

Quaranteam: Phil's Tale

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Chapter Six

Tamika stood up, zipping up Phil's pants as she stood. "Thanks," she told him. "Gotta get back to studying, though."

"It's all good," Phil told her. "And I'm glad to see you're taking your studies seriously."

"Yeah, well," the African-American teenager said to him, "at some point we're gonna be outta all this shit, and I'm gonna want to have my own life again." She wiped a bit of his semen from her lips, licking it off the back of her hand. "Though I think Imma miss these intense orgasms. It's *almost* made me rethink my policy on dudes."

"Don't go turning bi on my account," Phil said to her.

"Nah, fuck that," she muttered. "Chicks is way better than dudes any day." She headed to the door of Phil's office and headed out into the hallway, walking towards the exit.

Tamika Jefferson was as gay as the day was long, but her father was one of the soldiers on the base, and had come to him, asking him to help find a way to protect his daughter. Phil had explained to the soldier that the system they had in place was the only way to keep someone immune from the virus.

Her father looked horrified, but Tamika, who'd been standing right there the entire time, had said that she'd be willing to take a shot in the mouth once a week if it kept her alive for the time being. Linda pointed out that Phil had been *repeatedly* told to get more partners over the past week, and said if Tamika didn't mind, they could come to an arrangement, at least until they were on the other side of the pandemic. She'd agreed, had been imprinted a few days ago, and had shown up for her first regular dosing today.

It hadn't been a good blowjob, but he hadn't expected it to be, considering Tamika wasn't into men, so Linda had helped her, talking to him to provide mental stimuli enough to get him to an orgasm. Audrey was waiting in the hallway to take Tamika to the Marcos household, as today was the day she was moving into the house.

Tamika wasn't the first woman he'd heard of that had taken one dick into her lesbian life to survive, but she was the first in his extended family. He wasn't entirely certain she would be the last, especially with the mandate that he get more partners *immediately*.

The efficacy group had determined that the optimal *minimum* number of partners for a man to have was *seven*, which would convey a 99.4% immunity from the DuoHalo virus. That group was also entrusted with making sure that every member of the research was getting up to the minimum number of partners as soon as possible.

It had pissed Phil off something fierce, and while he was doing his best to resist their pressure, now Linda and Audrey were getting in on the deal, guilting him into filling out the questionnaire and/or requesting a couple of people, until he was *at least* at the seven partners the group was advising.

He didn't have any interest in getting that many partners, but Linda was constantly reminding him that *their* health was dependent on *his* health, so whatever it took to keep him safe, and thus, *them* safe, was what they were going to do.

Arguing with Linda was like trying to negotiate with a hurricane – you were only going to lose against the force of nature. So whether he liked it or not, within the next few weeks, he was going to be up to seven partners, so he decided to mostly go through the system.

As he considered it, he realized it was a chance to evaluate the Oracle system like anyone else, even if he was being given massive preferential status. Ten minutes into starting the exam, he was extremely glad he was taking the time for it.

The test had *changed* since he'd seen it last, something nobody had mentioned during any of the section chief stand up meetings they'd done every Tuesday, so he wasn't even sure *when* the changes had happened, if it had only been changed once or if there had been a serious of changes over the past

month or two.

Right out of the gate, he noticed that he couldn't set the slider for women he wanted any higher than 50. It wasn't as though he was setting out to find a partner that old, but learning the limitations that were built into the system were vitally important, so he was being sure to take the entire thing apart and study each and every bit of it.

Next, he noticed the polyamory question was gone, although that came as no real shock to him, simply because at this point, *all* men were going to be in polyamorous relationships whether they wanted to or not. The survival of the species was at stake, and that meant men were going to be repopulating the nation for the next several years.

'We're all going to be Daddy by the time we're on the other side of this,' he thought to himself.

