

The Tree Farm

Scriptor Paul Hathcoat



Chapter 8 ~ Simple Sister

"What will we do after I say goodbye to Daddy?" Eleni asks.

"It'll be high noon and scorching hot by then. I promised Sara I'd take you and Motta to the temple pool. You can lie in the sun or the shade, sleep, eat, read, relax, whatever you like. Do you know how to swim?"

"Yes. Hey, where are we going?" Eleni's voice echoes down a dark conduit.

"Shush," I place a finger over my lips. "Storm drain. Secret shortcut. Stay close. Watch your head."

"Why are you whispering?" asks Eleni.

"Nyt can hear us in the dark."

"Nyt as in Nytmare? You said she was a figure of speech."

The Tree Farm

Scriptor Paul Hathcoat

"Not exactly. Nyx is real. She is the oldest, most beautiful daughter of" I whisper the devil Queen's name, "Nyx."

"Who's Nyx?"

"Quiet," I scowl. "Nyx is the Goddess of Hell Space. Do not say her name." I cup my ear, "Too late, Nyx calls. Can you hear her?"

"Robert, don't talk creepy. It scares me." Eleni draws in, seeking manly comfort and protection. She takes my hand, and we walk quickly toward a dim yellow light at the end of the storm drain.

"Wait." I stop dead in my tracks and look over my shoulder. "Did you hear that?"

"No," Eleni whispers.

"Scampering, something is following us."

"What is it, Robert?" Eleni hugs my arm and buries her face in my shoulder. She's shivering.

"Do exactly what I say, we might survive."

"Okay," she whimpers.

"Ready?" I ask.

"Okay."

"Black scorpion, run from the shadows!" I bolt for the exit, leading Eleni by the hand. We gallop the remaining fifteen yards into the brightly lit landing pad parking stalls. Eleni

The Tree Farm

Scriptor Paul Hathcoat

drags me on. "Whoa, little lady," I pull up on the reins.
"Here's our ride. Saddle up." I smile.

"Where is it?" Eleni gasps for breath and looks back at an empty causeway lit by flickering yellow bug lamps.

"It was nothing. I wanted you to run, so I played the BS game with you."

"BS game?" Eleni regains her composure.

"Black Scorpions™. It's an interactive board game where the evil demi-goddess, Nyx, unleashes one of her demonic pets on you and your friends. Father taught me when I was a kid. It's based on a real-life adventure. It's fun. Don't you think? Game over. I win. Get in. Let's go."

Eleni frowns in deep dismay, doubles up, and punches my arm as mightily as possible.

"Ow, that hurt! That's going to leave a mark," I complain. It will actually leave nothing, not even a scratch. I didn't feel it. It didn't hurt. "Why'd you do that?" I try to look gravely wounded and not laugh. Eleni hits like a girl.

"Next time, tell me when we're playing a game, you access-hole!" Eleni punches me again in the same place.

"Mercy, dear sister. I'm sorry." I clutch my arm and feign severe bodily injury. "Please, I can't drive with a broken arm," I wince in fake pain.

"I'm sorry, Robert. I didn't mean to hurt you, but you scared me. I love games, but tell me when we're playing."

The Tree Farm

Scriptor Paul Hathcoat

"You're right. I should have. I'm sorry, come here, huggies," I reassure Eleni with a warm, brotherly embrace. "I didn't know. I've never had a sister before." I violated her trust. I did not see that coming. I'm an idiot. "Forgive me?" I give her my sad, puppy-eyed apology. It's perfected over time in the mirror. I use it on Father all the time.

"I forgive you, Robert." Eleni looks up with flushed cheeks, flashing eyes, and a mischievous smile, "It was kind of exciting. I've got a naughty game for you."

"You do? Good, let's go," I break the embrace, "and talk in the T-bird. Your side is unlocked."

"Is Nyt real?" Eleni fastens her harness.

"Daughter of darkness. Speak, not her name, dear sister. Listen to the wind. Nyt calls. I am coming. Can you hear her?"

"Stop being creepy, Robert!" Eleni doubles up her little paw and pats me. Mew.

"Ow, not while I'm driving." I rev the rotor and honk the horn. "If I crash Father's T-bird, it's your fault. He will be very angry with you."

"Daddy will not. He'll be mad at you. He said you're not supposed to drive his convertible."

