**Flesh**

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**Flesh: Prologue**

Bolivia, 1983

Summer knew that something was wrong the second she saw Otoniel dash out of the jungle towards her. His eyes were as wide as dinner plates and the color had completely gone out of his skin. He was panting too hard to shout anything at either Summer or Russ, but there was a sense of panic that had completely engulfed him.

"Walter," Summer guessed as Otoniel got closer. "Something's wrong with Walter."

"Doctor Newcomb!" Otoniel finally yelled out over his panicked breaths. "Doctor Newcomb has been bitten!"

Russ took off towards Otoniel, meeting him halfway down Hanan Pacha's main street. The village was small, so it took little time for the two men to collide, Russ grabbing the smaller man by the shoulders to calm him down.

"Where is he?" Russ asked quickly, shaking Otoniel. "Where's Walter?"

"In the fields," the translator panted, desperately trying to regain composure.

There were shouts coming from jungle behind them, as the Huaca villagers caught up with Otoniel. They were shouting in Huaca, but Summer at least understood that they were calling for Punchau, Hanan Pacha's medicine man.

"Let's go," Russ said to both Otoniel and Summer, following Punchau as the Huaca raced off in the direction of the planting fields. Otoniel took a few deep breaths before falling in behind Summer and Russ, but he dutifully followed them back out of the village.

Hanan Pacha was little more than a dozen or so huts scattered alongside the Rio Clemente in the Valle de los Reyes. There were a few irrigation ditches that ran from the river to the farmland that a Peace Corps volunteer had helped dig nearly a decade earlier, but other than that, Hanan Pacha looked as if it hadn't change in centuries. To a certain extent, it hadn't.

The Huaca Indians, who called all of Valle de los Reyes in Bolivia their home, had somehow managed to slip through the cracks of history. They'd coexisted relatively peacefully with Inca at the height of Incan civilization, and had somehow managed to go unnoticed by Pizarro and the Conquistadors as they carved up most of South America. Antonio José de Sucré had hidden from the Spanish in a Huaca village sometime in 1824, but otherwise the Huaca had managed to sit out the War for Independence, as well as the subsequent War of the Pacific and the Chaco War. Even the political movements, both the MNR and the MIR, tended to ignore the Huaca, finding better support in the cities and other parts of the country than they did in Bolivia's north-eastern corner. Dr. Hernán Siles Zuazo, who had been swept back into power the previous year, had been in office for seven months before he even mentioned the Huaca in public.

When Summer, Russ, and Walter had first arrived in Bolivia eight weeks earlier, they had cherished the idea that they were in a different world, a forgotten corner of the globe that had remained unspoiled by industrialization. If Walter was now in trouble, however, the long trek back to San Eduardo or Guayaramerin didn't seem to be so wondrous.

Punchau reached the sixty-one-year-old chemist first, dropping alongside side him to examine the teeth marks in Walter's ankle. He chattered hurriedly back and forth with the farmers in Huaca, and by the time that Russ and Summer had caught up with him, he had a firm grasp on the situation. A runner was sent for both Pachacamac, the village chief, and Pachacamac's son.

If Otoniel had been pale, Walter was completely white. He was howling in agony, rolling on the ground as the Huaca farmers held him down. Summer wasn't even sure that the elderly man even realized that she and Russ were there. The medicine man looked up at Russ, quickly explaining the situation in Spanish.

"What did he say?" Summer asked after a few seconds of back-and-forth between Russ and Punchau. She spoke little Spanish and no Huaca, so she was lost in shouts and verbal concerns that were floating around her.

"Greensnake," Russ replied seriously. "Andean greensnake. Apparently it had just been lying among the crops, and Walter accidentally stepped on it." Walter had gone off with some of the farmers to see the fields while Summer and Russ had remained behind, in the village. The older man had taken Otoniel with him to translate what the farmer was saying, leaving Russ and Punchau to communicate back in the village in Spanish. Walter had been talking about Huaca crop growth since they'd first arrived in the Valle de los Reyes, and the chance to see first-hand what the Huaca were growing was too much of an opportunity for him to miss.

"How bad is it?" Summer asked, brushing her long blonde hair from her eyes.

Russ shook his head. "Punchau says the worst part is the pain." He stopped, listening the medicine man's explanation in Spanish as Otoniel finally dropped down with them. "Punchau sent someone to get something for the pain - some type of salve or something. He's not in immediate danger, but he's suffering pretty bad from the venom."

"Walter! Walter! Can you hear me?" Russ asked the older man. There was no sense that Walter heard him, his eyes rolling back in his head.

"Greensnake venom is hallucinogenic," Otoniel explained. "But you definitely still feel the burning all throughout your insides."

Summer glanced over at their translator. Otoniel hadn't grown up in the Valle de los Reyes, but he had grown up in Bolivia. "Have you been bitten before?" she asked.

He shook his head, solemnly replying, "mi hermano."

From the look on Otoniel's face, Summer knew that Otoniel's brother had not made it. "How long do we have?"

Before Otoniel could reply, Russ answered, "About twenty-four hours. That's what Punchau says."

Otoniel and the medicine man had a short conversation, Punchau's Huaca much better than his Spanish. As they talked, a rusty pick-up truck bounced across the fields, Pachacamac sitting in the passenger seat and his son Anqas behind the wheel. There were a few men in the bed of the truck, which came to an abrupt halt a few feet from the hectic scene around Dr. Walter Newcomb. Dust rose into the air as Pachacamac stepped out, stooping down alongside Punchau. As the chief and his medicine man talked soberly, Otoniel turned to Russ and Summer.

"I should have fixed our jeep," Otoniel cried, a worried look in his eyes. "I should have fixed out jeep."

The jeep that Ambrosia Pharmaceuticals had purchased for the small team of scientists had been broken for over a week and half. Otoniel had been pressing Walter about the need to fix it, in case an emergency arose, but Walter had told Otoniel to focus on other tasks around the Ambrosia camp, like the water, the radio, and so on and so on. They weren't planning on making a supply run into San Eduardo for another two weeks, and in Walter's opinion, there were better things that the Bolivian could be doing with his time.

"Calm down, Oto," Russ consoled the other man. "The Huaca have a truck - I'm sure that they'll let us borrow it to take Walter to the hospital. Now, what else did Punchau say about Walter?"

As Otoniel translated what the medicine man had said earlier, one of the villagers from the back of Anqas's pick-up began rubbing a thick white paste onto Walter's leg. Almost immediately, the older man's shivering and shaking had stopped, and he seemed to calm down.

"What is that?" Summer asked, surprised that the cream was even having an effect. She had half-expected nothing to happen, thinking it was nothing more than a superstitious herbal remedy.

"Samincha. It's a native blend of roots, leaves, and berries from plants around the valley," Otoniel explained. "It's not a cure, though; it simply helps the pain go away."

Pachacamac clapped to get Otoniel's attention, and began talking with the team's translator. As Summer ran her hand across Walter's forehead in an effort to calm him down, she listened to an increasingly insistent conversation on the part of both men involved. Otoniel was clearly upset, but Pachacamac seemed just as annoyed.

"What?" Russ asked. "What is he saying?"

Otoniel gave one last angry glance towards the chief before turning to two Americans in front of him. "He says that his son will take us to the hospital in Guayaramerin, but he doesn't trust us with the truck."

"'Doesn't trust us?'" Russ asked, not believing what he had heard. "Anqas is going to be with us. Doesn't he trust his truck with his own son?"

The translator shook his head. "We need to give him some sort of collateral, some sort of insurance that we will bring the truck back."

"But Anqas is going to be with us, right? He's driving us to Guayaramerin, isn't he?"

Calming himself down, Otoniel explained, "You have to understand that this truck is the only vehicle for miles, Doctor Szalinski. Hanan Pacha relies on it day in and day out. For Pachacamac to let us use the truck, even to take Walter to Guayaramerin, requires a lot of trust on his part."

"Russ, let's just give him something," Summer interjected. "Whatever it is, we can come back for it. It's going to take us twenty-seven hours to get to the hospital, and from what I understand, that's about three hours longer than Walter has. Whatever he wants, let's just leave it here, because we need to go NOW. Even if it's some of the expensive equipment, we're going to be back for it. We aren't planning to steal the truck."

"Fine, fine," Russ replied. "What does he want, Oto?"

Otoniel swallowed hard, obviously nervous about the chief's demand. "He wants Summer."

Summer and Russ both exchanged a look of concern. The woman, in disbelief, asked, "He wants me?"

"Just as collateral, Doctor Monroe. You said yourself that we will be back after Walter gets to the hospital."

Summer wasn't sure she liked the idea of remaining behind as collateral for the truck. For one thing, she thought she should be with Walter. For another, she was skeptical about what the chief wanted her for.

Otoniel obviously sense the hesitation, and elaborated. "There are two things I need to explain first. The Huaca concept of 'borrowing' something essentially means a transfer of ownership. Technically, we will 'own' the village's truck, and the village with 'own' you, Doctor Monroe."

"Own....?"

"Yes, but while there is no difference to the Huaca when it comes to owning and borrowing, there are two distinct words for the type of ownership that is implied. The chief used the one that signifies ownership of a thing, like the truck, or a plow, or like livestock." He looked into Summer's eyes reassuringly. "The type of ownership that you're worried about - slavery, prostitution - necessitates the use of different word. You're just an object, like the truck, and not a concubine or sexual slave, Doctor Monroe."

"I still don't like it," Summer replied.

"Summer, what choice do we have?" Russ implored. "Walter needs to get to the hospital, and needs to leave RIGHT NOW. Even if the jeep was working back at the camp, it's a two-hour hike back there. We need to get Walter into this truck, and on the road to Guayaramerin immediately."

Summer was still doubtful.

More calmly, Russ reassured his colleague, "We'll be back as soon as we can. It's a day and half there, and then a day and half back. I'll leave Walter with the doctors in Guayaramerin, and be back for you as soon as possible."

"Yes! Yes!" Summer finally gave in. She didn't like the trade, didn't like the idea that she was going to be like "livestock" for Pachacamac and the village of Hanan Pacha. But there was no other option. Either she'd stay behind in the Huaca village, or Walter would die.

Still, something bothered her about the whole arrangement.

"Good," Russ replied, ordering Punchau in Spanish to help him get Walter up on to the truck. Otoniel and some of the villagers milling around helped as well, hefting the elderly man into the bed. Walter's moaning and squealing had stopped, and he was noticeably calmer than he'd been when Summer and Russ had first found him. Obviously, the salve had worked its magic.

"Otoniel," Russ said to the translator as he climbed up into the bed of the truck himself, "stay behind with Summer and make sure that she's okay. And if you get a chance, try to get the jeep going."

"Yes, Doctor Szalinski."

Punchau and a few other villagers joined Walter and Russ in the back of the truck, as Anqas and another man slipped themselves into the cab.

"I'll radio back to the camp and leave a message when we go through San Eduardo, and then again once we get to the hospital in Guayaramerin." As the truck started up, Russ turned his attention back to Summer. "You'll be fine," he assured her. "You've got Otoniel with you, and I'll be back in three days."

With that, Anqas floored the gas and the truck disappeared in a cloud of dirt, racing up the road from the fields and away from Hanan Pacha. Only Summer, Otoniel, Pachacamac, and two other men remained behind.

"Well," Summer began, he heart still beating fast because of everything that had just happened, "what now?"

Otoniel translated her question to Pachacamac, and the middle-aged chief simply laughed at first. He then began to slowly answer Otoniel, and Otoniel apparently didn't like the response. They shouted back and forth at each other, Pachacamac growing less and less patient each time he had to counter the translator's argument.

"What?" Summer asked. "What is it?" She was already worried about the full consequences of her deal with the chief.

Otoniel shook his head, not wanting to let her now. After she pushed him, he finally said, "He wants you to remove your clothes."

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Bolivian tree frogs were to blame. If it weren't for Bolivian tree frogs, Walter wouldn't have been bitten by a greensnake, Russ wouldn't be racing away towards the nearest hospital, and Summer wouldn't be faced with the prospects of stripping for a Huaca chief.

There were stories about Bolivian tree frogs in the northeastern region of the country, nestled away in a single valley known as the Valle de los Reyes, or the Valley of the Kings. Apparently, Spanish scientists and botanists who had scoured over most of Alta Peru had discovered an anomaly among the frogs from that region. While Bolivian tree frogs elsewhere were little different from the many other species of tree frogs that populated the continent, frogs in the Valle de los Reyes went through an accelerated growth process. They were hatched out of eyes and spent their early lives as tadpoles, just like other frogs, before maturing to adulthood. The only difference was that these particular frogs did it in one-sixth the amount of time.

While the Spanish had abandoned any additional scientific study of the anomalous frogs in favor of plundering the hillsides for silver and enslaving the native Incan population for the mines, the first records of these particular tree frogs survived, and piqued the curiosity of someone at Ambrosia Pharmaceuticals in the American metropolis of Babylon. The drug company had put itself on the map with experimental new chemicals, and as the biomedical boom continued in Babylon's downtown Leather District, Ambrosia was looking for the "next big thing."

If the stories were true, and the Bolivian tree frogs of the Valle de los Reyes were truly able to go through an accelerated adolescence, the hormones that caused the acceleration would be worth a small fortune back in the US. The eyes of Ambrosia's executives had only seen possible dollar signs, even through the practical applications had yet to be imagined. Scientists, much like Summer Monroe, Russell Szalinski, and Walter Newcomb, had imagined a vast potential of uses for such a theoretical compound, called "accelerated growth hormone," or simply AGH for short.

And so, Ambrosia had sent a small team down to South America on an expedition. Dr. Walter Newcomb, a life-long employee of Ambrosia, had been picked to lead the team. He was getting old, but he still knew more about drugs, hormones, and pharmaceuticals than many others in Babylon. And since he had no family, there was little to keep him from spending an extended length of time down in Bolivia.

Russ Szalinski, on the other hand, had both a wife and a seven-year-old daughter back in the suburbs of Babylon. But the search of AGH was so compelling that Russ had begged his higher-ups to be put on the project. Even if he had to spend four months apart from his family, the discovery of AGH would put him on the scientific map.

The last scientist picked for the team was Dr. Summer Monroe, who had only just recently completed her PhD in biology. Though she had applied for grants in order to do her own studies into the mysteries of amphibian biology in Boston, the National Science Foundation had passed her over, and Summer found herself casting about for a paying job. Ambrosia Pharmaceuticals, luckily enough, was looking for a frog expert to send on their expedition to northern Bolivia. A few months later, Summer found herself in the Valle de los Reyes, studying tree frogs, analyzing chemical samples, and being order to strip out of her clothes by an Indian chief.

Otoniel was there with her, of course, but he mostly looked powerless to refute Pachacamac's orders. Walter had hired Otoniel Sandoval in La Paz, as the young man had grown up outside of San Eduardo and spoke fluent Spanish, English, Quechua, and Huaca. Otoniel was more than just a translator, though, providing guidance to the cultures of the people they met in rural Bolivia, protecting them from overzealous soldiers at checkpoints, and otherwise acting as a general custodian for them at their camp in Valle de los Reyes.

While the three scientists had had little contact with the Huaca in their weeks since arriving in the valley, all three had expressed interest in visiting the local village of Hanan Pacha. It was close to eight weeks, however, before they made the two-hour hike through the Bolivian jungle to meet Pachacamac and his people. And then, in a little less than two hours, everything had gone to hell.

"Fuck you!" Summer swore at the chief, even if Pachacamac couldn't understand her. Turning her attention to Otoniel, she repeated the curse. "And fuck you, too. I'm not taking my clothes off for him."

"I told him that, Doctor Monroe," Otoniel defended himself. "But Pachacamac is standing by the letter of the law. You see, to expand upon the custom of livestock ownership -"

"No!" Summer insisted, glaring at the chief. "I don't care what the letter of law says. I'm not taking off my clothes."

"Summer-" the mestizo began.

"No! No! No! Look, we've already got the truck. And it's not like I'm going anywhere, like he needs to hold my clothes keep me from sneaking off, if that's what this is about." She glanced at the translator. "So what's the worst he can do if I don't comply?"

"If we were closer to La Paz? Litigation. Here in the Oriente, though, breaking a contract carries more strict penalties."

