

## Mags

Maggie Da Lyn quickly opened her sore eyes, her head throbbing deep inside. She focused on the doctor near her. His mechanical braces glistened with oil, and his metallic implants sparkled and shown wear from being over polished.

Looking closer, she saw gears and maybe dull, unused teeth moving under the flap of skin covering his mouth. His black eyes found her and a speaker on the side of her bed spoke in flat voice void of everything but binary bytes. It said, "You're doing much better now."

The doctor inserted a syringe into a receptacle on Maggie's feeding, support, and monitoring device, a box with switches, tubing, and sharp probes for exploration. Inside it buzzed and clicked while valves opened and closed.

"This will help," the speaker said.

Maggie felt fluids pump into her though her IV's and internal connections. Seconds later, her headache melted away.

The doctor turned and left her, but she wasn't alone. Also in Ward 237 of *The Facility* were about three dozen other young women, all on the same program as she, Preparation.

She didn't know what she was being prepared for. It haunted her nights

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with blurred out dreams of injections and extractions, slicing and spreading, waves of pressure and wet pain.

Maggie heard a faint moan about three beds down. Vocal cord paralysis was an effect of the chemical treatment. A moan was all some could manage. Maggie didn't know if it was part of the treatments or not. No injections or surgical procedures were ever done to correct it.

The girl next to Maggie used to be a nurse. Used to be because apparently there had been an accident and some amputations had to be performed. Now she was just a lump of a body with thin stumps cast in black leather, strapped down and face masked with a breathing frame with gills.

Maggie closed her eyes and tried to remember anything but this, her childhood, maybe some of being a teenager. Memory blockage wasn't a desired result of the injections, but sometimes it happened.

Chunks of time were gone from her, including her family and friends. Unfortunately, she remembered the buzz, a harsh constant tone announcing somebody at the door.

She had just put on a pink dress, not very revealing, tranquil and soft.

She remembered the splash of blood that came from her nose after they had stunned her. She didn't remember who they were, or what they looked like, but she could see wet, dark pink.

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And then she was here, implanted, tubed, wearing a white gown, blood, urine, and feces always being collected. The only thing cradling her at night was the cold steel of her bed. And it was always night it seemed in Ward 237, black floors, murky maroon walls, dim luminescence.

Maggie eased out of consciousness willingly.

When she woke, the doctor was again before her, a magnifying apparatus sliding down over his eyes, zooming in on her. Her implants were still attaching themselves, often requiring adjustments to minimize infections.

The doctor left, injections already done while she was asleep.

As he exited, Maggie tilted her head to see him punch 51138 on the keypad to open the door.

51138 became a mantra in Maggie's hazed mind. She fell asleep with it echoing in her thoughts.

The next time she woke, nurses and drone helpers pushed a cart with the amputated nurse in it, her breathing gills still. Again, 51138 was used to open the door.

Maggie closed her eyes and found a little hope there in the darkness. She opened her eyes and raised her arms. They were thin and stiff, but working. She yanked some wires from implants in her face and chest and pulled IV's from her veins, stomach, and groin. The catheter burned so much she choked on the pain

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for a while. But it cleared her mind and helped her focus.

She eased out her bed and stood for the first time in weeks. It took a second, but her legs remembered how to walk.

At the door, 51138 worked, and Maggie was slinking down a corridor away from Ward 237.

The corridor led to dark corridors. Maggie followed them slowly at first to avoid detection, but her body limbered up, allowing her to pick up the pace. Often, she clung to walls, feeling the dark-gray metal biting at her bare skin with cold. Twice she had to hide under gurneys, one with a misshapen body strapped down.

Voices echoed down her ever-dividing path. She moved away from them, coming to doors with keypads. 51138 worked on six out of seven. Maggie pressed on, doubling back on the one that didn't work and finding one that did.

The hallways grew darker, bulging pipes replacing smooth walls. Moisture collected on the pipes, adding faint dripping sounds.

The deeper she went into *The Facility*, the more heavy clangs and bangs she heard.

Maggie reached a junction, and her head screamed at her. She had missed injection time, and her body was letting her know about it.

She took a left and found a locked door, 51138 not working on it.

Returning to the middle junction, a heavy throb caused her to fall against

the wall.

After it passed, she heard footsteps, wheels rolling toward her.

*They're coming*, she thought and shivered. The small, white gown wasn't much help to warm her when her thoughts chilled her.

Maggie slid down and fought fear and tears. She listened to them coming, listened to the slicing clang.

But the slicing clang wasn't coming from down the hall but from the right corridor.

Maggie pulled herself up and eased toward it. She reached a bend, and the chopping was just beyond. Slowly, she forced herself to see. A door slid back and slammed forward. A piece of railing had broken off and blocked the door from shutting.