When it came to ethnicity, Phil decided to do something unusual – he left all of them checked except for one. Caucasian. Phil decided if he was going to be forced to have a litter of partners, the least he could do was to make sure he was saving as many different ethnicities as possible. He already had Linda, and one white girl was probably enough.

One of the things Phil had been bothered by when looking at the data about who was being given the serum was that it was a preponderance of white people. He'd been doing what he could to counteract that, even on the very limited scale that he could, but it was starting to get to the point that he felt like he needed to point it out to someone upstairs.

When he decided to dive deeper into the data, he came to an even more disturbing conclusion – the fact that white men and women were getting inoculated faster than minorities was just a side effect. They weren't setting out to *exclude* non-white people. They were setting out to prioritize *rich* people. The racial undertones were just a byproduct of the wealthy people covering their own asses first.

As Chris Rock once said, "I'm not talking about *money*; I'm talking about *wealth*."

He went back and forth between the questionnaire and the general data he had access to a number of times, taking breaks every now and then to look up what exactly some of the specific fetishes that were being called out were.

'Ursusagalmatophilia,' for example, was being turned by being dressed up as a teddy bear.

'Symphophilia,' was a fetish for watching car accidents.

'Quirophilia' was a hand fetish.

Phil found himself wishing he'd paid more attention to the Latin when he was in Catholic school growing up, if only for it to save him time constantly trying to figure out what these damn things were.

Once he got past the absurdly long section about philiias and phobias, he found a question that was a sliding scale where the person filling in the question could choose between ten different ticks on a bar that said, "how different do you want your partners to be from one another?"

On the left end of the bar was "not different at all," in the middle was "somewhat different" and at the end was "very different." He considered what kinds of results would get returned based on where people set the slider. At the left end, he imagined that the women would all be virtual carbon copies of each other, and while that would be fine for some people with a very narrow window of women they were attracted to, he set the bar completely on the other end of the spectrum.

Variety is the spice of life, he thought.

It wasn't until he was near the end of the test when he noticed something unusual. Because he was a member of the team, he had admin level access to the test, so a couple of normally hidden questions popped up in the last section. They were very telling.

The first was that he could see he was set to a level 6 priority, something he hadn't even thought existed. As far as he'd known, there had only been levels one through five, but when he started digging through the massive amounts of paperwork that had been pushed his way over the last month, he found buried away in one file a mention that all members of the team were being set to a sort of super *super* status, level 6, which wouldn't be disclosed publicly. It meant that their requests would supersede anyone other than another level 6. If two level 6s placed requests for the same person, the person who'd

placed the first request would be granted. Except for a *very* few number of individuals, all level 6s would be members of the project working on Project: Ark, as the team had been officially designated. He couldn't change his designate even if he wanted to.

The other thing that was normally concealed from users was a proximity slider, which specified how far of range the Oracle system would look to make matches. For level 1s, it looked as though the default range was 250 miles. For level 2s, it doubled to 500 miles. For level 3s, it doubled again to 1000 miles. For level 4, it was set to "US" and for level 5, it simply said "global."

When he saw "global," Phil began to get very nervous, and decided to focus in a little more on that. After some research, he discovered that a number of nations had "bought" their way into getting access to the vaccine. The US government had offered to provide vaccine access as long as the other countries agreed to a handful of conditions – they had to use the Oracle system as well, they had to link their versions of the Oracle system to the US's and they would only have the ability to set their most elite members to level 4s, with no access to level 5 or level 6.

In essence, what this meant was that if a nation took them up on the offer, they would get access to the serum, and would be able to protect its populace, but some of their most desirable women could and probably would be relocated to the US for elite status American partners.

He was *horrified* by this at first, and then baffled the further he dug into it. Dozens of nations – the UK, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Spain, New Zealand and Japan, among others – had agreed to this, in a desperate attempt to keep their nations alive, expecting to have to surrender celebrities and pop stars to the US as the cost of doing business.