"Eleni, it's dark and cool now, but basin temps will hit one-hundred-twenty by noon. I'm used to the heat. It doesn't bother me. I like it. I can't get enough of it. But you, Sara, and Motta are not acclimated. Father will be happy I'm taking loving care of his daughters, and mad at you for making me crash

The Tree Farm

Scriptor Paul Hathcoat

his T-Bird. So don't hit me again while I'm driving," I threaten. "You could kill us all."

"Okay, okay already, I'm sorry, I won't. Are there really black scorpions?"

"Yep, and they grow as big as a man." I rev the rotor, and we rise into the night sky. The landing dock lights fade into the distance.

"Do Black scorpions come here?" Eleni asks.

"Here at the Overlook? No, but a local sighting was reported this spring. "They live down in scorpion country and usually avoid humans. Some people hate them. Native people love and revere them."

"Do you hate them?" She asks.

"I don't particularly care for bugs as a general rule, but I think Black scorpions are magnificent sentient creatures. I would love to find an empty carapace to mount on the wall."

"Then you love and revere them," Eleni presses.

"All native people do."

"Do you know many native people?" Eleni asks.

"Duh, a few, I'm half Sybarinian Squashatch Indian."

"Daddy told me he married two local girls. Tell me about your mimmes."

"They were virgin Sybarian Sun-Maidens. Father met them at the Temple of Dawn. It was a day just like today, Summer

The Tree Farm

Scriptor Paul Hathcoat

Equinox. Father said they were beautiful, draped in pink spider silk, and their hair was bailed and bound in white ribbons. Mothers told me they knew him from the 'Time of Dreams.' Welp, they married, and that was sixteen years ago today."

"They mixed DNA, and then you were born," Eleni playfully twiddles her finger in my ear.

"My coming was prophesied. Stop." I jerk my head away. Stupid girl. "You'll make me crash."

"That's why you love Sara. She's the girl of your dreams." Eleni accurately notes.

"That is very observatory. But you didn't mention you, and Motta are also my dream girls," I note.

"Such a flirt, you naughty boy. Do you have other relatives?" Quizzes Eleni.

"I've got shiploads of goofy girl cousins running around half-naked out in the sticks, some overfed aunts, and a bat-shit crazy uncle, but no brothers or sisters other than you, Sara, Motta, and your sisters. That I know of, I would have had brothers, but mothers got themselves raped, butchered, and eaten by Zuman filth before they could give Father any more children."

Long pause.

"I'm sorry. I didn't know. I knew your mimmies had died. I didn't know how. Daddy told me they died peacefully and went to heaven to be with Dawn."

"They were butchered by Zuman raiders and died in screaming, writhing, bloody agony as they were eaten alive."

The Tree Farm

Scriptor Paul Hathcoat

Father took it pretty hard. I can't say I blame him. He doesn't talk about it much. He stares into the void when I ask him about it."

"Daddy is always happy around me."

"Well, who wouldn't be happy around you?"

"Thank you," Eleni blushes.

"Father has his ups and downs. I've seen the best and worst of both. Is your mother alive?"

"Yes," Eleni tersely responds.

"Tell me about her. Father didn't have much to say. What's her name?" I ask.

"Epona. She's forty years old, and she's Ebonian."

"Right, Father said she's from Ebo-Eight as I recall."

"Daddy says she's the prettiest girl on Port Dawn, and most men agree," Eleni says.

"Then you're half Ebonian. Your mother must be beautiful."

"Yes, and I'm her ugly disappointment."

"You're not ugly."

"I know the truth."

"What's the truth?" Eleni looks like a grade-A demi-goddess to me.

"The truth is in the mirror. I'm plain."

The Tree Farm

Scriptor Paul Hathcoat

"That's not true."

"It is," she insists.

I take a long, hard look. Upon closer examination, I tag Eleni as a grade-B demi-goddess.

Eleni wipes the back of her hand.

Eww. "Do you want a tissue?"

"Where?" Eleni snorts.

"Look in the glove compartment. Don't touch the gun. Get a tissue, and get out of there."

"I don't care," Eleni cries and honks her nose.

"About what?"

"Nobody loves me except Daddy, and Magnus loves another woman."

"I thought Magnus loved you?"

"All he ever talks about is Kenzi. Kenzi is beautiful. Kenzi is fun. Kenzi is smart. Kenzi, Kenzi, Kenzi, I hate the bitch, and I'm sick of it. Magnus only wants to be friends. He wouldn't accept the pink cameo crystal I made for him. I feel so stupid. I should throw it out the window."

"Don't, I want to see it. Show me."