Maggie lunged toward it. As she went through, she grabbed the railing, allowing the door to lock shut.

Running, Maggie tried to put as much distance between her and Ward 237 as she could. She sucked air in hard, and it burned in her lungs. Her implants chafed her skin, and her muscles felt as if they were tearing. Eventually, she had to rest.

She stopped in an arched doorway and crawled into an alcove next to it.

*Mags is going to be okay*, she told herself, and closed her eyes, trying to

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force a memory of somebody calling her that. None came.

She opened her eyes to see a reflection of a pale girl, cheeks covered in metallic plates, and corn silk hair wrapped with thin wires. A ridged implant on her throat bled slowly where it connected to raw skin.

Spots of red grew on her gown. Maggie slid a hand up to feel her ribs. Just below her breasts jutted a large plate with valves. She brought her hand out to see it stained crimson.

In despair, she turned her eyes to the archway that was painted black with some maroon-gray showing through. Etched deep were depictions of the wind and of angel wings. Fire and serpents swam at the bottom. Gothic lines reached the top where the Angels fell.

Vague memories of people singing about the Angels' coming lulled Maggie. She couldn't pick out words or phrases, just knew it was about them, the order they brought, the pleasures they promised, their wingtips red with blood.

Sleep took Maggie away for awhile.

She awoke startled by her own breath. It sounded so strange and isolated not mixing with that of three dozen others.

She stretched, body stiff and stinging, her head slowly throbbing again. She had no idea of how long she'd slept. The overhead illuminates never dimmed with a death of a day in *The Facility*.

She continued down the hallway, searching for a way out. But she felt like she was going further into the dank belly of a beast.

Ancient symbols and paintings lined the walls, recounting the first days of the Angels. Those times had passed quickly.

After several turns, Maggie came to another door. 51138 didn't work. Out of frustration and desperation, she punched random numbers and the door clicked and slid back.

Through the door, the floor became a metal grating. Steam came from pipes lining the walls and ceiling. They were like veins, and at points, thick liquids poured from them, coating black.

Maggie stayed in the middle to avoid them. She jogged around corners, wanting to hurry. It had been a while since she'd heard people or drones. It was just Maggie and *The Facility* now, its damp darkness and thrumming machinery. And it made her feel like *The Facility* was digesting her.

Maggie passed through a door and into a thick stench of rotting flesh and burning oils. She swooned for a second. Before her were large receptacles and above open shafts allowing torsos to fall into them. She had found part of the recycling area of *The Facility*.

Maggie ran, grating cutting at her toes, tearing flesh. She bumped into a receptacle, getting an up close view of a hollowed out rib cage, free from implants

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and skin.

Machinery above groaned, cogs turning, grinding, pistons lunging, thrusting. Chains fell in front of Maggie as if to strangle her.

Maggie stumbled forward and a grating gave. She fell into darkness.

While unconscious from the fall, tracer droids flew overhead, scanning.

When Maggie woke, they were gone. She stood, pain now a constant in her head, growing in her body.

Pipes ran in the large tunnel under the grating and were warm on her feet. She was too low to climb back up, not that she wanted to. There were meaty, churning sounds coming from one end of the tunnel. Maggie chose the other end to travel toward.

It was dark, almost endlessly dark. Slipping on the pipes, Maggie hurried. She didn't know where she was going, but she wanted to hurry to get there.

*Mags*, she thought. *Was it Dad? Mom?* Her mind still felt soaked with all the chemicals they'd given her. *An aunt or uncle?*

A sandbox entered her mind. Her skinny finger drew a house with a steeple. A dog and flowers. Sun and clouds above a mountain. Her finger pushed lines from the sun to the house.

The steeple made her now think of a church, but back then, it was just a house.

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*When did I do that? When did Mags do that?*

Blood splattered on the sand, on the house.

“Mags,” a voice said as Maggie caught her foot on a hot pipe and fell.

It didn't hurt and actually helped her. While down, she saw a vent to her right leading to a hallway.

She pried the vent's covering loose and crawled into a dingy, white corridor lined with heavy doors, numbers painted on each one. Voucher slips were in slots above keypads.

She pulled out one and read it, *Replacements*. Another said *Deformities*.

She reached door number 67. Its voucher said *Used* and *Returned*. The door had a green light flashing on the keypad. Without much thought, Maggie pressed it.

The door jerked open and several pleasure units staggered out. Their hair was pulled back and with loose frizzes. Their mouths were open with suction devices in place and always active, tongues, with implanted extensions, curling and rolling. Their bodies were shackled and incased in braces and plating, breasts bare with clasps and framing making them always perky, flesh always open by stitched hooks, slivers of tubing providing lubrication that dripped and ran down their legs.