"Strict penalties like what?" Summer asked. Surely, Otoniel didn't mean that breaking a contract would be cause enough for taking someone's life...did he?

The grim look on Otoniel's face told her all she needed to know.

"So let me get this straight," the blonde said nervously, backing away from the Huaca chief and the translator both. "Walter is bitten by a snake, and is going to die. But in order for the chief here to take him to the hospital, I have to be 'given' to him like a shovel or a donkey. And then I have to strip naked, or else he'll kill me. Am I getting that right?"

Otoniel shook his head. "He'll kill me."

A couple of heartbeats passed as Summer took in their situation. There had to be another way out of this, something that wouldn't end in her completely au naturél or Otoniel walking around without his head. "Why?" she finally asked, breaking the silence. "Why does he want me naked?"

The translator didn't bother repeating the question to Pachacamac. The two men had already angrily exchanged explanations. "Think of yourself as a llama...or as un gato, as a cat."

Summer raised an eyebrow.

"And you're being given to a new owner," Otoniel continued. "Your first owner, however, still maintains possession of your collar, your toys, and whatever else a cat may need."

"But these are my clothes."

"But how can a cat own its collar?"

"I'm not a fucking cat!" Summer screamed, running her hands through her long hair in frustration. Tears were starting to build up behind her eyes. "I'm not a fucking cat!"

"But you are," Otoniel said calmly, taking a step closer to her. He said something forcefully to Pachacamac as he took a hold of Summer's hand. "In this situation, you are. In his mind, you and your clothes are both property of Doctor Szalinski and the company that you work for. The deal that we agreed upon extends to nothing more than your body."

The translator paused for a second, working up the courage to deliver a suggestion that he knew she wouldn't like. "I will be with you the entire time. You will be safe. And Dr. Szalinski will be back soon enough."

"Is he giving me something else to wear? Is it back in the village?"

Otoniel shook his head again. "You are a cat."

Summer's whole body was shaking, not unlike Walter's had been before. The only difference was that the young doctor's shivers were caused by nerves, not venom.

She looked up the translator, this mestizo that she, Russ, and Walter had met only eight weeks ago. She had trusted her life with him before, at various checkpoints along the roads from La Paz to Valle de los Reyes. He knew this country better than anyone else she had met here, with a deeper understanding of both modern and native customs. But what he was asking her do was too much for her.

Summer looked to Pachacamac, who was waiting patiently. He didn't seem to be enjoying the cruelty of what he was doing, but he didn't seem particularly compassionate about Summer's strife. It was a deal, plain and simple - Russ and Walter got the truck to travel to Guayaramerin, and Pachacamac got a naked white girl to parade through his village. Summer cringed at the thought of being stared at by the villagers, all coming out of their huts and hovels to take a look at the denuded blonde.

But what choice did she have? Was she really going to refuse to get naked, and cost Otoniel his life?

"It's just getting naked, right?" Summer asked with hesitation.

"Pachacamac is not going to sleep with you, if that's what you're asking," the translator replied. She could tell that he wasn't happy about any of this, either. "Like I said, he used the word for ownership more closely associated with animals than with prostitutes or slaves."

"Well, let's just hope that our good chief here isn't interested in bestiality," Summer joked, trying to make light of the situation. She didn't want to do this. She didn't want to spend three days naked in Hanan Pacha. But Walter was in serious trouble, and her inhibitions about her body didn't seem to be any nearly as worrisome as the older scientist's snakebite. "And you're staying with me?"

"I promise not to leave your side," Otoniel answered.

Summer stared at Pachacamac again, her eyes showing off the animosity that she had for him. Pachacamac remained as stoic as he'd been.

Summer was wearing little more than a white polo shirt and a pair of khaki shorts. Pulling the shirt up over her head, the blonde revealed a utilitarian white bra. She had packed for a life of functionality, not a life of sexual encounters. Russ had caught her changing once, and Walter had walked in on her during one of her bucket showers back at the camp, but the first man was married and the second was close to three times her age. Now, though, it seemed like her bra was being examined in detail by the small crowd of men behind Pachacamac.

Trying her best to stay clinical and as unseductive as possible, she found the clasp to her shorts and undid it. She unzipped her fly, and, grabbing at both the waistband of the shorts and the elastic of her pink and white striped panties underneath, she slipped them down her legs.

"What am I doing?" Summer asked herself under her breath. She shook her head, unsure of exactly how she'd gotten into this mess, and cursed herself for acquiescing as quickly as she had. As Summer stepped out of the shorts, she revealed an untamed patch of pubic hair. Though Summer kept her legs clamped together, it was impossible to hide the fact that she was a natural blonde. Her bra was the last article of clothing to be shed, joining the rest of her clothes in a pile by Otoniel's feet.

"Happy?" she asked the chief.

While the other men around him at grown silent and were gawking at Summer's naked body, Pachacamac maintained the same neutral expression he'd been wearing since the end of his angry conversation with Otoniel. He simply nodded towards Summer's feet, indicating the boots and socks that she was still wearing.

"Wonderful," the biologist groaned. She was very careful about leaning down to untie her laces. If she squatted, the insides of her pussy were going to be on display for anyone there with her who cared to look. Instead, she bent over at the waist, consciously facing towards the men and leaving her exposed lower body away from the small group. Her breasts dangled down in front of her as she pulled at the boots, strangely free in a public place. She eventually kicked off the boots, and the socks along with them, and moved them closer to her clothes. Her panties and shirt were balled up and crammed as far as they could go into her left boot, eventually being placed back down in front of Otoniel.

Pachacamac smiled for the first time since they had arrived in the village, his teeth surprisingly white for a life of rural poverty. He reached behind his own neck, unfastened a necklace that he was wearing, and took a step towards Summer. The necklace itself was not much more than a series of eight sharp animal teeth attached to a piece of twine, but it obviously meant something to Pachacamac, because he took great care in trying to put it on the blonde girl.

"What is he doing?" Summer asked, annoyed at the intrusion into her personal space when she felt so vulnerable.

"That's his collar for you," Otoniel explained, continuing the cat metaphor. "That will let people know that you belong to him."

Summer was going to protest, but opted not to waste her breath. The chief, having placed the necklace on the young blonde girl, took a step back to marvel at the sight in front of him. Standing just a few inches shy of six feet, Summer was everything that Hollywood looked for - tall, blonde, and alluring. Though she had never been big into exercising back in the States, she was blessed with naturally flawless body. Her stomach was flat, her skin was unblemished, and her legs well toned from eight weeks of hiking around the valley. Her breasts were utterly perfect, not too large but not too small, and her nipples were situated so that they pointed upwards, and currently, outwards. Summer was a bit mystified as to why her nipples were hard the moment. She dismissed the idea that her strip show for Otoniel and the Huaca men had gotten her excited.

"Jaguar's teeth?" Summer guessed, fingering the necklace.

Otoniel repeated the question to Pachacamac, who replied in the affirmative. Though becoming more and more endangered throughout South America, the jaguar was still relatively prevalent in Bolivia's eastern borderlands.

"So what now?"

The two outsiders were led from the field back into the small village of Hanan Pacha. As they progressed between the huts and hovels that lined Hanan Pacha's main "street," Summer met the gazes of more and more Pachacamac's people. The chief himself strode right down the center of the village, a smile on his face indicating how proud he was of the exchange he had made. Hanan Pacha may have lost the use of their one and only truck for the next three days, but the naked blonde following Pachacamac back into town seemed to make everything all right.

Summer did her best to keep her head up high, trying to seem as indifferent to her nudity as much as possibly. Throughout the morning, she'd bumped into more than one topless woman in Hanan Pacha, and she kept reminding herself of this fact as she met the stares of villager after villager. Somehow, her nudity seemed completely different, entirely sexual in nature. As she met the eyes of an elderly Indian woman, who was topless herself, the realities of her situation sunk in - Summer herself was different.

The Huaca were dark-skinned people who had lived in the Oriente since before time began. And even Otoniel, though an outsider to Hanan Pacha, was still a mestizo whose native home was only a few dozen miles away. He was not Huaca, but his Quechua heritage made him more commonplace than Summer. Her nudity may have caused her to stand out, but her light skin and blonde hair would have attracted this much attention whether she was clad or not.

Her audience was both men and women. The concept of the men staring at her naked flesh was something that she could write off as simple, testosterone-fueled heterosexual lust. But there were just as many sets of female eyes raking up and down her body, drinking in the white skin, tan lines and all. Were they looking at her sexually? Or were they just comparing themselves to her?

The one thing that registered in Summer's mind, however, was the lack of children. If she were to walk down the center of the street back in suburban Babylon, she'd be exposed to just as many young kids as full-grown adults. But while there was the occasional set of young eyes on her, they were rare. As she reflected on this thought, it struck her as odd. Since the moment that they'd arrived in Hanan Pacha earlier that morning, Summer hadn't seen many young children. There were very few people that looked younger than thirteen or fourteen. Where were all the kids?

Pachacamac's home, though one of the nicest in the village, was still little more than a mud hut with a tin roof. But it sat at the end of the main drag, adjacent to a beautiful, crystal-clear pool. The pool itself was fed by the Rio Clemente, dropping what Summer guessed to be forty-odd feet from the cliff above the village in a breathtaking waterfall. Yes, Pachacamac's house left much to be desired, but he backyard would be the envy of any American.

There were women milling around the pool, where the water flowed onward down the Clemente, filling up jugs of water to take back to their own homes.

Summer wasn't looking forward to spending time with Pachacamac in the chief's cramped home, but she was looking forward to getting out of eyesight for a while. She had put on a good face as she walked through Hanan Pacha, but her nerves were completely shot to hell. While Pachacamac's home certainly wouldn't allow her any privacy from the chief himself, it would allow her a respite from the rest of the village.

Unfortunately, though, Pachacamac had other plans. Instead of leading her into his home, the Huaca chief led his newly acquired captive to the right side of the hut. Summer was confused, but as Pachacamac picked up a thick metal spike and long metal chain, the girl's confusion left her for a deep sense of fear and foreboding.

"What is he planning to do with those?" Summer asked her translator.

"Nooo," Otoniel moaned to himself, obviously understanding Pachacamac's intent. He ignored Summer for a few seconds, listening as the chief called for someone named Catequil.

"What is he planning to do with those?" Summer repeated her question, noticeably more worried.

"Livestock," Otoniel began. "Uywa." A large, strong man emerged from down the street, quickly joining his chief with a sledgehammer in his grasp. As Otoniel again explained the Huaca word for borrow that implied livestock and tools, the large villager began driving the metal spike into the ground.

"You're going to be kept outside," the translator explained in English. "The same way that one would keep a llama, or a sheep."

"I thought I was a cat!" the blonde screamed at her companion. She watched in horror as Catequil took a step back from the spike, which was now clearly embedded in the ground. Pachacamac was already securing one end of the chain around it, and Summer was sure that she knew what was going to be secured at the other end. "No!"

The protest was made to Otoniel, and it went mostly unnoticed by Catequil, Pachacamac, or any of the other villagers standing around. Otoniel, though, had clearly tired of fighting with the chief. He could argue until he was blue in the face, but he knew that any complaint would only be met with same death threat that Pachacamac had offered up before. He didn't want to disappoint Summer, or let her be humiliated yet again, but he knew where the argument would go even before it began.

Summer, thankfully, understood. She was usually all hellfire, but she had grown more and more resigned as the day wore on. Like Otoniel, there was little she could do, and rolling with the punches seemed like a much easier thing to do than fighting Pachacamac each step of the way. Was she happy about being chained to the ground like a llama or some other type of livestock? Of course not. But in current situation, this was the least of her problems.

And sure enough, Summer was chained to the spike. Pachacamac beckoned her closer, securing the metal links around her left ankle with a cheap-looking combination lock. The lock reminded the girl of her old high school locker back in Rhode Island, and the continued humiliation of being stripped and chained up behind the chief's home was further aggravated by the fact that he had decided to lock her there. Completely naked, devoid of shoes, and lacking anything more than a vague sense of direction back to Ambrosia's camp, Summer hardly saw herself as a flight risk; Pachacamac either saw differently, or simply liked the fantasy-turned-reality that he had created for himself.

Task completed, Pachacamac excused himself, leaving Summer and Otoniel alone behind his home. "Alone" may have been a stretch, however, as there were still quite a few Huaca just standing around, soaking in every detail of the naked American's body. Their attention soon began to wane, however, and eventually only a few women remained behind to get water, occasionally glancing in Summer's direction.

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It was close to an hour before Summer and Otoniel even said anything to each other. The naked girl had just taken a seat on the ground, clutching her knees to her chest, and staring off blankly into the waterfall in front of her. Otoniel, at first, had looked like he wanted to say something. But not finding the right words to comfort the girl, he dropped to the ground a few feet from her, staring in the opposite direction down the road.

Otoniel was playing absentmindedly with a stick in the dirt when Summer finally turned to him. Her eyes were puffy, and she wiped a tear from underneath them. She had been crying silently for some time.

"Do you have water?" Summer asked the translator.

Otoniel hesitated for a second, unsure of how to respond. He felt horrible about not being able to keep her out of the situation that they now found themselves in. "No," he finally responded, "but I have iodine."

"Do you have a cup?" Summer asked. She smiled gently as she added, "I think my chain here will probably let me reach the river."

It was a joke, but it was a joke that made Otoniel wince. He crouched over his backpack, finding both his empty water bottle and a packet of iodine tablets. He wasn't going to make Summer get her own water - after all that she'd been through, this was the very least he could do. After filling the bottle up in the pool and inserted the tablets, Otoniel ventured closer to his companion.

"I'm sorry for all this," Otoniel said gently. "These people....they just..."

Summer shook her head. "That's not why I'm crying," she replied through a sniffle.

Otoniel looked at her questioningly.

"Walter," the blonde girl explained. "Here I am, feeling sorry for myself about a few dozen people seeing me naked. And meanwhile, Walter is still thirty hours away from any sort of medical attention." She looked up at the mestizo. "He could die, Otoniel. And I'm sitting here and feeling sorry for myself."

The translator was quiet as he sat down alongside Summer, much closer than he'd been before. "It is very brave of you," he said, finally. "You've put Doctor Newcomb's life ahead of your dignity."

Summer sniffled again, the tears finally stopping. She took a sip from Otoniel's water bottle. "When do you think they'll be passing through San Eduardo?"

Otoniel glanced at his watch, seeing that it was already past four o'clock in the afternoon. "They should be going through San Eduardo around eight o'clock tomorrow morning. Doctor Castillo is there, and perhaps he will be able to help Walter. Perhaps Dr. Szalinski will be back by tomorrow night."

The thought was comforting, but the reality of the situation was doubtful. They'd met the "doctor" in San Eduardo when they'd first arrived, and Summer doubted that the elderly Cuban man knew much more about medicine than she did. Otoniel knew this, as well, but he was just trying to comfort her.

"Well," she began, "provided that everything goes smoothly for the rest of the night, I think you should probably be back in camp tomorrow morning to get Russ's call from town. He said that he'd radio from San Eduardo, so I think you should probably talk to him. See how Walter is doing. Explain what's going on here."

"I'll leave tomorrow at five," Otoniel nodded. It was a two-hour hike back to the camp, and the translator figured he should be there early, in case Russ and Anqas had made better time than usual. Turning his attention back to the nude woman sitting alongside him, Otoniel asked, "Are you sure? Will you be okay?"

Summer stared off into the waterfall. "Well, you said I'm a sheep, and not a sex slave. And I belong to the chief. So I should be okay, shouldn't I?"

"Yes," Otoniel replied with certainty. Neither one of them was convinced by the response, but it made them both feel better.

It was another few hours before the sun began setting. Around the village of Hanan Pacha, both Otoniel and Summer could smell dinner being cooked. There was idle conversation, and there were more than a few villagers who walked by Pachacamac's house, staring long and hard at the naked girl chained up by the pool. Summer didn't ask Otoniel to translate what they were saying about her, uninterested in hearing how the Huaca viewed her naked skin. Her knees were still tucked up against her chin, her arms wrapped around her legs; while the skin of her back was easily seen by those passing by, that was the only view that they were to get.