"Here, you can have it. It's ugly."

"It's beautiful," I carefully examine the cameo. "It's you, I love it. Please return it to the print lab and turn it into a

The Tree Farm

Scriptor Paul Hathcoat

gold signet ring for me. I want to wear it and remember you for the rest of my life."

"You will?"

"I will. But I don't understand how you could love me."

"I love the way you are." I'm bewildered. Am I blind to some hidden fault? Now I see it: Eleni is just an average C-grade demi-goddess, but I love her despite her many flaws.

"Thank you, I love you too." Eleni sniffs.

"Am I lying if I tell people my sister is simply beautiful?" That's a Good question.

"Robert, you don't know."

"I don't know what?"

"Have you ever met an Ebonian Marsh Maiden?" she asks.

"Not exactly. I might have seen some pictures in Galactic Geographic magazine. They don't wear much clothing, as I recall. I remember lots of smooth, dark green skin and healthy, athletic bodies."

"Mimme is an Ebonian Marsh Maiden. She's married to our father, and this retched thing sitting next to you is their oldest daughter." Eleni looks down at her feet.

"Oh my Goddess, stop being stupid." I can only put up with so much girl drama. "How did your mimme meet Father?"

Eleni hesitates.

"How?" I restate the question.

The Tree Farm

Scriptor Paul Hathcoat

"They met at the Prancing Pony," Eleni reluctantly admits.

"What's the Prancing Pony?" I ask.

"A dollhouse," Eleni looks away.

"What?" I ask for clarification.

"A brothel."

"Oh, I see. Galactic Geographic ran an interesting article on the temple sex trade during the Third Saturaconian dynastic period of decadent debauchery. The article included on-site photographs from convents across the inner quadrant. Art, sculpture, and intricate glass mosaics depicting carnal knowledge. I didn't know people could bend like that."

"It's not like that. Mimme isn't a plaything. She's a dance artist. Daddy saw her performing an Ebonian fertility dance at the Pony. He liked the performance and tipped her two gold twenties. They talked, fell in love, and married."

"Does Epona still dance?" I ask.

"Only for Daddy."

"What does she do now? Is she a stay-at-home-mimme?"

"She teaches dance, manages the club, and drives me insane. Why can't you be like Elsie and Epana? Why? Because I'm ugly, that's why," Eleni sulks.

"Shut up, you're not ugly. You're beautiful. Who owns the club?"

The Tree Farm

Scriptor Paul Hathcoat

"Daddy bought the Prancing Pony and gave it to Mimme for a wedding present. They remodeled the rooms, spa, lounge, theater, restaurant, and casino, and imported beautiful exotic girls from all over the quadrant to work. They turned the Prancing Pony into the most luxurious dollhouse on Port Dawn. Daddy says the Pony has the prettiest girls, best food, liquor, and entertainment in the quadrant."

"Where do they live?"

"On the top floor of the hotel. That's where Memmi, Daddy, and I lived before I came here," Eleni explains.

"Father told me he stayed at the Visiting Captain Quarters when the Bonefish docked in Port Dawn."

"Daddy has a sign above his private bedroom that says VCQ," Eleni says.

"Interesting." My father lives in a dollhouse owned by his exotic Ebonian wife. He omitted a few details in his description of Port Dawn and his accommodations.

"Tell me more," I encourage.

"Like what?"

"You said you dance?"

"I love to dance and sing. Mimme taught me at an early age. Do you dance?" Eleni asks.

"Goddess, no, what about the twins? Do they dance?"

"They do. They're more graceful than I, prettier and shapelier, and sing like songbirds. I can't do anything right."

The Tree Farm

Scriptor Paul Hathcoat

"Shut up, I'm going to put you in the back seat if you don't stop whining," I threaten.

"Hah! Elsie and Epana are just like you. "They're going to love you," Eleni smiles.

"I'll love them too."

"You better; they have lots of pretty friends. I'll take you to Port Dawn someday when you're older. I know all the girls will want to mate with you, even the ugly ones like me."

"Will you do a fertility dance for me?" I ask.

"You want me to dance for you?" Asks Eleni.

"Yes," I enthusiastically reply.

Eleni hesitates and looks down at her feet. "Robert, I am not a virgin."

"No problem, I can work with that."

Eleni smiles, "I will perform the feathered Ebonian mating dance for you, my beloved brother. Do you mind nudity?"

"Not at all. I would love to watch you dance. I've been dreaming about you for weeks."