While there had been a couple of those, mostly what had happened was that the US military was custom tailoring their requests to get top scientists and researchers from the other countries, bringing them to the states and pairing them up with American scientists. It was a sort of demented love nest version of the old Operation: Paperclip, where former Nazi scientists had been folded into the US after World War II.

All of this was buried under *layers* of obfuscation, and nothing was ever stated directly, but the more Phil looked at things, the more he was able to piece things together. Miguel Cunningham, the man who had designed and built the Oracle system, and who oversaw its day-to-day operations, looked like he was reporting in to someone in the CIA. Phil even recognized the go-between shell company they were using – it was called Long Thought Research and Development. Andy's roommate Eric worked for them, although way way *way* down the food chain.

After completing the questionnaire, he brought Linda over to look at it, letting her read through it to see if there was anything he wasn't thinking of that he shouldn't be. In the past few months, Phil had come to lean on Audrey and Linda even more than he'd thought he ever would, the need for fresh eyes on old data vital to him being able to get work done.

"You went far tamer on this than I would've expected you to," she told him. "I mean, given unlimited power, I don't know that I would've shown the same level of restraint you're doing here."

"How so?" he asked.

She tapped on the age slider. "Lower it."

"Linda," he sighed.

"Phil. Baby. I know you think you're doing the world a favor by keeping it at 22, but you're going to need to be a father, and with multiple partners. Set it down to 18, like you know you should."

"Eighteen-year-old girls haven't got two brain cells to rub together," he grumbled.

"Sure, you'll be better for the one or two you get than whoever else they'd get saddled up with, so you're just going to have to learn to live with it. Besides, having a teenage fuckpet will be good for your cardio health."

"Fine. No point in arguing with you."

"There's a good boy." She tapped at another portion of the screen. "You sure about this?"

"Look, in addition to this, I'm also going to have to fill out a house staff requisition form, and

that's beyond any direct requisitions I make of people, so if you're worried about being the only white girl in the house, I can make sure that you aren't."

"I'm just making sure you've thought about what you're doing," she said. "That's all."

"Yeah, I'm definitely thinking about all of it, Linda. Other than that, you good with all of this?"

"As long as you don't mind me making a couple of custom additions to the household here and there," she said with a soft laugh.

"Good lord," he said, clicking the 'send' button to submit the test into the system. "What now?"

Linda dropped three manila folders onto his desk, one atop the other. "So you have to pick one of those three women to join the family."

"These three specifically?" he said, picking up the folders, holding them in one hand. "What's so special about these three?"

"They're women I trust, soldiers capable of defending your life with their own and generally along your tastes in women," she said. "From now on, I want someone actively awake and looking after your well-being twenty-four-seven. I have to sleep sometime, and that means I want a second around, keeping alternating schedules with mine. I can bring them around for you to interview them if you want, or you can just pick one of the three and trust my judgment in the matter."

Phil opened the folders one at a time, considering each of the three women being presented to him. When he opened the third one, he started to laugh. "Shit, Linda, you could've saved us both the trouble and just told me Violet was in here."

Linda rolled her eyes, scooping up all three of the files. "Maybe I was hoping you *wouldn't* go for the one of the three of them who's hotter than I am," she said, turning to move away.

Phil grabbed her by the waist and pulled her back to him, pressing his lips against hers firmly. "Don't you *dare* go insulting yourself like that," he said, parting from the kiss. "Don't get me wrong – she's fucking hot, but you are way, way hotter."

"Even if I believed you," Linda said with a smirk, "which I *don't*, you still picked Master Sergeant Violet 'BigTits' McGuinness without even a moment's hesitation."

"Sure," Phil said, "I met her at San Diego Comic Con a few years back, long before she was stationed to our base. She was dressed up as Tifa from Final Fantasy VII, although I'd assumed she was padding her bra to get to be that busty."

"No no," Linda sighed. "She just normally wears sports bras that defy conventional engineering. But it's fair. She's a good match for you, and she's very capable of providing personal protection. And I know she's friendly with you in the hallways from time to time. I just hoped you'd take a little longer to think about it, that's all."