Summer and Otoniel passed the time by chatting with each other. They had spent nearly eight weeks together, but Summer still didn't know all that much about Otoniel's childhood, or growing up in the outskirts of San Eduardo. He explained the many differences between the Quechua, the Huaca, and some of the other smaller tribes that inhabited the Oriente. Summer talked about growing up in Rhode Island, going to college and graduate school in California, and eventually coming to Bolivia with Ambrosia Pharmaceuticals. They could not have come from more different places, and yet there were still enough commonalities that they were able to share the perspectives. They both had overbearing mothers and fathers that tended to drink too much. Both had enjoyed reading as children, Summer about animals and plants, and Otoniel about far away places like London or New York or Babylon. Life was life, no matter where one grew up, and people tended to be faced with similar challenges and similar moments of happiness.

Eventually, Pachacamac returned to his new piece of property, sitting cross-legged on the ground alongside Summer and Otoniel. Summer was not fond of the proximity, crunching herself further into a ball to prevent the chief from seeing more of her body.

Five others joined him, two men, and three women. Otoniel, after talking briefly with Pachacamac in Huaca, introduced Summer to Apotequil, Mancocapac, Chasca, and Yana. Apotequil was the village's priest, Mancocapac was the chief's brother, Chasca the chief's wife, Yana the chief's daughter, and Kulli a friend of Chasca. Mancocapac certainly let his eyes linger on Summer's body, but the rest of the Huaca treated Summer's nudity as a completely mundane thing. They ignored the fact that she was naked, interested in talking to her about America and what she thought of their little village.

Yana handed bowls to both Otoniel and Summer, filled with a strong-smelling mixture of what looked to be rice and beans. The spices on the dish were strong enough to make Summer's eyes water, even without putting the food into her mouth.

"Tacu tacu," Otoniel explained. "With llajhua. It's rice and beans with a spicy tomato and pepper sauce." The translator saw the skeptical look on the girl's face. "It's good."

Summer wasn't quite so sure. When it came to foods, and spicy foods in particular, she had never been very adventurous. Even though she'd been in Bolivia for two months now, most of her meals had consisted of bland American food that they'd carted down from Babylon, or Otoniel's culinary concoctions that took Peruvian and Bolivian dishes and toned them down for the mild palettes of the biochemists. She had to admit, though, that she was hungry, and leaned forward to scoop some of the dish.

It was nearly impossibly eat and keep from being exposed. Choosing the lesser of two evils, Summer let her legs drop from her chest, crossing them to hide her pussy. Mancocapac certainly noticed the now-evident breasts, but everyone else kept eating with little fuss made.

The llajhua was excruciatingly spicy, and Summer immediately reached for the beverage that Chasca had set down in front of her. Though the liquid was not anything that Summer had ever tasted before, she swallowed it down quickly.

"Slow down," Otoniel cautioned her. "That's aqha, corn beer. It has alcohol in it."

The group around the naked American burst into laughter, finding the sight of Summer desperately trying to get the spices out of her mouth outrageously funny. Yana, however, fetched another dish for her guest, setting down another bowl in front of her.

"No llajhua," she explained to the blonde. None of the hot spices.

Dinner rolled on, Summer becoming less and less inhibited about her nudity as she drank more and more aqha. They talked about Hanan Pacha, Babylon, and every in between. Summer finally worked up the courage to ask the question she'd been thinking about since the afternoon.

"Where are all the children?"

Otoniel translated the question, and the entire group got quiet. Apotequil, in a serious tone, explained everything to Otoniel, meeting Summer's eyes every now and then. Apparently, the women of Hanan Pacha, as well other surrounding Huaca villages, had not been able to get pregnant for some time. There were exceptions, of course, but the Huaca lived their lives afraid that they were being punished by the fertility goddess Sipusiki.

Summer, as a biologist, doubted that a native god had anything to do with infertility among the Huaca. Could it have been the water? Was the Clemente polluted with something? Was it their diet? She had a dozen different possible explanations, but there was little she good do but speculate.

By the end of dinner, Summer had a pleasant buzz, though she was far from drunk. Every now and then, she would forget about her nudity, but her inhibitions always came back. Her breasts were out there for anyone to see, her pussy on view every time she shifted her legs. Mancocapac, in particular, seemed to follow every shift, every movement made by the girl. Pachacamac and Apotequil weren't immune from the lure of naked white flesh, but they were less obvious in their glances, pretending as if nothing was out of the ordinary at this little dinner party.

Otoniel seemed to be having more difficulty, however. The translator made every effort to maintain eye contact with Summer, forcing himself to ignore the rest of her body. If Mancocapac was making her uncomfortable with his lascivious peeping, Otoniel was making her uncomfortable with his lack of such looks. Every time that he turned to talk to her, Summer was reminded that she was naked by his discomposure. Of all the men around the circle that night, Summer had to say that she felt the least awkward with the chief and the priest, both of whom were calm and casual.

Eventually, dinner ended, and the small gathering around naked, captive biologist dispersed. Chasca and Yana took the dirty dishes down to the Clemente, and Mancocapac said goodnight and disappeared down the street. Otoniel, giving a few last minute words of encouragement to Summer, excused himself with Kulli. He and Summer, together, had decided over dinner that he didn't need to stay with her all night. Kulli had extended an invitation into her home, offering to let the mestizo a place to stay in exchange for a small price. What that price was, Summer didn't know. But Kulli's hut was only about seventy-five feet away, meaning that Otoniel would be within earshot the entire night.

Apotequil and Pachacamac migrated a short distance away, settling down in a dark shadow not far from where Chasca and Yana were washing out bowls. Though Summer couldn't make out much more of them than their silhouettes, she could hear the low tones of the two men, murmuring back and forth to each other in their native tongue.

Summer herself wasn't looking forward to sleeping outside that night. She moved closer to the waterfall pool, sat down and began to clutch her knees to her knees to her chest. Her more private areas were on display in the direction of the pool, but as there was no one currently out there, that thought didn't concern her all that much. No, what bothered her more than anything was the dark. The sun had long since set, but up to that point she'd been surrounded by her translator and the Huaca. Even being naked around them, awkward though it may have been, seemed preferable to the spooky shadows, the sounds of the surrounding jungle, and the over-imaginative mind of the biologist herself.

A soft padding of footsteps began to approach Summer, and she readied herself to scream for Otoniel. But instead of Mancocapac coming back for a more physical examination of the blonde, Summer found herself staring up at Apotequil. For some reason, the priest's face seemed kind and trustworthy, and her racing heart began to calm. He showed her a big smile, and held out his hand. In it was a piece of twine, similar the one Pachacamac had given her earlier as a necklace. The piece of twine was significantly longer, however, and instead of jaguar teeth, there was a teardrop-shaped piece of metal attached as a pendant.

"Do I have to wear this, too?" Summer asked, annoyance plainly evident in the tone of her voice.

Apotequil didn't understand what she was saying, and she didn't understand the next few words that he spoke to her. But Summer managed to ascertain that he wanted her to stand so that he could put on the new piece of jewelry. Rather than fight him, Summer complied. Apotequil seemed honest enough; she didn't feel that she had much to worry about from him.

The twine was longer, Summer soon found out, because it was meant as a belly-chain, and not a necklace. The Indian man fastened it at the base of the blonde's naked back, the string hanging loosely over her naked hips. The pendant hung a little too low for Summer's liking, finding itself mixed up in her wild patch of pubic hair. Apotequil came around her, gave her a once over, and then turned back to where he had come from.

Summer was puzzled by what the belly-chain was for. The jaguar teeth necklace was to mark her as Pachacamac's property. She understood that. But the belly-chain and pendant were a mystery. She stood, staring down at the pendant for a few seconds, and puzzled over the possible meaning.

Apotequil had rejoined his chief a few dozen yards from Summer's position. Unlike before, though, she could now make out their faces in the light being cast from Pachacamac's pipe. Summer sat herself back down in front of the pool, trying to act as normal as possible. But every casual glance down the shore of the pool towards the river was met by two sets of eyes staring back up at her. Apotequil and Pachacamac suddenly seemed more interested in their day's prize.

Summer, oddly enough, experienced a dichotomy of emotions at the thought of the eyes on her body. She was at once disgusted by their perversion and embarrassed for herself, but also a little of some other emotion. Slightly shocked at herself, Summer had to admit that there was some part of her that felt a little turned on. She had never been the center of attention in high school, nor in college. She had always been the brain, the smart girl, and the good girl. It wasn't that Summer wasn't good looking - she was gorgeous - but she had always lacked that spark, that flirtiness and confidence in her body that attracted men to women not quite as attractive.

Now, thousands of miles from home, she was the focus of most of this little village. Even now, the eyes of the two most important men in Hanan Pacha were concentrated on her body. On her smooth, naked skin. On her round tits, and perky little nipples. On her tanned legs. On the pendant, hanging so close to a place so forbidden.

It was balmy in Hanan Pacha, warm enough that Summer wouldn't have to worry about being too cold to sleep. But her own body suddenly felt like it was radiating a significant amount of heat. She felt hot, even, as if the temperature along the pool had suddenly risen five or six degrees. She sat down in the dirt, her arms supporting her upper body behind her, and crossed her legs.

Down the shore of the pool, four eyes focused on her body through the dark.

Summer tried not to think about the chief and the priest. It had been a long, hard day. And it was going to be a few more long, hard days.

Was Pachacamac hard? What about the priest? What was going through their minds at that moment? Were they thinking about being wrapped with Summer's body? Were they wondering what it was like to be with a white girl? These questions rang through Summer's mind, as she herself formed mental pictures to accompany them.

She shook her head, wondering where all these thoughts were coming from. She leaned back, uncrossed her legs, and laid flat on her back, her knees still raised. Staring up at the stars, Summer began thinking about Walter and Russ, speeding along dirt roads and overgrown streets all the way to Guayaramerin. They would have been hard-pressed for time, even if the roads had been paved and clear, but things were hardly ever that easy in the far corner of Bolivia. But even as she thought of her friends, her mind drifted back upon everything that happened that day. She had undressed in a field. She had paraded naked through the center of this small, Indian town.

Back down the shore, the two men's faces, lit from the pipe, were still staring in her direction. They exchanged a few words between them, and then Apotequil stood. He strolled casually back along the shoreline to where Summer was laying in the dirt.

Summer's mind was still adrift, and she found herself absentmindedly fingering her necklace, running her hands beneath the twine and along the bare skin of her neck. She hadn't even realized that she was doing it, until she straightened up at the prospect of the priest reapproaching her. Apotequil grinned at the girl, crouched down along side her, and motioned for her to roll over. He wanted the belly-chain back.

Summer complied, rolling onto her right hip and allowing the Huaca man to unfasten the piece of jewelry. After he had done so, she rolled back into her original position, staring up at Apotequil and the night sky beyond him. He smiled again, stood, and walked back to his chief with the pendant in his hand. Summer stared after him, the mental picture of his body wrapped with hers still fresh in her mind.

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Summer awoke the next morning with a shock, feeling a hand on her naked shoulder.

She was lying on her right side, her legs curled up towards her body, with her back facing the village behind her. Despite not having a pillow, or a sleeping mat, or even clothes, Summer had slept relatively well. Throughout most her time in Bolivia, Summer had struggled to fall asleep each night, finding it difficult to rest in the heat and mugginess of Valle de los Reyes. But last night, whether it was because of the alcohol or the lack of covering, Summer had slipped easily into unconsciousness, and hadn't awoken until she felt the hand on her shoulder.

Jerking away instinctively, Summer rolled to face whoever it was that was touching her. Her left leg was tangled in the chain, but the biologist put enough distance between herself and the unknown person to allow her to turn around and see who it was.

Otoniel.

"Relax, Doctor Monroe," the translator tried to calm her. "It is only me."

Summer's heart was beating fast, her bare chest heaving in a panic. For a few seconds, all she had been able to concentrate on was that someone strange was touching her. Now, the realities of her nudity set in.

Covering her tits with her forearm, Summer asked, "What time is it?" She was sitting on her ass in the dirt, her pale flesh covered with sand and dust. Her hair was a tangled mess, filled with more of the same. She brushed dirt from her right cheek as she looked to the mestizo, awaiting his answer.

"It is five o'clock," Otoniel replied. "I am leaving for the camp, unless you want me to stay."

It was dark out, the sun still beyond the horizon. Despite that, Summer could see a few people milling about in the street of the village, carrying pots full of water or various farming tools.

Summer shook the cobwebs from her head, still more asleep than awake. "No, no. Check on Walter. I'll feel a lot better if I know that he's okay."

Footsteps began to patter closer to the American and the translator, and Summer looked beyond Otoniel to a familiar face - Kulli. But Kulli was wearing something that was familiar as well - Summer's white polo shirt. There was an exchange between Otoniel and Kulli, the Huaca woman giving a small package of food to Otoniel for his hike back to the Ambrosia camp. She smiled politely at Summer, but left the two outsiders alone after she had finished her business with the man.

Summer's eyes asked Otoniel what she wanted to know.

"Your shirt," Otoniel answered without ever hearing the question. "Nothing with the Huaca is free. I traded your shirt for a sleeping mat in Kulli's home."

The blonde stared after the Indian woman, dressed in an Ambrosia Pharmaceuticals polo shirt and a thin, native skirt.

"I'll pick you up more clothes from camp," Otoniel assured her. "And a couple of other things that I can trade with, so I'm not relying on your clothes again."

Summer nodded. Her mind drifted from the polo shirt back to her colleagues, who were racing toward Guayaramerin at that point. They'd probably been driving all night, afraid to go too fast in fear of slamming into a downed tree across the road, but afraid to go too slow in fear of losing Walter. Anqas, Punchau, and Russ were doing everything in their power to keep Walter alive, and Summer was back in Hanan Pacha, worried about a native woman wearing her shirt.

"Don't tell Russ about this," Summer said slowly.

"Que?" Otoniel asked, confused.

"Don't tell him," Summer repeated. Her eyes locked with Otoniel's, and she repeated herself one more time, "don't tell him. He's got enough to worry about with Walter, and the last thing he needs right now is one more burden. He can't turn around. He can't send someone back. There's nothing he can do, and it's just one more thing to worry about."

"But Doctor Monroe-"

"I'm serious, Otoniel." Summer looked down at her naked body, and then back up at the translator. "My self-consciousness really doesn't seem that important, given Walter's situation."

Otoniel nodded silently.

"Besides," the blonde offered weakly, "everyone in town has already seen me naked, right? What difference does it make if they get a second or third look?"

The translator was obviously conflicted, but Summer knew that deep down, he realized that she was right. They exchanged a few more words, Otoniel making sure that she would be okay with him gone, and then parted ways. As the first hints of sunshine began to appear beyond the eastern end of Hanan Pacha, the translator was already making his way into the jungle and back towards their camp.

The sun eventually broke the horizon, and the village came alive. While early risers had already gotten water and set out into the fields, the rest of the Huaca were only now joining them. Women, some of them as naked as Summer from the waist up, trudged towards the pool with buckets and jugs. Many of them waded right in, some of them dipping their hair and washing parts of their body. As they passed Summer, many of the women shot her nervous smiles, as well as the word, "Raphi!"

After a short while, Summer realized that "raphi" must have meant "hello," and began to respond in kind. This elicited a few giggles from the young women, and a few more complicated responses that Summer hadn't been expecting.

Still sitting in the dirt next to Pachacamac's hut, the naked blonde watched the town come alive. Men, dressed in native robes or more Western clothes departed from their homes out in the direction of the fields. A few others went about work around their houses, casting occasional glances down the road towards the American girl by the pool. By that point, Summer had dropped her arm from her chest, knowing that modesty was simply impossible, and that confidence was really the only way to get through however long she was going to be stuck in Hanan Pacha.

The odd blend of excitement and embarrassment from the previous night hadn't completely subsided. Though it seemed perverse, Summer had to come to grips with the fact that a part of her was somewhat excited about the nonchalant glimpses that the men took of her body. She, Summer Monroe, was not just a brain. She wasn't a biologist. She wasn't a college graduate, or PhD. She was a set of tits and pussy, to be looked upon with nothing but lust.

These men didn't know her. They'd never talked to her. All they had to judge her on were her physical features. And the attraction that they showed gave Summer some bit of pride, made her feel sexier than usual.