"How about tonight?" suggests Eleni. Let's mate. I want you," panting, and she places a soft, warm hand on my thigh.

Instant erection. "Definitely, but hold that thought. We're here. I need to concentrate on docking."

I enter the cavernous, airtight garage and hover to a stop. It's busy this morning, lots of coming and going. Ajax and Maktu

The Tree Farm

Scriptor Paul Hathcoat

are long gone. A Sybaris Station, Student Security squad, directs me to loading dock two, where I park in a ten-minute spot. Sara and a taller girl are waiting inside the security gate. "That must be Motta."

"It is. Hi Sissies," she shouts and waves.

"Wait here with the T-Pod." I hop out and hurry to the gate.

Sara opened the gate and greeted me with a sunny smile and a sweet kiss on my cheek. She's wearing a snug black spider silk jumpsuit and a matching cap. Her fire-whip-red hair is braided, and dark blast goggles cover her eyes. Goofy girl, it's still night. She looks absolutely adorable.

"Good morning, sunshine. Are we ready to roll?" I ask, noting the stunning young woman standing with Sara. "Who or what is this exotic green creature?"

"Robert, meet Motta."

"Hello," I squeak. "You're Ebonian."

"Mees Ebo girl," Motta jabs a thumb to her heart. "Mees Amazon. You funny!" Motta points at me and laughs.

She has a certain innocence, savagery, and animal alertness. I like her, but she scares me a little. "What did I do?"

Motta has me on the defensive. She is an Ebonian Marsh Maiden hybrid from the great Amazon rainforest. I would recognize those nubile Ebonian features anywhere. I've studied them closely in Galactic Geographic. Though not as pronounced,

The Tree Farm

Scriptor Paul Hathcoat

many of Motta's features are reflected in Eleni. Eleni has lighter olive-green skin, a shorter stature, and a less voluptuous figure.

Motta gets up nose to nose with me and stares intensely into my eyes.

"What's so funny? What did you say to her?" I direct my question to Sara.

"I'll tell you when I get to know you better. Come on, Robert, Eleni's waiting for us." Sara gestures for Motta and me to follow. "Motta come, chooka."

"Hi." Eleni steps out of the T-pod to greet Sara and Motta with handfuls of hugs and kisses.

"We match," Sara notes that they are all wearing black jumpsuits.

"Robert, take a picture, please," begs Eleni.

"Hang on, girls, I'll grab my Skypod."

As I rummaged around in the glove compartment of my new blood-red, high-speed convertible, looking for my Skypod, I realized something. I now have my own personal girl army. "Girls, settle down. Attention, line up for inspection," I command.

"Where do you want us to stand?" asks Eleni.

"Stand in front of Rayn," I command.

"Who?" asks Eleni.

The Tree Farm

Scriptor Paul Hathcoat

"My new blood-red, high-speed convertibles resident AI. Her name is Rayn. She is beautiful, no? Rayn, meet Sara Eleni and Motta. Stand next to her," I point.

Motta bends over and kisses Rayn's sleek, sexy airframe.

"No, Motta, face me. Sara, turn Motta around, please. Okay, squish together, closer, good, smile, say please."

"Please," the girls say in a toothy smiley unison as I snap away. Adorable, this photo's a keeper. "A little more naughty attitude. Nice. More hips. Nice. Turn around, look at me, booty. Hot. KK, I'm done. Let's go now." I'll post these photos on my Spacebook page. The guys won't believe I command a beautiful girl army and own a new convertible T-Bird.

"I want to see," Eleni squeezes in close for a good look, followed by Sara making elbow room for Motta.

Squashed inside a girl sandwich, I can't breathe. Umm, they smell lickly delicious. Scrolling through the images and the unabashed squishing, smiling, and giggling does not abate. "Hey, go easy, I'll get everyone copies." I take my Skypod back, turn it off, and pocket it in my breast pocket.

Eleni gets in my face. "So, what do you think, Robert?"

"About what?" My girl army stares. I fidget. What do I do now?

"Do we pass inspection?" Eleni pulls back her hair, retightens her scrunchy-bunchy, and stands loosely at hippy attention. Motta shakes out her mop-top and pops her lips three times at me. Adorable, but I have no idea what that means in

The Tree Farm

Scriptor Paul Hathcoat

Ebonian. Sara pulls on her braid, sighs, and waits patiently for my response.

"Yes, I think you sisters are simply beautiful."

"Good, let's go see your temple," Eleni says. "Come on, sissies, get in."