"I mean, we could add all three if you think it's important."

"It is," she said, "but you can't. The other two are going to get assigned to other members of importance here on the base. As much as I would *like* to have a crack four woman protection squad on you at all times, I can't hog all the resources just to keep my baby safe. One will go to Cunningham and the other will go to Fielder."

"Major General Fielder?" he said, blanching. "God, I hate to think of one of those other young girls having to cuddle up to the old man. He's practically geriatric."

"It would be absolutely inappropriate for me to agree with you, honey, no matter how much I may want to," she said, taking the folders from his hand. "But I'll let Cunningham choose next, so that the decision isn't in the general's hands."

"Then he's probably getting Carly, since Nita is very much Cunningham's type."

"She knew what she was signing up for when she volunteered for this detail, so she'll have to live with it."

"I get that," Phil said, "but still... Fielder..." He shivered in mock horror, which made Linda giggle. "He'll probably give her mustache rides." That set her off laughing all over again.

"Aaaanyway," she said, dragging out the first syllable, "you should probably make one specific

requisition now, just to see how it puts someone through the system. Got anyone in mind?"

"There was a game designer I met at one of the local fighting game nights over at Golfland a few months back," Phil told her. "Yuko Takahashi. I think she said she works over at Gecko Grifter Games. They're one of those tiny independent studios working out of a coop in the city, sharing workspace with like a dozen other baby studios, each consisting of two to three people total. She was dating this well-known asshole in the community named Grant when I met her, but I saw Grant with some Cuban girl at the last Fight Night, and Yuko was nowhere to be seen, otherwise I would've asked her out."

"This is a bit more serious than asking her out, babe," Linda said with a laugh.

"Sure, but it'll give her the option of saying no, and when she does—"

"If she does—"

"*When* she does, we'll know that the rejection process works and that people are really being given a choice as to whether or not they want to join up with men who are inviting them."

"And *when* she says yes, you'll have picked up a girl all on your very own," she replied. "No reason for you to be so negative about it." The phone on his desk started to blink so she glanced down at it, scanning for the caller ID number. "Looks like Niko's calling to check in." She pushed the button to answer it on speakerphone. "Go for Phil."

"Heya Linda," Niko's voice said on the other end of the line. "I've stepped out into the parking lot to call you, so they can't hear me right now. Thought I'd call and give you an update."

Niko had been with his friend Andy for three days now, and beyond making sure she was integrating well with the household, he also wanted to make sure Andy was being looked after.

"Sounds good," Phil said. "What's the sitrep?"

"He and his roommate got to talking, and I think Eric may have given him some insight into what Long Thought's been working on, how they're expecting the casualty rates to be insanely high. Andy was thinking about going to the press, trying to get them to talk about the particulars on the six o'clock news, but I think I've talked him out of that."

"Jesus Christ," Phil muttered. "I fucking *hope* so. I need the press on this like I need another rap on the knuckles with a steel ruler from Sister Thelma. After everything I've done for him, can't he just sit on this one for me?"

"Forgive me, sir, but I was under the impression that he didn't *know* any of the things you'd done for him since all this started," Niko replied.

"Fucking technicalities." Phil grumbled. "But yes, you are correct. Andy doesn't know all the shit I've been doing to keep him and Eric out of harm's way, and it's probably best we keep it that way. I didn't expect Eric to be able to bypass Long Thought internal security, but I guess that makes me just another person in a long line of folks to underestimate him. Are you sure you've got them agreed to keep quiet about it for now?"

"I *think* so, sir, but you'd probably better check in with them again soon. Speaking of which, we're getting a little cramped in their place. Aren't they scheduled to be relocated to New Eden soon?"

"Within the next week or so, I think," Phil replied. "We're doing staff review on Wednesday so I imagine they'll come by Thursday or Friday to pick people up. So it shouldn't be too much longer that you're there. Hold fast and you'll be in better accommodations soon."