All this, of course, in addition to being mortified about sitting naked in a public place, moored to the ground with an old metal chain and a combination lock. No, this was not some sort of erotic dream; it was a shame-filled, uncomfortable situation that Summer wanted over.

Going to the bathroom, for instance, left Summer divided on what to do. The simple - and least embarrassing - solution was to wade out into the pool, and to relieve herself under the cover of the water. But even though the women of Hanan Pacha were rinsing themselves off in the waterfall's pool, Summer didn't think that she could piss in the town's drinking water. Instead, she waited for the least amount of eyes upon her, walked as far away as she could from both the town and the pool, and squatted. A small group of giggling twenty-something year old girls caught her, but Summer escaped this time mostly unseen.

The morning passed by slowly, and Summer spent most of it on the shore of the pool, dangling her feet in the water and sharing smiles with the women who came down to gather water. She became more confident in calling out hello ("Raphi!"), but most of the women kept their distance from the chief's new pet.

Chasca, dressed in nothing more than a blanket wrapped around her body, finally joined Summer an hour or so after sun-up. Neither woman could understand what the other said, so they kept quiet, for the most part. Chasca made an effort to teach Summer a few words - qacha was dried fruit and t'anta the bread that Summer had for breakfast. She didn't drink the water (yaku) directly from the pool, as she saw the Huaca do, but instead dipped Otoniel's water bottle in, and then followed the water with iodine tablets.

The two women, one dressed in a blanket, the other completely nude, sat on the shore of the waterfall's pool for some time. They were mostly silent, but every now and then Chasca would point at something and say its name. Summer kept up with the game as best she could, picking up the Huaca vocabulary about seventy percent of the time. "Alqo" was "dog." "Chaka" was "leg." "Wasi" was "house." For a short while, Summer's concern about her nudity faded away. Until the word "raka."

"Raka," Chasca repeated, pointing in the direction of Summer's naked crotch.

Summer, a bit concerned by the offhand way that the Indian woman was pointing at her vagina, crossed her legs.

"Raka," the chief's wife repeated, obviously waiting for Summer to repeat the word.

"Raka," Summer conceded, to Chasca's delight. The word for "vagina."

Chasca stood suddenly, as if the word had triggered something in her memory. Leaving the naked blonde by the shore of the pool, Chasca hurried inside her home. She returned a few seconds later with a pair of old scissors and her daughter. Yana was dressed in a similar fashion to her mother, wearing nothing but a blanket wrapped around her body. While Yana went around the back of the hut, Chasca grabbed the blonde girl by the arm, and pulled her up off her ass.

Behind the hut, Yana disrobed. Naked as Summer, the girl tossed her blanket over a long pole that stuck out of the corner of the back wall at a right angle, creating a screen to hide her nudity from the women further down the shore of the pool. There was a similar pole on near side of the hut, and as Chasca and Summer joined the chief's bare daughter behind he hut, Chasca similarly shed her blanket, hanging it as her daughter did over the other pole. The three women, all dressed in nothing more than a few odd pieces of jewelry, were completely hidden from three sides. Their makeshift booth was open only towards the pool, and no one along the shore of the pool, either towards the Clemente or away from it, could see inside.

Summer was a bit nervous about what was to happen, cut off from the rest of the village with the naked mother and daughter. Both women were easily the most attractive Huaca women in the village, with or without their clothing. Yana couldn't have been any older than eighteen - her small, firm breasts gave away her youth. Her body was pocked with a few birthmarks here or there, in contrast to the plain white skin of the American girl not far from her.

Chasca herself was probably only thirty-four or thirty-five, Summer guessed. She'd likely given birth to Anqas when she was just a teenager herself, younger than Yana was now. Her body was still in its prime, and the chief's wife could have passed for Yana's older sister, instead of her mother.

Both women had surprisingly smooth legs and well-groomed pubic areas, Summer noted without meaning to. Though Summer had shaved her legs only the morning before, such grooming habits had mostly fallen by the wayside in the months that she'd been in Bolivia. She hadn't been trying to impress any of her companions. There were days at a time when Summer hadn't even bothered shower back at the Ambrosia camp, getting more and more ripe as the week went on. Her legs had been shaved before coming up to Hanan Pacha, but if her pubic hair was a bit unkempt, she hadn't planned on it being on display for anyone.

Behind the hut and inside the provisional privacy screens was a wide array of pots, buckets, and jugs, some filled with water, some not. Yana took a seat on an overturned bucket, found herself a piece of cloth hanging on a hook overhead, and began washing her body with water from a large barrel. There was a single bar of Western-looking soap in a dish next to her, and it wasn't long before the girl had lathered up.

Meanwhile, Chasca had guided Summer to a small, metal drum towards the outer edges of the temporary shower stall. Summer sat, as she seemed to be expected to do, and was handed a cloth similar to Yana's, as well as a small cup.

To be fair, this particular "shower" wasn't much different to those that she'd been taking back at the camp. There was, of course, no running water anywhere in the Valle de los Reyes, and bucket showers were the norm. Still, Summer wasn't quite at easy with the nonchalant nudity demonstrated by the mother and daughter here with her, who were both calmly and casually cleaning themselves.

But the point of the shower, of course, was Summer's "raka." Obviously, the American's ungroomed pussy had caught the eyes of the chief's wife, and she intended to make Summer do away with it. When the blonde girl was handed the scissors halfway through the showering session, she knew what Chasca wanted her to do.

Had it been Pachacamac or Apotequil who had made the request, had it been the day earlier, Summer would have refused. She was here in Hanan Pacha, after all, being held as livestock against her will. What did she care about how her snatch looked? But Chasca was harder to refuse. The chief's wife had brought her breakfast, and then spent close to an hour that morning with her, teaching her a few dozen words in Huaca. Chasca had spent time with Summer when the girl had felt isolated and embarrassed. And even now, as Chasca handed the scissors to Summer, she was only doing so with the intent of being nice. It wasn't an order. It wasn't even a request. From the look in Chasca's eyes, she could tell that Chasca was only handing her the scissors because she thought it might be what Summer wanted.

And so, perched precariously on the edge of the overturned drum, Summer began snipping at that hair above her pussy, her "raka." She didn't go right to the skin, but she did go far enough that the outline of her labia could be seen through the light blonde hair.

The shower and grooming session complete, Chasca was the first to take her side of the screens down. Still soaking wet, she dried herself with the blanket, wrapping it around her body, and headed back around the hut with a smile towards Summer. Yana did the same, and Summer suddenly was on display again, being peered at from down the shore of the pool, as a group of old women did their laundry in the Clemente.

For twenty minutes, Summer hadn't felt as awkward about being as naked as she was. For twenty minutes, she'd only been as naked as the two other women, and only seen by the two other women. But now, clean and trimmed, she was again out in the open, livestock chained to the ground, owned by the chief of Hanan Pacha.

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Most of the day was relatively uneventful, and less stomach turning than Summer expected. Most of the village's men were in the fields, or out hunting, or off and out of Hanan Pacha for one reason or another. Sure, there were women everywhere, women who stared at Summer's naked body more openly than many of the men had. But while her nudity was embarrassing, Summer wasn't as afraid of being approached in Otoniel's absence. Pachacamac and Apotequil both floated around town, but neither man gave Summer the same perverted looks as Mancocapac had done the night before.

There was young boy, probably only six or seven, that bothered her for part of the day. He'd run up to Pachacamac's house, pull on Summer's chain, and then scamper away before Summer could do anything. She was livestock, all right. After the boy, whose name was Oqe, had done this seven or eight times, Apotequil finally caught him, gave him a spanking and a stern warning, and sent him on his way. Oqe left Summer alone for the rest of the day.

But Oqe was an exception in Hanan Pacha, and as Summer sat with Yana at lunchtime, she remembered her questions the night before. Where were all the children? Oqe was one of the very few children in the village, and he had amused himself alone for the better part of an hour, running up and teasing the naked American girl.

Summer looked over at Yana, wondering why Yana didn't have children, didn't have a husband. Chasca, Summer guessed, had at this point in her life given birth to two children, Anqas and Yana, but Yana was still childless. Yes, Yana was still young by American standards, but a lot of women her age already had three or four-year-old children in San Eduardo and Guayaramerin.

Sipusiki, the goddess of fertility, had apparently laid a curse upon the Huaca, preventing them from having many children. Summer wondered if it was just that way in Hanan Pacha, or if other Huaca villages in the Oriente were suffering from the same "curse." From what Otoniel had told her, it sounded as if the Huaca from all over Valle de los Resyes had been afflicted with Sipusiki's anger. Summer chewed her lunch, speaking up every now and then to say the names of her food in Huaca, but let her mind wander over the possibilities.

Was it the water? If so, then she or Russ would have found something weeks ago, when they were looking for oddities in Valle de los Reyes that could explain the tree frogs' extraordinary growth rates.

Was it their diet? Summer wasn't sure how different the Huaca diet was from other tribes in Bolivia, but she doubted it could have been too different. And as she had noted earlier, there didn't seem to be a problem with reproduction rates in the Quechua towns nearby.

It puzzled her, because she couldn't think of or see anything that might cause a drop-off in birth rates. The vegetation was the same as in San Eduardo, the diets were similar to those in San Eduardo.

As the sun began to set to the west, the men of Hanan Pacha began to drift back into town. They carried fruits, vegetables, and tools with them, out of the fields and down the main street to their houses. Their eyes found Summer's naked body down the street, still chained to where she had been that morning. The same mix of embarrassment and excitation that had hit her the previous night hit Summer again, and though she felt a bit perverted, Summer again had to admit that there was a part of her that was getting turned on.

She shifted her mind from all that, however. Instead of focusing on the eyes that were roaming her naked body, Summer walked out into the pool behind Pachacamac's hut, letting the cool water wash away the sweat and grit that she had accumulated that day from sitting in the dirt under the hot Bolivian sun. The chain dragged behind her, but was long enough to allow Summer to walk right up to the cliff wall. The pool was shallow, never getting so deep that the surface of the water reached past the bottom of Summer's rib cage. The bottom of the pool was surprisingly soft, as well, covered in a cushiony layer of silt.

Summer stuck her head under the waterfall, allowing the water to run down her back into the pool. Despite the forty-foot drop from the cliff above, the water didn't hurt as it contacted the blonde's body. It was slightly cold, but in comparison to the humidity that had dogged Summer all day, it was a refreshing break. She ran her hands through her long, blonde hair, letting the water rinse it out, as she turned to face the village from beneath the waterfall.

At that point, she heard a whistle. Not a catcall, but rather the whistle of someone trying to get her attention. Standing on the shore of the pool was the priest, Apotequil, with the belly-chain from the night before in his hands. Summer wasn't eager to leave the waterfall behind, but she followed her summons, wading her way back towards the priest.

Seated on the shore of the Clemente, a few dozen yards away, was a group of five or six young men, probably the same age as Yana. They all pretended to be rinsing their tools and talking casually among themselves, but their gazes kept returning to the naked blonde in the pool. Summer gave them all a sheepish grin when she caught them looking, bashful once again about her state of undress.

Apotequil met her three-quarters of the way back from the falls, her recently trimmed pussy just barely breaking the surface of the water. He smiled at her congenially, gently taking her by the left elbow and turning her away from him, away from the young men, and away from Hanan Pacha. His arms carefully wrapped around her abdomen as he handed the twine to himself, letting the silver pendant dangle down in front of Summer's cunt. As Apotequil tied the belly-chain behind the blonde's back, the twine again hung below her waistline, resting on her hips.

Task completed, Apotequil patted the girl on the outside of her right buttock, signaling to her that she was all set. Summer was a little taken aback by the unexpected contact, but not as bothered by it as she should have been. He was an old man, Summer told herself. He's not a real threat.

As if to drive the point home, Summer turned to face the priest and kissed him on the cheek. Shooting a teasing glance towards the young men on the shore of Clemente, Summer slowly fell back into the pool behind her, submerging her body in its entirety below the water.

"Why didn't I think of this earlier," Summer muttered to herself as she swam backwards towards the waterfall. Instead of parading around on the shore, exposing herself to the entire Huaca village, she could hide here in the pool, letting the water cover her naked body.

As she kicked her legs, the silver pendant repeatedly bounced against her vagina, rubbing up against the lips each time. Summer toyed with the idea of shifting it, but as it happened for the fifth or sixth time, she decided against it. The belly-chain, with the pendant hanging off of it, was almost like clothing - like a loincloth that didn't really cover all that much. And, though she had battled against the occasional perverted thought all day, Summer had to admit that it felt nice to have something make contact with her pussy. It was wrong. It was deviant. And it was naughty.

The young men by the Clemente still hadn't left, making Summer guess that this must be the longest they'd ever spent cleaning their farming tools after a day's work. The thought made her laugh a little bit, though she was far from comfortable with the staring. Six young men were all looking in her direction, waiting for her to break the plane of the water again, waiting to get another glimpse of her tits.

She wondered how many of their dicks were erect.

Her long, blonde hair floated in a puddle around her as she swam into the waterfall. Cool water came down forcefully on her head, clouding her vision but allowing her an escape from the eyes across the way.

Shocking even herself, Summer rose out of the water suddenly, her nipples completely erect as she stood under the cascading water. This'll give the little perverts a treat, she thought to herself as she guided her hands down her naked skin, from her the base of her neck, across her breasts, and down the front of her body. They disappeared below the water, and Summer let the men imagine where her hands went from there.

She turned away from them, allowing them to only see two-thirds of her naked back, and pulled her long hair in front of her.

"What am I doing?" Summer asked herself, suddenly aware that she had been putting on a pornographic show for the young Huaca. The last thing that she needed to do right now, alone and chained up in a Bolivian village, was to tease a bunch of horny young men. She glided backwards into the water, preventing them from having another look at her breasts.

The pendant again brushed against her pussy, and Summer was almost overcome with the need to follow it with her fingers. Masturbation had always calmed her down, always let her relax. Summer smiled as she remembered Organic Chemistry 35 in college, and how stressed she'd been throughout the semester. At that point in her life, she was single, dedicated to her courses and her grades, and the only way she knew to relax herself was through masturbation. She had been a fiend that term.

Summer wondered if that was what she needed now, to calm herself from the fact that she'd been naked for over twenty-four hours now, on exhibit for the Huaca. She had to admit that the idea sounded appealing, if more than a little infeasible. Nudity was one thing, but Summer certainly wasn't going to go through the humiliation of getting herself off in front of an audience. Even out here, in the pool, it would be plainly evident what she was doing.

She spun around as she paddled around the pool. The men were gone, but they had been replaced by others, a little older, but no less curious about the naked American. The sun had set, but there were still lingering red and orange hues overhead, casting long shadows across the Huaca that Summer could see.

The jostling silver pendant wouldn't let Summer forget its presence, though. It had probably been at least three weeks since the last time Summer had brought herself to orgasm. She'd only done it three or four times during their stay in Valle de los Reyes, usually preferring to wait until after dark, when she was in her own tent, before silently touching her clit.

But three weeks ago, Walter, Russ, and Otoniel had all taken a daylong expedition off into the jungle, leaving Summer alone at the camp. That morning, taking advantage of her solitude, Summer slipped back to her tent, slipped out of her skirt, and slipped her fingers into her pussy. For Summer, the best release had always been the loudest release, and for the first time in months, she'd been allowed to make as much noise as she wanted. She held back some, however, afraid that her colleagues might be near by and afraid for her safety. Even still, Summer had the best orgasm she'd had in Bolivia.

That had been three weeks ago, though. And while the fact that her arousal now embarrassed her, Summer had to admit that she wanted an orgasm. Bad.

She moved to adjust the pendant, but used the motion to dig the silver piece of jewelry into the top of slit, giving it one long, hard shove against her clitoris. Summer would have killed for more, and had even begun convincing herself that, under the cover of night, she could have gotten away with it.

But she needed to control herself. She needed to calm down. She needed to behave.

"Doctor Monroe!"

Summer's dreamy thoughts of self-pleasure melted away, as she flipped around and saw that Otoniel had returned. Apotequil, looking displeased with the return of the translator, was standing a few feet behind him, and gazing off towards the blonde girl.

