypt.”