"Copy that," she said. "I told him I'm a data analyst with the Air Force. He seems to be okay with that."

"Better come clean that you're in the Security Forces soon, Lieutenant," Linda said. "It's not a big enough thing to lie about, and the less lies you have to juggle, the easier it'll be to maintain cover that you chose him."

"He *does* seem like a very good guy, ma'am," Niko said. "I think I probably would've been okay with choosing him on my own, given a little bit of warning."

"Still, that's one thing you *don't* want to let him know about," Linda said. "No man likes to feel

like he was somebody's *second* best option. Remember, like I told you yesterday, you are going to be me to Andy like I am to Phil. We're relying on your to keep him safe and sound."

"Is he really going to be in that much danger, ma'am? As nice as he is, he's just some writer."

"Except we're going to be sending him into the lion's den, Niko," Phil said. "I want him to be my eyes and ears inside New Eden, to keep me aware of what kind of shady shit they're trying to shovel under the rug."

"If you say so, sir. I owe you my life, so I intend to honor that promise."

"That's my girl," Linda said. "I'm sure you'll find your life full of action before you know it."

"Well, once I've gotten *my* shootout with Russian terrorists, I'll consider us even," Niko laughed.

"You make it sound like it was fun."

"It sure *sounded* like fun."

"...Okay maybe it was a *little* fun."

"See?" Niko laughed. "I knew it. Anyway, I should get back inside. I told them I was going to take a short walk and would steer clear of anyone, despite the fact that I'm buffered against DuoHalo now. Is there a reason they don't know that yet?"

"They'll be given a better briefing when they're relocated to New Eden," Phil said. "I'm not part of the communications division, so I have no idea what they're doing and how."

"Do me one favor, sir, and check in to make sure they're communicating to women about the risk of other men. When I went through the injection process, they still weren't mentioning it, and it's a thing we women *deserve* to know about."

"Copy that, lieutenant," Phil replied. "I'll literally go from this call to checking in on that. Anything else?"

"Negative, sir. If I think of anything else, or if anything comes up, I'll radio in. Redwolf out."

The line went dead as Phil looked up at Linda. "Even signing off she sounds cooler than I do," he told her.

"Honey, we *all* sound cooler than you do. That's just how it is in the Security Forces."

Phil closed up his terminal and stood up from his desk, Linda moving to the door, closing and locking the door behind them. Since Phil was now head of a division, and since they'd clearly been having problems with leaks, what with McCallister defecting, all the section chiefs had been told to redouble their security, both personal and professional.

Just a scant six months ago, the halls of the base would've been nearly dead quiet during the middle of the day, nothing but a handful of scientists bundled up in their labs, working on research that they hoped might one day let wounded soldiers regrow limbs. Now, there was no such thing as a quiet corner on the base, the hallways constantly filled with people running from one office to another. Operational security for the gate entrance must be a nightmare, Phil thought, and he worried that they weren't keeping close enough tabs on all the people on the base. But there simply weren't enough hours in the day for him to be looking at everything personally any more.

In fact, what had once been just one solitary building with a large underground section had grown into several four story buildings around the one in the center. Built entirely by female troops, naturally. They couldn't guarantee anyone else would live long enough, and they'd been built in record time, because everyone had been well aware of the stakes involved.

The two of them headed to the elevator and rode it up to the ground floor, heading out from the main building and over to one of the satellite buildings, the one the communications hub was being run out of. There were also buildings for the Oracle system, the inoculation processing area, the splinter research and the redistribution hub. There was also one building Phil *didn't* have access to, which he was told was for Air Force specific duties. Suspiciously, however, Linda, who was an Air Force Captain, was told she *also* didn't have access to the area.

Major General Fielder had assured her that it was for compartmentalization, to keep everyone

only aware of the things they needed to be aware of.