The arousal didn't disappear completely as Summer swam towards the edge of the pool, but it gave way to stronger feelings of awkwardness. She could have stood and just walked towards Otoniel, but that would mean exposing herself once again, and she wasn't entirely looking forward to doing so just yet. So, despite the fact that her knees grazed against the soft dirt at the bottom of the pool with each kick, Summer kept swimming.

By the time that she had come a few feet from the shore, however, swimming had become a little ridiculous. She pulled herself up in the water, though she didn't get out. Instead, she sat on her knees about three feet out, the water just deep enough to cover up to the twine of her belly-chain. Her pussy, and the pendant that was set in front of it, were both below water, but her breasts were plainly visible to Otoniel, Apotequil, and anyone else that bothered to look in her direction. Soaking wet, water dribbled down her skin in the space between them, but also dripped from her still-erect nipples.

Otoniel had trouble speaking at first, losing his concentration due to the scene in front of him. But he coughed, regained his composure, and found Summer's eyes.

"Dr. Newcomb has stabilized," the translator reported. "I didn't get to talk to Dr. Szalinsky myself, because they have made better than they expected. But Dr. Szalinksy left a message with Senor Castillo at the post office."

As Otoniel made his report, Apotequil waded into the water, towards the blonde girl. Summer paid him little attention, even has he bent down behind her and began to remove the belly-chain once again. It was odd, she thought to herself, that he keeps putting it on me, and then taking it off. But she didn't bother fixating on it, more concerned with what the translator had to say. "What else did he say?"

"Not much," Otoniel continued as Apotequil sloshed away from them with the pendant in his hand. "Punchau and he have been applying more of that salve to the bite, and Doctor Newcomb is in better condition than they could have hoped for. Anqas is speeding like a maniac towards Guayaramerin. And the hospital there has been alerted to the fact that they are coming in sometime soon."

"They should already be there by now," Summer added. She wasn't wearing a watch - she wasn't wearing anything - but the sun had just set, and therefore she guessed it to be sometime around seven.

Otoniel nodded. "The message was from seven o'clock this morning."

Twelve hours ago.

If Russ turned around as soon as Walter was safely in the care of the people in the hospital, he could be back in Hanan Pacha by late afternoon the following day. She might only have to suffer this humiliation for another twenty-plus hours. The thought of Russ returning to Hanan Pacha, and finding Summer naked and chained up wasn't terribly appealing, but the thought of remaining naked and chained up for much longer was even less so.

"Anything about me?"

Otoniel nodded again. "Doctor Szalinski expressed his sympathy for having to leave you behind, and said that he hoped Pachacamac was treating you well."

"Fat chance of that," the biologist quipped as she fingered the chain around her leg.

"He said that he thinks they should be back for you by Thursday morning."

Summer's heart sank. Not tomorrow. But the next day. Two more nights of her naked body on exhibit for the Huaca.

"Well," she stated glumly, "I guess that means I get another full day to work on my tan."

Otoniel ventured a weak smile, but he knew how disappointed the American girl was. Still, Summer told herself, at least Walter was doing better. His life and death situation was more important for Russ than Summer's uncomfortable captivity in Hanan Pacha. She took a deep breath, sighed, and decided to not let the frustration show.

Otoniel had picked up a varied assemblage of clothes, equipment, and other items from the Ambrosia camp that day, carrying it back with him in a newly repaired jeep. Summer wasn't going to get her shirt back from Kulli, but Otoniel made sure that she wasn't going to leave Hanan Pacha in just her bra. As Otoniel described the clothes that he had brought for her, Summer couldn't help but wish for this ordeal to be over, for the opportunity to put clothes back on.

Otoniel had also brought equipment to trade with, expendable items like extra flashlights and gas-lamps. He was planning to sleep in the jeep that night, but he made sure that there were enough items to secure something from the Huaca if he needed to. And though the mestizo didn't tell Summer, there was a twenty-two-caliber pistol in the glove compartment, an insurance policy against things taking a bad turn for the outsiders here in Hanan Pacha.

But Otoniel had brought two things that interested Summer the most. The first was a hair elastic, and the biologist immediately pulled her wet hair back into a ponytail. The second was a bottle of chicha, a Bolivian liquor made from corn. Summer and Walter, together, had discovered the joys of chicha in La Paz - before Hanan Pacha, before Valle de los Reyes, before the trek out to the Oriente. It was strong, and Otoniel figured that, given the way Summer had imbibed aqha the previous night, she'd want to again get a little buzzed, and allow herself to be little less self-conscious. He figured correctly.

Summer took a shot of chicha right away, eliciting smiles and laughter from two old men smoking their pipes not far from where Summer and Otoniel were sitting. Obviously, they'd never seen a woman drink that way before, swallowing down hard alcohol straight from the bottle. And, given that the woman was a young, pale-skinned, naked American blonde, Summer was sure the sight was only that much funnier.

Dinner came a short while later, though it was much more formal than it had been the night before. Pachacamac sat with Apotequil, Mancocapac, Otoniel, and a good-looking young man introduced as Pariacaca, while Summer was seated with a handful of women twenty feet away. Judging by the looks shared between Pariacaca and Yana, Summer guess that the man was Yana's boyfriend, or suitor, or fiancé, or whatever the Huaca equivalent was.

Kulli, still wearing Summer's polo shirt, was seated to the blonde's right, and she was joined by Chasca, Yana, and others. A girl named Puka, probably Yana's age, couldn't keep her eyes off of Summer's body, and Summer began to wonder if Puka might be gay. Summer heard three words repeated throughout dinner: calato, sumaq, and yuraq. She made a note to ask Otoniel what they meant after dinner. Yuraq seemed to cause the most laughs whenever it was spoken, and Summer was sure that they were laughing at her. She combated her sense of awkwardness, however, by taking a few more gulps of chicha. The warm feeling brought forth by the alcohol helped fight the fact that she actually felt somewhat chilly, given her wet hair and still damp skin.

Dinner was a fish, called surubi, served with potatoes, or choqllo. Not nearly as spicy as the tacu tacu had been the night before, Summer was able to eat without fear of burning her tongue. She smiled and laughed along with the women around her, not having the slightest idea of what they were talking about. Her limited vocabulary allowed her to understand certain words, like "yaku" for "water," but she had no clue as to what the context was, or why the Huaca women were discussing water.

As it had the night before, dinner ended with Summer a bit tipsier than she had intended. Pachacamac's dinner guests began to depart, Mancocapac soaking up as much of Summer's body as he could before leaving. As Chasca and Yana cleaned and put the food away, Summer got up and walked towards Otoniel and the chief, cringing as she heard the chain dragging in the dirt behind her.

Summer sat down on the dirt Indian-style, without even thinking about how visible that made her pussy. She quickly changed her position, stretching her legs and crossing them out in front of her. But Otoniel had noticed Summer's new haircut in that time, and was obviously shocked by it. He locked eyes with Summer, desperately trying to hide both his stupefaction and his lust. His nervousness and obvious attempts at self-control again got under Summer's skin, and she felt better looking at the chief than her translator.

It wasn't that Pachacamac didn't look at Summer's body. He eyes ran over her legs, her stomach, and her tits even as they were sitting there. But he did so in such a casual manner that it made Summer feel like nothing was odd. Pachacamac would have looked at her like this if she were wearing clothes or if she wasn't. While Summer certainly appreciated this (especially in contrast to the edgy mestizo across from her), deep down, Summer wanted Pachacamac to be turned on. She wanted him to be excited. She didn't want him to look at her and treat her as if her lack of clothing was a mundane thing.

Despite the conflicting emotions, Summer felt comfortable around Pachacamac, the same way that she did around Apotequil. Even with all that the chief had put her through, he still generated a feeling of safety, and Summer knew that he would never do anything to hurt her. Humiliate her, maybe, but nothing that would cause her harm.

Fire flickering a few feet away, Otoniel shared a conversation with Summer and Pachacamac, allowing Summer to ask the questions that had been building up in her mind all day.

"They're waiting for the curse to be lifted," Otoniel translated, after Summer had inquired about Yana and Pariacaca. "Marriage for the Huaca is about more than just the man and woman - it's viewed as the seed from which families grow. Until they believe that Sipusiki's curse has been lifted, they will hold on their marriage."

"So they haven't even tried to have children?" Summer asked. "Whatever is causing the infertility in these people might not be afflicting Yana or Pariacaca. I mean, what about that little boy, Oqe? Surely there must be exceptions?"

Summer waited for Otoniel as the translator communicated the question to Pachacamac. Behind Otoniel, fireflies were blinking against the dark black backdrop of the jungle.

"You are right," Otoniel translated once the chief stopped talking. "Oqe is an exception. Pachacamac believes that these cases are rare, however. Years ago, the village was overrunning with children. But today, Oqe is one of a very few. Married couples, without children, are viewed with a stigma in the Huaca culture."

"So they're just going to hold off, without even trying?" Summer shook her head in disbelief. Whatever it was in the Huaca environment that was causing the impotency in the first place, there was no way to be sure that it was affecting Pariacaca or Yana, not without trying. "How many other couples are holding off marriage?"

"All of them," Otoniel translated after asking the chief. "There hasn't been a single wedding ceremony in Hanan Pacha for years now."

"So what you're saying," Summer began to say, putting the pieces together in her head, "is that no one, in the past however many years, has even tried to have a child? What about all the couples that were married before the curse began? Haven't they been able to have children?"

"That's where the exceptions like Oqe have sprung from. Pachacamac believes that while the curse is cast over the Huaca people as a whole, but it is especially potent over young couples. Sipusiki is angry with Hanan Pacha, Ch'umpi, Sumaq Wasi, Uca Pacha, and other Huaca tribes in the valley."

The water was fine, because Summer and her colleagues would have caught abnormalities during their research. The diets were fine, almost identical to the diets of the Quechua in San Eduardo. It seemed that the only thing keeping children from being born to the Huaca was the Huaca culture itself. They weren't having children because they weren't trying, and they weren't trying because they didn't think they could have children. It was idiotic. It was insane.

"Do you realize how crazy that is?" Summer asked Pachacamac directly. "Just how preposterous the whole thing is?"

Otoniel translated, but the chief just laughed.

"It's not funny! If you'd just let Yana and Pariacaca get married, they could have children! The only thing standing in their way is the fact that they're not having sex with each other!"

Otoniel translated again, though he toned down the exasperation in Summer's pleas.

"Otoniel," the biologist said, turning to the translator, "They're going to wipe themselves out, simply by believing in some backwards curse that probably doesn't even exist!"

Pachacamac stood as he responded to Otoniel, brushing dirt off his pants. He walked away from the two outsiders when he had finished talking, leaving the mestizo to tell Summer what he had said.

"You are an American. And you think like an American. You are a scientist. And you think like a scientist. But the world is more complex than American science can explain. This is a Huaca curse, affecting the Huaca people, because of the displeasure of a Huaca deity. Children will come when Sipusiki forgives the Huaca, when Sipusiki has been appeased."

Hanan Pacha got quiet after dinner. Given that most of the villagers got up with or before the sun, it wasn't all that surprising. But the silence of the small village stood in stark contrast with the squawks, buzzes, and chattering that emanated from the jungle. The previous night, Summer had simply passed out in the dirt outside of Pachacamac's home. Though she had certainly gotten inebriated, she wasn't as drunk as she'd been the previous night, and found herself struggling to fall asleep.

The blonde girl, still as naked as she'd been all day, lay on her back in the dirt, her hair tucked into a ponytail under her and her knees in the air. Her naked slit, now nearly devoid of the hair that had helped cover it yesterday, was pointed away from the chief's hut, directed into the shadowy jungle that lay beyond. Water falling from the cliff above and into the pool helped drown out some of the more frightening sounds of the Bolivian jungle, but Summer was nonetheless unnerved by the occasional growl far off in the night.

They were the same sounds that she'd been hearing for months in Valle de los Reyes, Summer told herself. Nothing had ever tried to get her in her tent back at the Ambrosia camp. There wasn't any difference now. Even if she was outside. And naked. And chained to the ground.

Summer thought about her daydreams that afternoon in the pool, about masturbating herself to release and relaxation. She wasn't quite sure what had come over her, but part of it remained. Could she get away with that out here? No one was walking around town. Everyone was in his or her home. And it was dark enough that even if someone were out, they probably wouldn't know what Summer was doing.

She shook the thought from her mind. She may have been paraded through Hanan Pacha without her clothes, and kept on display at the chief's house for the village to come and stare at, but she wasn't a whore. She wasn't some slut, getting off on the thought of all these people, all these men, all these women, looking at her body.

Was she?

Masturbation fantasies were pushed aside. The stars gave off too much light. It was still too early in the night. And no matter how much she might have wanted to, she simply couldn't bring herself to do so in such a public place.

And so, Summer returned her thoughts to the stars overhead and to the hopes of falling asleep. Like the night before, it was still warm, even with the sun down. Though she had been a bit chilly as the water dissipated off her body at dinnertime, Summer again found herself surprisingly comfortable, dressed in nothing and outside. If anything, it was still a bit warm for her to sleep, though not as bad as it usually was in her tent, dressed in the shorts and tank top that she wore as pajamas. Maybe I need to start sleeping naked when I get back, Summer told herself. That would be a few degrees cooler, in any case.

When she got back. Would they even continue with their research back at the camp? Walter was seriously sick, and in danger of dying. Would Ambrosia keep Russ and her there, even if Walter died? Would they pull them out, even if Walter lived? Though studying the Bolivian tree frogs hadn't been exactly what Summer wanted to do with her doctorate, the thought of leaving the research unfinished was disheartening. Now that she was in Valle de los Reyes, now that she'd seen the astonishing growth patterns of the amphibians, she was genuinely interested.

Summer began to drift in and out of consciousness as her mind hovered over frogs, her colleagues, and her own naked body.

And then, she felt something against her neck. Summer groggily opened her eyes, and found herself staring into the eyes of a big, black cat. A jaguar.

Any drowsiness that Summer had been feeling disappeared instantly. She was suddenly awake with absolute terror, unsure of what to do or how to act. The warmth that she'd been feeling from the balmy Bolivian night vanished, and her blood felt like ice in her veins.

The biologist was still lying on her back, staring up towards the sky. But now a jagaur was straddling her body, standing directly above her and sniffing the necklace that she wore. The necklace of jaguar's teeth.

The cat pulled away from her again, once more locking eyes with the naked blonde. Summer was frozen with fear, locked in her sleeping position, and feeling the jaguar stare her down. This was a female, Summer told herself. She was unsure of how she knew, but she somehow just sensed it.

Seemingly satisfied with Summer, the jaguar gave her one last, brief sniff and then turned towards the jungle. She trotted away, leaving behind a blonde girl that couldn't move, couldn't speak, and could barely breathe.

Summer lay in the dirt, running through what had just transpired. She was sweating profusely, even if her body felt frigid up and down her spine. She wanted to call out, but she wasn't sure for what, or for whom. Instead, she managed to roll onto her stomach, pushed herself off the ground, and crawled on her hands and knees to the water's edge.

Her reflection, as she stared down into the water, was barely visible in the dark. But if she had been able to make herself out better, Summer was sure that she would have been pale white. She let her blonde hair down, pulling out the hair elastic, and splashed some of the water from the pool on her face. Her heart rate began to slow, and the shivering stopped.

Though she was justifiably unnerved by her experience with the jaguar, Summer knew she had to calm down. In order to do so, she kept crawling forward, down off the dirt and into the pool. She crawled until the water was deep enough to swim in, and then paddled herself towards the waterfall. Steadying herself against the cliff wall, Summer stood up from the pool and into the downrush of water from above.

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Summer awoke the following morning with a tug on the chain around her left ankle. The sun was up, and the village had begun to bustle, but Summer had somehow slept through it all from the mud puddle she called a bed. She was lying only a few feet from where Catequil had driven the spike into the ground, and she was caked in dried mud. Sopping wet and exhausted, Summer had come to shore the previous night and just dropped herself onto the ground. The water from her body and the earth beneath her combined into a nice layer of mud on the naked blonde, finding its way onto her face, into her hair, and even inside her right ear.

But what woke her was Oqe, jerking roughly on the chain that bound her in place. Summer repeatedly blinked her eyes as she awoke, catching glimpses of Otoniel chasing the little boy away.

Summer sat up, brushing away some of the dirt from her besoiled face, and smiled up at her translator.

Otoniel gave the girl a once-over, but then made sure to maintain eye contact. Still, he couldn't help observing on her state of uncleanliness. "You know, you probably should have dried off before you laid down and went to sleep."

"I was going to," the girl replied, "but I left my towel in the pool house."

Otoniel chuckled.

"So what's it say on the day-planner for today?" Summer asked as she stood up. As she waited for a reply, she bushed the dried earth from her body.

"Same as yesterday, I guess."

"Well, then," Summer began, "I can see that we are going to have a very special day. I've already had my mud bath, apparently, so perhaps I'll clean myself off in this state-of-the-art tropical pool. After my morning shower in this luscious rainforest waterfall, I think I will have breakfast brought to me - the finest breakfast this side of the Rio Clemente, complete with the finest fruits and breads of Bolivia's enchanted Far East, the Oriente. Afterwards, I'll spend your day tanning myself in the nude, all while commanding the attention of few dozen indigenous villagers."

The translator couldn't help but laugh at Summer's spiel. "Looking on the bright side?"

"It's all up here," the girl replied, point at her head. But the fantasy tropical vacation did have a few drawbacks. "Can you turn around?"

"Turn around?"

"Yes, face the other way. I need to use the 'facilities.'"

Having Otoniel turn around while she squatted in the dirt away from the hut was actually fairly ridiculous, being that there had to be a dozen Huaca men and women watching her every move. She had relieved herself yesterday morning with only a small audience, but as the day had worn on, she had realized that she was never going to be able to piss without someone watching. It was still mortifying, of course, but she had grown to accept that she didn't have any alternatives. But while the watchful eyes of the Huaca didn't bother her as much as they had the day before, Summer still didn't think she could let Otoniel see her squat like that, out in the open.

Under the waterfall, as Summer rinsed the dirt from her body and her hair, she played back the scene that had unfolded the night before. A jaguar, a jungle cat, had found her half-asleep outside, sniffed her once or twice, and then just sauntered back into the shadows. Should she tell Otoniel? Should she have Otoniel tell Pachacamac? What if the cat came back that night?

Ultimately, as Summer waded hip-deep in water back towards the shoreline, she decided to keep her encounter to herself. She had been terror-stricken the night before, but with the encounter behind her, there was something almost magical about it. Sharing such a meeting would somehow pollute the mysticism, and Summer couldn't see much harm with keeping the jaguar a secret. At least for now.

Breakfast, as it had been the day before, consisted of fruits and bread, with a few pieces of stale cheese that Summer wished she'd never put into her mouth. Unlike the day before, however, Otoniel was always hovering around her. Breakfast wasn't spent with Chasca and Yana, but with Chasca, Yana, and Otoniel. And though it was somewhat nice to know what Chasca and Yana were saying, Summer was soon wishing that it had taken her translator a day longer to fix the jeep. Having him there, constantly averting his eyes, constantly on guard against others coming too close to her, only served to remind Summer how naked she really was.

She put up with him, however. He was looking out for her best interests, and if he made her a little more uncomfortable than she already was, perhaps it was worth it. Perhaps it was worth having someone else around to look out for her, to prevent something bad from happening. Perhaps.

"Naked," Otoniel translated while Yana and Chasca were bathing behind their curtains again. Though Summer hadn't understood what the women had been saying about her the previous night, she had remembered the words themselves, and "calato" was the first she asked Otoniel to translate.

"And 'sumaq'?"

"Beautiful," Otoniel replied.

Summer blushed. She had thought Puka and the others had been making fun of her, but instead they'd been commenting on how beautiful she was. "What about 'yuraq'?"

The mestizo laughed a bit. "White."

Summer looked down at her body. After spending the entirety of yesterday in the Bolivian sun, she certainly wasn't as white as she'd been two days ago. But even with her body beginning to darken with an all-over tan, Summer was pale white against the dark, brown skin of other women in the village.

She talked with Otoniel for a while longer, and had the translator teach her more and more Huaca. "Ari" was "yes." "Mana" was "no." She learned body parts, from her "chaki nanu" ("ankle") to her "pupu" ("bellybutton") to her "makis" (hands) to her "ñuñus" (breasts). And she tried stressing to Yana that the curse afflicting the Huaca villages throughout Valle de los Reyes was nothing more than superstition, and that Yana should sleep with Pariacaca to prove it so. But Yana was like her father, and sex out of wedlock was completely unthinkable to the Huaca, and wedlock without children was more of a disgrace than remaining single.

The morning passed slowly, but without incident. Summer passed most of it continuing her Huaca lessons with Chasca and Otoniel, lying on her back by the pool. If she was going to be stuck outside, in the nude, then she was going to leave Hanan Pacha with the best tan she'd ever had.

Most of the men in the village had disappeared into the fields and the jungle again that morning, but began to drift back around noon, carrying a lot more food than they had the day before. When Otoniel asked Chasca about this at lunch, he was told that there was to be festival that evening, what Chasca called "Phancha."

"Phancha?" Summer asked, not quite sure that she liked the sound of a party. She had the feeling that, instead of passing the evening getting drunk on chicha with Otoniel and Pachacamac's family, she was going to be made the center of attention.

Otoniel looked a bit baffled. "It's like a spring festival, a celebration of the start of the growing season." He paused, furrowing his eyebrows in confusion. "I don't know why they're celebrating so late in the season, though."

Summer knew, however. "It's because of me, isn't it? This was probably decided upon since I got here, since I've been chained up here alongside the chief's house."

It was evident that Otoniel shared the same opinion, but he pretended as if he didn't. He shook his head, saying, "No. Phancha has never been about guests. If this were a party for you, or a party because of you, she'd be using a different word."

He pressed Chasca for more information, but the chief's wife remained tight-lipped. She gathered up the bowls and the left over empanadas, ignoring the translator's continued questions.

The two outsiders watched as the festival was prepared. Smoke from cooking fires emanated from huts all over the village, flowers were picked and strung together on long pieces of twine, and Catequil, Pariacaca, and a number of other younger men hiked up and around the cliff above the waterfall. Summer wasn't happy about being stared at from a whole new direction.

Apotequil appeared an hour or two after lunch, as Summer and Otoniel were watching a pair of teenaged girls perform a dance called the auqui-auqui from afar. And, as he had done the previous two days, he produced the belly-chain, large silver pendant and all. Summer didn't even have to be directed to do anything - she simply stood up and turned around, presenting her backside to the priest.

Otoniel, though, had suddenly gone blank. And after muttering something to himself and telling Summer he'd be right back, he dashed away from the pool, out to beyond Kulli's hut, where the jeep was parked.

Neither Apotequil nor Summer had any clue what had just happened, but the Indian man fastened the twine together at the top of Summer's buttocks, and the pendant once again found its way to its resting place on top of her pussy.

Apotequil took a few steps a way, intending to return to whatever it was that he'd been doing before adorning the biologist with the jewelry. Summer began to hunker back down on the dirt. Neither of them, however, completed their actions, due to the Ambrosia Pharmaceuticals jeep that was barreling up the main road of Hanan Pacha.

Otoniel, behind the wheel, slammed on the brakes just feet from where Summer and Apotequil were parting ways. He slid out of the vehicle quickly, brandishing a handgun in one hand and a set of bolt-cutters in the other.

Barking at the elderly priest in Huaca, Otoniel put himself between Summer and Apotequil, pointing the gun directly in his face. Apotequil backed away slowly, but the shouting and the roaring engine had brought attention to the three people by the pool. Catequil, Pariacaca, and some of the other young men that had been up above the waterfall for most of the afternoon reappeared on the far side of the Clemente, all with concerned looks upon their face. Mancocapac, joined by villagers from all over Hanan Pacha, flowed down the street and towards the commotion. Pachacamac and Chasca emerged from their own hut, Pachacamac wasting no time in adding his voice to the cacophony of shouting.

Summer still had no clue what was going on.

Pachacamac's progress towards the outsiders was halted when Otoniel directed the gun at him, and as other Huaca came closer to the scene, the translator kept redirecting the pistol, keeping them as far back as he could.

"Hold the gun!" he ordered Summer in English. "Hold the gun!"

Summer did as she was told, taking the weapon from the mestizo, and swiveling her body to hold back the crowd that had begun to encircle them. Otoniel, meanwhile, used the bolt-cutters to snip through the chain without difficulty. He tossed the tool towards the jeep, and snatched the gun back from the naked blonde.

Grabbing Summer's right wrist in his left, Otoniel yanked the girl behind him as he walked towards the driver's side of the jeep. In the process of doing so, he made sure to direct his gun at anyone standing in his way, clearing a path from Summer's broken chain to their getaway car. Still screaming at Apotequil and Pachacamac, he pushed the girl into the jeep, and, sans clothing, Summer crawled awkwardly into the passenger's seat. She understood very little of what Otoniel was saying, but she did hear the name "Sipusiki" and the word "raka." Otoniel carefully backed in behind her, sitting down without once shifting the gun from the people closest to him. And, in one fluid motion, the mestizo slammed the vehicle into reverse, tearing backwards through Hanan Pacha.

Looking back into the crowd, Summer noticed that there wasn't anger on the faces of the Huaca, but rather disappointment.

The translator didn't slow down until he finally reached the last in the row of houses that lined the village's small street, and only then did he quickly turn around and speed forwards out of Hanan Pacha.

"That charm that you're wearing," Otoniel asked through clenched teeth as they bounced along the dirt road, "that was the same one that you were wearing yesterday? The one that I saw the priest take off you?"

"Yes," Summer replied, realizing that it was the first word she'd spoken since the whole incident had begun.

"Mierda!" Otoniel cursed, banging his fist against the steering wheel. "I should have noticed yesterday!"

Still naked, and gripping the arm rests of the passenger seat for dear life as they bounced down the dirt road, Summer tried to get a grip on the situation. This was because of a piece of jewelry.

"What just happened?" the blonde asked, grabbing at the seatbelt next to her. She pulled the shoulder strap down between her tits, somewhat shocked to find that her nipples were rock-hard.

"That charm that you are wearing around your waist?"

"Yeah?"

"It's a fertility charm."

The pieces fell into place in Summer's head. The women of Hanan Pacha couldn't conceive children, but the Indians hoped that they'd be able to have a baby with an outsider, a blonde, an American. That must have been what the festival was for - they were going to try to get her pregnant. Disgusted, Summer spat out, "They were going to fuck me after all. They were just waiting for a party."

"No," Otoniel replied, contradicting Summer's theory. "You are an 'uywa.' You are a domesticated animal."

Summer's head was spinning, still trying to sort out everything. On top of that, her breasts were beginning to hurt as they bounced wildly around on her chest, the jeep hitting pothole after pothole going full tilt.

"You need to slow down," Summer told her translator. "We must already be a mile out of Hanan Pacha, and I seriously doubt that the Huaca can run forty-five miles an hour."

Otoniel complied, but only slightly. The jeep continued its rapid escape from the Indian village.

"We'll stop at the camp, pack up everything that is necessary, and take the road towards Guayaramerin," he told the girl.

Summer nodded. "Otoniel! Otoniel! You need to tell me what is going on. Why did we just run away? What is this pendant that I'm wearing? And why were you shouting about Sipusiki and my cunt?"

Though the translator was visibly shaken by the girl's choice of words, he did his best to explain to her everything that had just transpired. "Phancha is more than a spring festival. It is a fertility festival, celebrating new life of plants, animals, and even children. The word "phancha" itself is derived from the Huaca term for "blossoming," the way a flower opens up."

"But if they're not going to sleep with me, then what am I wearing this pendant for? How am I involved?"

"There is a ritual - I should have remembered this sooner! - There is a ritual, known as T'ojsiy. In times when the Huaca believe that they owe an apology to the fertility goddess, they make a sacrifice to her, using livestock. Uywa. You."

"They were going to sacrifice me?" Summer honestly couldn't picture Apotequil killing her. She had never felt in harm's way with him.

"Not in the manner that you are thinking, Doctor Monroe. The word 't'ojsiy' itself means explosion. Like fireworks. Or like an orgasm."

Summer still wasn't quite sure what Otoniel meant. Brow furrowed, she began, "But if they weren't going to fuck me, then how..."

"I don't know the English word for it," the mestizo replied. "Like a stick. A fake penis."

"Dildo."

"Dildo," Otoniel repeated.

The Huaca were going to have her dildo herself to orgasm, believing that doing so would appease a native fertility goddess, who would then allow children to be born to them once again.

No, she wouldn't be the one using the dildo, Summer corrected herself. She was livestock. Uywa. Someone was going to do it to her.

"But why me?" Summer asked, staring blankly into the jungle that was rushing past her window. "Why not real livestock? Why not a llama? And for that matter, why not one of the women in the village? Yana? Puka? Kulli?"

"I don't know," Otoniel replied. "They must have already tried. Perhaps this spring, at a Phancha they may have already held. I don't know."

"Do you think they tried with another girl?"

"I don't know. I have never seen the T'ojsiy performed. I had forgotten all about it. I haven't heard of it being performed since I was a little boy."

There was silence from both the biologist and the translator as Summer came to grips with what the Huaca wanted her for, what Otoniel had explained to her, and with what she was now considering.

"Stop the jeep," Summer finally said, after spending almost five minutes gazing silently at the glove compartment.

"What?" Otoniel replied. "No!"

"Stop!"

"No!"

Summer was getting angry now that Otoniel, who was technically her employee, was not listening to her. "I said stop."

The translator considered the order for a second, guessed the distance he had put between them and Hanan Pacha, and slowed the vehicle. He threw up his hands in exasperation as they came to a full stop, and turned to the blonde. "What?"

"I need to go back."

Otoniel had heard enough. He reached for the shifter, intending to put the jeep back in gear and continue towards the camp. But Summer reached over and pulled his hand away. She was serious.

Otoniel could tell by looking in her eyes that her mind was made up. He couldn't mistake the determination there. But she didn't know what she was doing, she didn't understand the full implications of what she was saying.

"No," he said firmly.

"Yes," she countered.

"No."

"Otoniel, you were hired to help us. You were hired to take us where we wanted to go. And right now, I want to go back to Hanan Pacha."

"Doctor Newcomb hired me," Otoniel corrected her. "And he hired me to translate for you in Bolivia, to protect you out here in the Oriente, to look out for your best interests when dealing with native Bolivians and campesinos. And this, Dr. Monroe, is not in your best interest."

"It's not," Summer agreed. "But what are we down here doing? Studying frogs? Otoniel, I've been studying amphibian biology for at least five years now. And what has come of it? What has my research ever done for other human beings? Nothing.

"You know, and I know, that this curse of Sipusiki is preposterous. These people have convinced themselves that they can't have children, and therefore don't even try to have children. And I can tell them again and again that it's just a self-fulfilling prophecy, but they're not going to believe me.

"But for some reason, they seem to believe that me having an orgasm will somehow appease their angry goddess, and that they'll be able to have children after that. And if I suffer a little more humiliation - okay, a LOT more humiliation - then isn't it worth it?

"I'm not going back there to get off. I'm not going back there because I'm some sort of exhibitionist slut. I'm going back there to give people like Yana and Pariacaca hope. I'm going back there to convince them that their curse is over, and that they should at least try to get pregnant."

Summer looked over at Otoniel, believing that she'd persuaded him to drive her back.

But Otoniel hadn't been won over. "No."

"Fine," the blonde replied. "Then I'll walk."

She unclipped her seatbelt, opened the car door, and stepped out. She slammed the door behind her, and began padding barefoot back towards Hanan Pacha along the muddy road.

Otoniel let out an exacerbated breath. Turning, he stared after her as she began her long hike to the Huaca village. Her blonde hair was tied in a ponytail behind her. The necklace full of jaguar teeth still hung around her neck. The belly-chain hung loosely over her hips. And a good foot and a half of chain, still locked around her left ankle with the combination lock, dragged behind her. Her bare back was facing him, her tight, tanned ass wiggling back and forth as she walked away.