While Linda hadn't liked that answer one bit, she knew better than to question a general openly.

Phil's keycard opened nearly all other doors on the base, though, so the two of them walked into the communications building without so much as a slowdown. He stopped in the lobby, just to officially check it, before the two of them headed into the building elevator and up to the fourth floor.

When the elevator door opened, he saw the communications head, Leroy Reid there waiting for him, a hangdog look on his face. "Look, Phil, I know we haven't been the best at making sure shit gets done, but you don't need to come over and check on me like I'm a teenager out with the car for the first time, okay man? We've got this."

Leroy was actually one of the new people Phil liked the most, an African-American man in his early thirties, tall and lanky, like a basketball player without any of the muscle or agility, giant Coke bottle glasses over his eyes, dressed in a button up silk shirt and silk slacks, expensive and passable for fashionable to anyone who wasn't up to date on the latest trends.

"Then maybe you can walk me through a few things, so I know we're on the same page here, Leroy, because I keep hearing that women aren't being *told* that the sperm of men other than those they're imprinted to is toxic, and that's a pretty big *fucking* problem."

"For the last three days, the people actually giving the injections have been telling the women about the dangers of infidelity, and right now, we're recording a series of videos to show people during their observation period, so we can be sure they're getting all the relevant information. We even borrowed Doctor Varma to help with it."

"Charlotte's over here?"

"Yeah, in fact, we're filming an imprinting live in just a little bit here, if you want to come supervise," he said with a tone that implied it really wasn't necessary.

"Supervise no, but I don't think it'd hurt to have a few observers making sure you're getting everything captured right. Who'd you get to volunteer to be on tape for this?"

"One of the Air Force boys, Billy something or other. Him and his girl, Wendy, decided they didn't mind, because it would get them jumped forward several steps in line. C'mon, we can go sit in the observation room."

Leroy led them down a hallway and through a couple of locked doors before entering a mostly dark room, stepping a few feet across before opening another door, stepping into yet another low lit room, although in this room were set up several chairs and three HD cameras on tripods, one wall clearly a one-way mirror, as an airman in his forties sat patiently on a chair.

He was the most Midwestern guy Phil could remember seeing in ages. Big, strong, mostly balding with a ring of blonde hair, blue eyes, square jaw, a scruffy looking beard and relatively good looking, despite the fact that he was losing his hair. His partner hadn't come in yet, but the cameras were already on and rolling, and Phil saw Charlotte sitting in a chair in the back.

"Heya doc," he said to her quietly, moving to sit down in the chair next to her. "Glad to hear you're consulting on all of this. It's good to know someone capable is overseeing all of this."

"Hello Doctor Marcos," she said to him with a soft smile, her voice tinged in that kind French accent. She'd been deep in mourning since her husband had passed, and Phil was worried about her. "I had not realized how poorly we were handling the induction process. These videos are an excellent idea."

"We haven't had time to catch up lately. How've you—"

"Shhh. The man's partner is about to come in."

Inside the room, the door opened and a soldier brought in Billy's partner, Wendy, an Asian woman in her mid 20s, with a green stripe in her dark hair. She was dressed in a tight fitting t-shirt and jeans, having already removed her shoes outside of the room.

Billy stood up as the door closed behind Wendy. The two of them started to remove their clothing slowly, patiently, almost clinically. "God, I hope they don't freeze up," Phil said quietly.

Wendy dropped down to her knees and pushed her mouth down around the head of his cock, suckling on the tip of it, as her face scrunched up in ecstasy, the priming orgasm hitting her. After that, she pushed him back onto the mattress, climbing on top of him, sliding his cock right into her shaven pussy, a wanton moan filling the air.

“That's it, baby... you give momma what she wants, or she's gonna fuckin' take it... you're mommy's bitch now, aren't you? Aren't you?”

“I think we'll have to run the video without sound,” Leroy said.

“I think that would be best,” Charlotte agreed.