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"What am I doing?" Summer asked herself under her breath. The long speech she'd just given was as much about convincing Otoniel as it was about convincing herself. The last thing she wanted to do was what the Huaca were essentially asking of her. She had thought about masturbation the previous night, in the dark. She had thought about it during the day yesterday, wondering to herself about whether or not the men on the shore were erect.

Well, she mused, if they weren't hard yesterday, they're sure as hell going to be hard tonight. Maybe they'd put their hard dicks to good use and actually sleep with some of the women in the village.

The thought of the entire village of Hanan Pacha returning to their huts, all having sex at the same time, did amuse the naked blonde. The idea that they might be thinking about her as they did so excited part of her, as well.

Was she crazy? Was she out of her mind? Summer wasn't sure. She knew that once she was back in the village, once she was stretched out on some altar, once Apotequil or Pachacamac picked up the dildo and began to approach her - she wasn't going to feel quite as courageous as she felt now. But as she had told Otoniel, if a little bit of degradation on her part was enough to dispose of the idiotic curse in the minds of the Huaca, then it was worth it. If she didn't do this, then it was very possible that the entire Huaca way of life might disappear in the near future.

Summer heard the engine behind her roar back to life, and sensed Otoniel coming up behind her. When she turned to look at him, she found that he had circled around, and that the jeep was now pointed back in the direction of Hanan Pacha.

"I don't like this," Otoniel said gruffly as Summer got back in the jeep. "And Dr. Szalinski won't like this, either."

"Then don't tell him," the girl replied, equally abrupt. God, please, please don't tell him, she thought to herself.

As they began their drive back towards the village, Otoniel told her, "Your clothes, from the camp, are in the back."

Summer considered this for a minute, but stayed facing forward, wearing just the two pieces of jewelry that she had on. "No, if I put something on, it's just going to be harder to undress again."

She'd been naked for almost forty-eight hours at that point. Putting clothes on for the ten-minute drive back seemed unnecessary, and parting with the clothes again was more than Summer thought she could handle at that point.

"If I'm going to do this, I need you to do two things for me," Summer said, looking at her translator.

Otoniel grunted. He'd do what she wanted. He wasn't going to be happy about it, but he'd do what she wanted.

"The T'ojsiy is usually performed on animals, right?"

A silent nod.

"Just make sure that the...the...the dildo is boiled, okay?" Summer shivered at the thought of what else it might have been used on. She then shivered at the thought of the dildo itself. "For that matter, make sure that I don't see it until it's time."

"Yes."

"And we still have a half bottle of chicha left, correct?"

"Yes."

"I don't know if that's going to be enough," the blonde stated. She certainly wasn't going to go through with this sober. "See if you can scare some more up. Trade a flashlight, or more of my clothes, I don't care."

"Yes."

As they got closer to the village, Summer began to feel a familiar emotion. Not fear. Or shame. But anticipation. She had wanted to cum last night, and now she was going to get her chance...in front of an audience.

The villagers were none too happy about seeing Otoniel again, but the downtrodden expressions that Summer had noted as they had peeled out of town vanished upon seeing the naked blonde. The preparation for Phancha had halted, and people were still milling around by Pachacamac's hut. Summer noted that it looked like some of the girls, Yana and Puka among them, had been crying since she'd left.

Summer and Otoniel, together, sat down with Pachacamac, Apotequil, and Chasca inside of the chief's home. The rest of the village waited anxiously outside while Summer and Pachacamac hammered out details. Summer would take part in the T'ojsiy, as the chief wanted. She'd do whatever he wanted, behaving just like any other animal that they put through the ritual.

But afterwards, after Summer had orgasmed and appeased Sipusiki, the arrangement made between her and Pachacamac was over. She'd be allowed to get dressed and go back to her own camp, even though Anqas and the truck would not be back from Guayaramerin until the following morning.

Terms agreed upon, Pachacamac stood and departed the hut, announcing the good news to his villagers. There were cheers and sighs of relief, and Summer knew that she was doing the right thing.

And so, the day continued on, with Otoniel keeping his promises to Summer and the Huaca preparing for their big night. The chief undid the lock around the biologist's ankle, freeing her from the remaining length of chain. And Summer, for her own part, began taking shots of chicha almost immediately, even though the T'ojsiy would not be performed until after the feast.

She calmed herself by taking another swim in the pool, standing and showering herself under the cascading water from the cliff above. Men and women gathered on the shores to watch her, and Summer again couldn't shake the feeling of excitement that had taken hold over her lower body. She may have been dreading what was coming up, she may have found the dozens of eyes of her bare flesh embarrassing, but Summer could not deny the fact that her vagina was wet. And as the silver pendant rubbed up against her her pussy lips, Summer began wishing that she could get the ritual over with, that she could cum right then and there.

Surprisingly, as people on the shore gathered to watch her run her hands across her breasts and down the sides of her body, through her long blonde hair, down under the water level and across her ass, Summer found that she didn't mind them as much as she had earlier in the day. People seeing her naked was old news at that point - the real embarrassment was to come. If anything, Summer couldn't help but feel a bit sensuous. Her body was causing arousal in men all around her. Her body was captivating an entire village. She was sex symbol. She was a ravishing, steamy porn star, here in Hanan Pacha to do one thing and one thing alone - orgasm.

The notion of herself as a centerfold, as Marilyn Monroe instead of Summer Monroe, only served to electrify Summer's twat even more. Her nipples were adamantine, and had been so for hours. Her clit was throbbing full of life, and begged to be touched. Her whole body had turned into an energized erogenous zone, as water trickled down her face, to her neck, and to her chest.

She risked a casual pinch of her right nipple as she rubbed her body with her palms, sending a spasm of pleasure shooting down her spine. She wanted to do more, to touch herself here in the water, to get herself off in the pool while the village looked on. If she was going to cum for them later, why not cum for them now, as well. She wanted it now, so why not?

But she held back. She had only taken three shots of chicha at that point, but she wasn't thinking clearly. She needed to wait. She needed to tell herself that this wasn't about her release.

And so, busting at the seams with lust and perhaps more aroused than she'd ever been in her adult life, Summer waded back to shore, where Chasca, Yana, and handful of other young women were waiting for her.

Chasca had prepared a special meal just for her, and after Yana had towel-dried Summer's hair with a blanket, Summer sat down on a flat rock at the junction point of the pool and the Clemente to eat it.

"Silpancho," Otoniel told her as she began to eat. "A thin, spicy slice of beef, served over rice, purple potatoes, and a fried chicken egg."

"Wallpa egg," Summer corrected him, using the Huaca term.

Otoniel was obviously not welcome among the gaggle of women, as evidenced by the stares and fierce eyes that he was receiving. In addition to the bottle of chicha that sat in front of her, Otoniel had placed a jug of aqha and another jug of a liquor called paceña down with Summer's meal.

"This is obviously a girl party," Summer said, reading the emotions of the women around her. She wasn't sure that Otoniel, given his actions earlier in the day, would be welcome anywhere in Hanan Pacha. But she could get along without him here. "A gash bash. Thank you for the liquor, though."

Understanding, Otoniel began to step back. "No problem."

"How about my other favor? Is everything clean and ready to go?"

"Your qollqephichilu," Otoniel said, using the Huaca word and eliciting a few giggles from the girls around Summer, "has been cleaned and boiled."

He paused after Summer thanked him again, and asked, "Do you want me to come up to the altar with you? To keep you company?"

Summer shook her head. She was eating her dinner now, before everyone else, because she wasn't going to be a part of the feast. While the festivities unfolded in the village below her, Summer would be alone at the altar on the cliff. Otoniel hadn't been happy when Pachacamac had explained it to him, but Summer had rolled with it. She'd get a chance to be alone and prepare herself for what she was going to do. Afterwards, she could put some clothes on, head into the village, and stuff her face, if she felt so inclined.

"What about during the ceremony?"

Summer shook her head again. She didn't want Otoniel anywhere around, making her more nervous than she already was. She didn't want to know what was going on during the ritual, or what was being said. She just wanted to close her eyes, fuck whatever it was that Apotequil was sticking in her pussy, orgasm, and get it over with. She'd feel better if the translator was just out among the masses, instead of up close and talking her through it.

Taking the final few swigs of chicha left in the bottle, Summer turned her back to the mestizo, and dug into her meal.

After Summer had finished eating, Chasca, Kulli, and Yana led the bare-skinned blonde through Hanan Pacha to Apotequil's hut on the edge of the jungle. They followed the blonde into the hut, as well, and after a short back and forth, the priest told each of the Huaca women where to sit.

Spread out on the floor of the hut was a mat unlike anything that Summer had ever seen before. She remembered a friend in college having a pair of snakeskin boots, but the boots had nothing on Apotequil's mat. Summer was unsure of how many snakes had actually gone into making the priest's exotic rug, but she guessed that there had been more than a few.

Apotequil guided her onto it, laying her on her back. She could feel the cool scales against her naked skin as the priest guided her knees into an upright position and placed her feet both flat on the ground. From her vantage point at the end of the mat, Chasca could now see right between Summer's thighs, the blonde's still-saturated pussy open to her view. Apotequil carefully placed the pendant right at the top of Summer's slit, touching her hard and tingling clitoris with the cool metal, and causing Summer to gasp with a brief moment of pleasure. He spread her arms away from her body, straight out as if she were being crucified, and got to work.

There were two wooden bowls filled with some sort of strong-smelling paint, one red, and one purple. Apotequil wasted no time in applying it to the blonde girl's body, following designs and patterns that only he knew. Each of her nipples was given a different color, the right one red and the left purple. The aureoles around the nipples then got the opposite colors - the right one purple, and the left red. Apotequil then traced concentric circles out from around the aureoles themselves, leaving patterns of white skin, then purple, then white skin, then red, and so on.

The skin between Summer's breasts and her navel remained mostly bare, aside from a few dots that Apotequil deemed necessary on the sides of her body. From the belly button on down, all the designs and patterns painted on were meant to call attention to her pussy, whether they were straight lines, wiggly lines, or arrows.

As the priest got to her hips, he clipped away the twine that had held the pendant up, but left the teardrop piece of metal in its place. As Apotequil's fingers, covered in paint, moved through her pubic hair, or down from her hips, or up from the insides of her thighs, it was everything that Summer could do to keep from grinding against his hand. She was sure that her pussy must have been drenched at that point, that her juices must have been ruining the paint job that the priest was applying.

She concentrated on what was happening on the other end of her body. Yana and Kulli, acting together, were braiding her hair. Not in one braid, nor in two, but into dozens of thin strands that started halfway down the length of her hair. At the end of each strand, though, the women braided in small, empty nuts. Summer knew that as she moved, as her head shifted at all, the nuts would creating a clinking sound as they bounced against each other.

Apotequil's fingers shifted away from Summer's nether regions and legs, and found their way to her face. As the priest began to apply the paint liberally, Summer had to admit that a part of her wanted to see what she looked like. She hadn't seen a mirror in Hanan Pacha over the past few days, and doubted that the Huaca had anything she could see her reflection in, aside from the pool under the waterfall.

Once Summer's entire face had been covered in paint, Apotequil seemed satisfied with his work on her front, and he flipped her over, onto her hands and knees. She got a brief respite from the teasing of the fertility charm as Apotequil painted around her oqoti - her asshole. But the priest quickly strung another piece of twine through the pendant, and secured it this time backwards around Summer's body. Instead of hanging down in front of her pussy, a string of twine now ran down between her ass cheeks, across her anus, and held the pendant in place against the outside of her lips. The humiliation didn't stop.

It took some time for Apotequil to finish applying the body paint, but when he had, Summer was covered nearly head to toe in red and purple, with patches of her tanned skin in between. She was guided down on her elbows, and allowed to rest her ass on the back of her ankles, but the priest made sure that she knew not to turn over. He demonstrated that she could stay down, as she was no, or get up on her hands and knees, as she been a few seconds ago. But she couldn't change her position aside from that.

Her hair was braided. Her body was painted. And she was still adorned with the silver pendant, hanging backwards down between her ass crack. But in her present position, her cunt had escaped contact with metal, and Summer almost missed it.

Throughout the whole ordeal, Yana kept bringing a small cup full of alcohol to Summer's lips, and Summer gulped it down each and every time. By the time Apotequil had finished preparing Summer's body, the blonde's head was spinning, and though she was still in control of herself, she had begun to lose the few inhibitions she had left.

Apotequil barked a few orders at the women around the mat, and Summer watched them position themselves around her. What she had noticed about the priest's strange rug were the extra strips of animal skin that adorned the corners. Summer gulped as she realized what they were for: she was going to be tied up.

Instead of fighting it, though, Summer just rolled with the punches. It'd all be over soon. She would soon achieve her orgasm, get untied, wash the paint off, put clothes on, and then fall asleep in her own cot back at the Ambrosia camp. The thought of protesting the restraints seemed ridiculous to her. Okay, she joked to herself, you can strip me naked, cover me in erotic painted designs, fuck me with dildo intended for animals in front of an audience...but when you start securing my wrists, you've gone too far!

She chuckled to herself drunkenly, barely feeling the three women and the medicine man secure her to the snakeskin mat. What she hadn't realized about the mat, up until that point, was that it was lying on top of a long, flat, board. She was going to be carried up to the cliff like this.

Apotequil dismissed the women, but before Yana left, she leaned in quickly and placed a kiss on the blonde's lips. It wasn't an erotic kiss, but rather a thank you, a show of appreciation for what Summer was putting herself through. Still, despite the nervous shivers that had begun to engulf the biologist's body, her brain was charged up with nothing but sexual energy. And the kiss caused delight to spark in Summer's cunt, so much so that she lifted her ass back up into the air in order to feel the sensation of the pendant rub against her.

The three women all left, and were soon replaced by four strong men from the village, among them Catequil and Pariacaca. With little effort, they hoisted Summer, on her platform, up on their shoulders and out into the Hanan Pacha night.

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It occurred to Summer that she had never seen all the people of Hanan Pacha at the same time. She'd been paraded through town during the afternoon two days ago. She'd been chained outside of Pachacamac's house for a solid forty-eight hours. But, until she was hefted out of Apotequil's hut, Summer couldn't even have guessed that there were as many people living in the village as there were.

The biologist positioned herself proudly upright, her ass in the air, and her upper body propped up on her hands instead of her elbows. She had made this decision, and she was not going to cower in front of these people while following through.

The sun had set while Summer was being decorated inside the priest's hut. Hanan Pacha's main street was lit by torches and lined with floral decorations. In the firelight, the faces of the Huaca glowed orange, their dark eyes all fixated on the colorful naked girl being carried over their heads. There were occasional sounds of awe, but there was little chatter as Pariacaca and Catequil led the display towards the chief's hut and the cliff behind it.

Summer's head was spinning and her pussy tingling as she was jounced down the street. While her body might have appeared proud, her head was hung and she stared mindlessly at the snakeskin mat beneath her, uneager to make eye contact with Otoniel, or for that matter, anyone else that she had come to know over the past two days. The thin sheet of silver slapped against her lips each time the men below her took a step, but despite the inebriation and titillation, there was a nervous knot in her stomach.

They passed Pachacamac's house, and Summer risked a glance in that direction, to where she had been chained up all week. She'd been mortified by just being nude in front of the Huaca. But she had been in the dark about just how far she was going to be pushed, about just how far she herself was going to be willing to go.

Come for the frogs, Summer joked with herself as they rounded the pool, and stay for the indigenous dildo parties.

The four men, carrying the trivial weight of the painted blonde on their shoulders, began their ascent up the side of the waterfall, by way of the jungle. With their sacrifice out of visual range, the village behind Summer suddenly came to life once again. She could hear them laughing, talking, and playing music, easy and carefree while she was preparing to do the most humiliating thing in her life.

Just over the edge of the cliff, but beyond the eyesight of Summer's previous vantage point below, sat an altar on the side of the Rio Clemente. The jungle had been cleared behind it, away from the cliff, allowing enough space for potentially a hundred people to gather and watch. This area, too, had been lit with torches, and the flickering orange light danced on the purple, red, and natural tan sections of Summer's body.

After being carried up a short set of stairs, Summer was finally set down. Board, mat, and girl were all placed upon the altar gently. Her ass was pointed away from the cliff, to where the Huaca would gather in the clearing behind her. Her position allowed her a view of the entirety of Hanan Pacha below her, the fields in the distance, and the dark shapes of the Bolivian countryside further out. Somewhere out there, Walter Newcomb was struggling to stay alive, if he hadn't passed on already. Somewhere out there, Russ Szalinksi was racing back to Hanan Pacha, unaware that his colleague was naked, painted, and about to be a part of an Indian sex ritual.

Three of the men turned and left Summer alone, but she didn't even turn to watch them leave. Pariacaca, stayed behind for a few seconds longer, allowing the girl one last swig of paceña to calm her nerves before he joined his companions on the descent back into the village.

Summer was now alone, left atop an altar atop a cliff while the village below celebrated her upcoming good deed. She could feel tears of shame and humiliation welling up inside her, but she wouldn't let herself cry. She'd be strong.

The sensation of the silver pendant against her pussy made everything else seem like background noise, however. Whatever was going through her head, whatever fears bubbled up inside her, whatever doubt she still felt - all of it was pushed aside as the charm slid along Summer's saturated slit.

She was a scientist. She believed in laws and theories, in elements and interactions, in electrons and protons. She believed that the curse of Sipusiki was nothing more than self-fulfilling fears of an uneducated Indian population. But as she recounted the events of the past few days to herself, Summer couldn't help but feel that the fertility charm now juxtaposed along her naked vagina had a magical force over her.

Two nights ago, when Apotequil had first placed it around her waist, she hadn't been able to get the mental images of she and the priest, wrapped naked together, out of her head. Yesterday, she'd teased and tormented a half-dozen young men on the edge of the Clemente, touching her tits and rubbing her hands all over her body while allowing water to cascade down upon her. Even today, her nipples had become petrified the moment she felt the charm against the top of her pussy, and they hadn't softened in the hours since.

She allowed herself a respite from the contact, lowering her ass onto the back of her legs and letting the pendant swing free in the air behind her. Settling herself down onto her forearms, Summer decided that the belly-chain was akin to a merry widow, or a garter belt, or some other type of lingerie a woman might put on to seduce a man. While seduction might never have been Summer's intent, she felt sexier and more sexually confident each time the twine was hung on her hips. The way that the pendant hung, kissing her pussy as it did so, made her feel naughty. It drew attention to her sex, eliciting excitement in the men around her, and therefore eliciting excitement in Summer herself.

Each time the pendant had been hung on her body, each time it had skated across her pussy, Summer felt a wave of sexual energy, electricity shooting through her body. There was no magic to the fertility charm, she told herself. But it brought confidence and sensuality to someone wracked by nervousness and humiliation.

The feast in the village below went on for what felt like days to Summer. She had been drunk when the four young men had set her down upon the altar, but as the second hour passed on the cliff, Summer had begun to sober up.

On top of that, her legs, arms, and knees were all sore from the position that they'd been in for hours at that point. She shifted every now and then, stretching her legs and adjusting her body to the few postures allowed to her. She could curl into a ball, scrunching her body down in on itself. She could get up on her hands and knees, configured proudly in the solitude around her. Or, she could be in a position that she called "presenting" - down on her knees while her ass and her pussy were both pushed up and out into the air. In her isolation, she decided that this was how she'd exhibit herself when she was joined on the cliff.

Eventually, the music below her began to die down, and she watched torches and villagers parade up Hanan Pacha's street, towards her, her cliff, and her altar. She was far too sober to be doing this, she told herself, cringing at the thought of what was about to happen. Part of her felt the need to pee, but she wasn't sure how much of that urge was her bladder, and how much was her nerves.

As the Huaca streamed up the side of the cliff through the jungle, she were presented with a wide-open view of Summer's most intimate areas, blocked only by the teardrop-shaped pendant hanging down between her buttocks. She was "presenting," as she had intended, with her ass in the air and her forehead pressed against the snakeskin mat. Thanking whoever had decided to position her face away from the growing crowd, Summer breathed easier, knowing that she would not need to face any of the Huaca. Otoniel would be out there. Pariacaca would be out there. Mancocapac would be out there. But Summer would never know who was where, or whose eyes were tracing the pink outlines of her pussy at that moment.

She was joined on the altar by two men. A glimpse told her that they were Apotequil and Pachacamac, as she'd been expecting. Both men were all dressed up, wearing a collection of teeth, rocks, furs, and jewelry that reassured Summer just how important this was to them and their people. Either one of these men would be up here in her place if it were possible, but neither one had the most integral body part to the T'ojsiy.

As Pachacamac began addressing his people, Summer wondered again if the Huaca had attempted this ceremony with one of their own women, and who that woman had been. Chasca? Yana? Puka? Or was it deemed necessary that it be an outsider, to appease Sipusiki with someone unafflicted by her curse, but also to prevent a Huaca woman from spending the next few months walking red-faced around the village after what she had done. After what Summer was about to do.

Apotequil spoke now, starting in hushed tones and building to shouts and whoops. The Huaca responded to his invocations, offering up what Summer was sure were "amens!" and "hallelujahs!" in response to the priest. She'd ask Otoniel later what had been said, the details of Hanan Pacha's supplication to Sipusiki. But she was glad that he wasn't here, standing close by, and translating everything as it happened.

Summer's mind wandered, but it inevitably was drawn back to her moistened cunt. Every time that her mind drifted to the entirety of what she was going to do, she felt the silver glance against her. It all came down to getting off.

Forget the people watching, Summer told herself. Forget the priest and the chief that were standing on either side of her. Forget the translator who'd been working with her and her colleagues for the past eight weeks. Forget the bigger picture, the self-fulfilling curse of Sipusiki and the hope that she'd be bringing to the Huaca. Forget the altar, the torches, the cascading water alongside her. All of this was secondary, ancillary to what she was here to do.

Everything came down to pussy, dildo, and orgasm.

And Summer wanted to get off.

Secure in that assurance, Summer risked a peep down under her body, between her legs, and out into the crowd beyond. At that moment, the qollqephichilu came into full view. The dildo. The huge dildo.

All the nervous sexual energy that Summer felt transformed into full-out bewilderment at how something that big was going to fit inside her twat.

It was a showstopper, all right. It had to have been a foot and half long, fashioned out of what Summer guessed to be the same silver hanging against her pussy. But it wasn't the length that disturbed her, but rather the fact that it was wider than any dildo that Summer had ever seen her entire life.

Summer, of course, had never used a dildo before, let alone had someone use one on her. She'd been a good girl, content with regular old sex with one partner, one penis, and one vagina. Still, she'd been in a porn store or two over the course of her life, to pick out embarrassing bachelorette and birthday gifts. And this dildo, this qollqephichilu, was bigger than anything she'd set her eyes upon. This was the Cock Colossus. The Polypheme Penis. The Elephant Dick. The King Dong.

At the end of the qollqephichilu was a hilt, much akin to something that Summer might have expected on a broadsword. That was where whoever wielded the monstrosity would hold on, dipping into Summer's box until she achieved climax. And, based on the moisture that had built up in her pussy, it wouldn't be long.

Apotequil tested her wetness with his finger, shocking the naked blonde as his index immersed itself in pink. Pachacamac was now addressing his people again, but he would not miss the groan that escaped Summer's mouth.

Apparently, Summer's pussy was not quite as wet as the priest might have hoped, because he removed his finger, searched for her clit at the top of her pussy, and began tracing circles around it. Even though her pussy lips were swollen and she thought she was more than ready for what was about to happen, the priest had obviously decided that she needed to be as lubricated as possible to take something the size of the qollqephichilu.

What if I cum now? The question ran through Summer's mind as she stifled a moan. Apotequil, despite being a little rough, was causing more pleasure in Summer's clit than she thought possible. Hundred of people were watching the priest play with her trembling pussy, but all the blonde could concentrate on was the finger.

Summer could feel an orgasm building, and felt herself stuck with a dilemma. She wanted to cum badly, more than anything else. She also thought that if she climaxed, she might not need to be skewered on the end of the monstrous dildo behind her. She did want to be spared that, didn't she?

In the end, the decision wasn't up to the biologist at all, as little had been over the past few days. Apotequil stopped rubbing her seconds before the first wave of her climax would have begun. Summer moaned in blissful agony.

Satisfied that the blonde was ready, Apotequil removed the belly-chain from around Summer's waist, the pendant from against Summer's slit. A surge of fresh air suddenly billowed into her pussy, and a chorus of simultaneous inhalations came from the attentive crowd, as if Summer were a stripper who'd just removed her last article of clothing. Her slit - pink, wet, and waiting - was now open and exposed to the Huaca in a way that it hadn't been over the past few days.

Embarrassment had gone by the wayside. Summer was more aroused than she'd ever been, and nothing mattered to her at that moment more than climaxing. She wanted to be fucked.

And Pachacamac complied.

Apotequil led the Huaca in a serious, monotone chant as Summer spread her legs as far apart as her body, the altar, and the restraints would allow. As the tip of qollqephichilu touched her expectant pussy, she pushed against it, forcing herself onto the dildo before the dildo had a chance to force itself into her.

Summer gasped in a combination of pleasure and good, good pain. The dildo was wide, but Summer's pussy accommodated it with only minor resistance.

"Fuuuck," she moaned out loud as the chief pushed further into her cunt.

The metal was cold, but the biologist's pussy so hot that it warmed up with each inch that it pressed further into her body. It stretched her lips further apart than they'd ever been, and forced itself deeper inside her than she thought possible. As Pachacamac completed his first thrust into her, she could swear that she felt his hand on the hilt.

The dildo slid back out of the deeper recesses of her cunt, more quickly than it had gone in. Summer wanted it harder. Summer wanted it faster. And as the village behind her chanted and watched the sexual scene unfold before them, Summer's embarrassment dissipated, her arousal tripled, and moral depravity set in.

She shrieked with pleasure. It didn't matter if she made noise. It didn't matter if she were louder than she'd ever been before. These people wanted her to get off. Summer wanted to get off. And if she doing this, there was no reason to hold back. There was little humility left to be saved, and she was going to enjoy what she could out of it.

She grunted. She moaned. She cursed. She squealed. Her whole body writhed on top of the altar as the chief began to assault her pussy more rapidly than before. In and out she felt the dildo slide, dipping again and again inside her. The priest, leading the chant to her left, placed a hand upon her painted back. Summer was sure now that her sweat was causing the paint on her body to run, to drip onto the snakeskin mat beneath her. But she paid it no heed, centering her concentration on the current that was flowing from her crotch.

"Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!" Summer screamed at the top of her lungs, knowing that no one but Otoniel would understand her and not caring that he would, either. She bounced back and forth on the dildo, letting her body take her wherever it felt best, and allowing the chief to do to her whatever he saw fit. She had no control over how fast or how hard he used the dildo; she was completely at his mercy.

Summer longed to reach back and play with her clit, but the restraints around her wrists wouldn't allow it. She pulled at them anyways, hoping that they'd eventually tear free and that she could join Pachacamac in playing with her pussy. But they held, and Summer had to grind her teeth, allowing herself to be passive in the fucking she was receiving from the chief, while all of Hanan Pacha watched.

It was unlike any sex that Summer had ever had before. She'd done big guys in the past. She'd been fucked in the position that she was in now. But never with anything the size of the qollqephichilu, never with the intensity that the chief was plunging into her, never with the eyes of so many people on her.

And, in the end, it was the audience that put her over the edge. An entire village was watching her fuck. An entire village was watching her squirm in her restraints. An entire village was watching as the dildo came hypnotically in and out of the naked blonde on the altar. Pachacamac. Apotequil. Chasca. Yana. Pariacaca. Mancocapac. Puka. Catequil. Kulli. Otoniel. Each one of them was fixated on her, on her body, on her fucking.

It was too much. In just a few minutes from when the enormous silver dildo had entered her slit, Summer began to cum.

She shrieked as a wave of sexual fire enveloped her body, screaming out into the Bolivian night with intensity that she'd never felt before. She continued to be fucked by the qollqephichilu, continued to be impaled upon it, as her whole body began trembling. The orgasm shot up her spine, down her legs, and to the tips of her fingers, exacting a scream that Summer was sure would cost her her voice in the morning.

Applause and shouts went up from the people behind her, ecstatic about the culmination of the T'ojsiy. Their curse had been lifted. Sipusiki had been appeased. They would be able to get pregnant again.

Summer had climaxed.

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The next ten minutes or so were a blur to the blonde girl. She remembered the dildo being extracted. She remembered being cut loose from her restraints. She remembered stepping down from the altar and limping through a cheering crowd all around her.

Eventually, Summer found Otoniel, standing with another man. Her vision was blurry, her mind unable to concentrate on anything but the residual sparks of pleasure that were still shooting from her pussy, but she recognized the man as Russ Szalinski.

Walter was in Guayaramerin, receiving the treatment he needed, and would be okay. Russ had raced back to Hanan Pacha with Anqas and Punchau sooner than he'd planned. He'd arrived while Summer was waiting alone on the cliff-face, assured by Otoniel that this was her doing, that this was what she wanted. He'd watched as she was toyed into orgasm by the chief.

Summer should have been shocked and ashamed by having her colleague watch her being fucked by the qollqephichilu while the Huaca looked on. She probably would be later. But for now, as she hobbled silently away from him, there was nothing that could bring her down from the ecstasy that she felt.

Otoniel was waiting patiently with clothes for Summer. Panties. Bra. Skirt. Tank top. Shoes. But she just brushed past him, grunting for him to meet her after she'd washed all the paint off in the Clemente, after she'd had a few minutes to be alone in the water, and indulge in the post-T'ojsiy bliss that had overrun her body.

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A tall, strong-looking man stood at the window of his office, staring out at the skyscraper being built in the Babylon skyline behind him. His skyscraper.

It would be completed soon, all one hundred and twenty-three stories. It would stand as the tallest building on Earth, a testament to his empire. A testament to Knox Industries. A testament to Jupiter Knox himself.

Knox listened as one of his vice presidents, Andrew Duncan, droned on and on about the findings of one of Knox's subsidiaries, Ambrosia Pharmaceuticals. Something about tree frogs. Something about a miraculous, pain-relieving native cream. Something about a type of aberrant silver.

Of course, Duncan was practically reading from the report, throwing out seven-syllable scientific words as if they meant something to the industrialist. But he caught one or two words, and, interest piqued, he turned to the younger man.

"'Stimulus-enhancement?'" Knox quoted back at him. "Are you saying that the silver is like some sort of Spanish fly? It's an aphrodisiac?"

"No sir," Duncan ventured carefully, not wanting to contradict his boss. "It's nothing like that. The Huaca silver doesn't cause stimulation itself, but rather magnifies stimulation that already exists. The Ambrosia team didn't even know about it, still don't know about it, I don't think. The woman, er -" Duncan glanced down at the name on the report in front of him, "Doctor Monroe, didn't even fully realize its effects. She wrote them off as her own emotions, her own stimulation, her own excitement. It took the labs back here, in Babylon, to fully discover its effects."

"Hmm," Knox responded. He was a quiet man, someone whose silence only made him seem that much more powerful. "And the team?"

Duncan paused for a moment, wondering what his boss was thinking. Nonetheless, he continued to brief the other man. "Doctor Szalinski and Doctor Newcomb are both back in Babylon. Doctor Szalinski has been working with the amphibian DNA samples they collected for the six months since returning from Bolivia. And Doctor Newcomb has made a full recovery, though he is now in the employ of Sussex University downtown in the University District. He's teaching next term, I believe."

"And the girl?" Knox asked. "Doctor Monroe?"

"Bolivia. She stayed behind in Valle de los Reyes, with the translator and the Huaca. Apparently, the Indians believe that she was blessed by some sort of fertility goddess....some sort of fertility goddess that travels in the form of a jaguar, I believe.

"She does research now and then, and mails it back stateside. But from what I understand, her primary role has become traveling from village to village to village, breaking a curse that the Huaca believe was inflicted upon them by the goddess. She goes in, performs some ritual, and then suddenly the pregnancy rates begin to climb in whatever village it is. Hanan Pacha, Uca Pacha, Sumaq Wasi - they've all got pregnancy rates that have that have just exploded over the past six months."

"Intriguing," Knox mused. He gazed back at the skyscraper that was growing a few blocks away, juxtaposed next to his own reflection. "Intriguing."