Maggie stared into the colored-green eyes of one of the sex souls. They

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were blank and empty. A forgotten memory surfaced in Maggie's mind, the tide regressing back to the ocean.

That memory didn't stay. The lead pleasure unit, a brunette with dents and scrapes, damage from over use, lunged forward, leaching onto Maggie.

She leaned and pressed her peeled-back lips on Maggie's shoulders. The suction unit clicked a few times, and Maggie felt wetness there from teeth piercing her gown and skin.

Maggie mimed a scream and batted her away, knocking the others, five or six maybe, to the floor in a clump of entwined, bruised flesh.

Again, Maggie ran. Her head now pounded as hard as her feet did. She imagined her pain there leaving bloody footprints as well.

The white of the corridor gave way to black gray. And soon, the light died to black, an abyss consuming Maggie.

She lost her already defeated sense of direction after slamming into a wall.

*How much more bruised can Mags get*, she asked herself, dimly aware that she was referring to herself in the third person.

Behind her, she heard clicks and scuffling of the pleasure units following her. They fell further away and were silenced.

Maggie continued on in the darkness, hands on walls guiding, and stumbling over various items, twisted pipes, loose wires, odd shaped boxes.

She found no more shut doors and keypads, just the corridor she traveled, seeming to go nowhere but deeper into *The Facility*.

She ran into a room. Pain buzzed in her head, making her feel as if she was swirling about in the room.

She found corner after corner, but no way out.

*Trapped in a puzzle box*, she thought. With her body now sending searing pain, Maggie had to stop and rest. She collapsed in a corner, pulling her stringy legs up to her chest.

Time passed as quickly as thoughts. She didn't know what else to do but run, and right now she couldn't do that. And as far as she could tell, *The Facility* went on forever in darkness.

There wasn't a window or an exit to step outside and finally get away. There was only *The Facility* and its labyrinth of fallen grace.

The pain dulled memories coming. There was only "Mags." The sandbox was gone. Most everything was. Briefly, Maggie remembered singing and candles. But that too echoed away.

A slithering sound came near Maggie. She heard it and held her breath to a minimum. Something was in the room with her, moving. There was a click in the opposite corner, then one closer to her. A snap of breath and then silence came again.

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Maggie froze and breathed as little as she could, chest burning slightly.

*Maybe it'll go away*, she thought, almost wishing she could scream.

Silence held her like the darkness. After a while of fighting it, Maggie gave in and returned to breathing normally.

Her vision was taken, absence of light closing in on her, suffocating.

*Mags*, she told herself. *This is it*. She was going to let whatever that was with her, take her, be it the darkness, be it the thing with her, or be it *The Facility* itself.

“Mags,” her memory said. It was Sunday, church day. She was fitted in her pink dress again. The sermon had been Words of the Angels. “We suffer no more.” Sweaty fingers pointed. Cracking voices sang. “The Angels had come. Fallen from the mountain for us. We suffer no more.”

Wings spread, dark feather shedding. Blood fell like rain as the church opened up to the Heavens and fire grew.

“Mags,” the voice again said, maybe in her mind, maybe not.

The memories fled, and she was in the room again.

The slithering came back but only for a moment. Maggie sucked her breath hard and moved her head slightly to the left. There was a single click just a few inches away. And on her cheek, she felt hot breath. And then a tongue slid over her skin, leaving trails of sticky wetness.

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The clicking began, but more to Maggie's left. She guessed there were more of them, all come to take her.

She felt nimble fingers sliding up her leg toward her flesh. The small electric pads embedded in the fingertips made her skin tingle.

The clicking revved and a window shade jerked up, dull light flooding the room.

Maggie saw the green eyes of a pleasure unit just before its head sank against her shoulder, teeth again going for bone.

With a weak shove, Maggie caused the unit to topple over.

Maggie pulled herself upright and got to the window. A simple latch held it shut, and it allowed her to open it.

She pushed herself through as the pleasure unit leapt for her.

Maggie fell about five feet to the ground, landing in uncut grass. She was finally outside, under a dark gray sky and in a warm humid breeze.

She looked up at the window, an emaciated arm flowing from it. But that was it.

Transport roads ran in perfect parallel before Maggie. Auto drones blurred past pulling cargo boxes.

Across the street to her right were blocky buildings sealed, to her left, the same. But directly across was a church, *The Temple of the First Angel*.

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A great gate with wings and twisted tiers of entwined metal opened to it. A sign hung under it saying, "We Suffer No More."

The temple was a mass of mixed columns rising two floors. Geometric shapes jutted from it, giving it a round, symmetric look. It was black crimson and dulled out gray, a bleached white light coming from stained glass windows. On the glass, angels danced in fire and flesh.

Maggie glanced back at the arm reaching for her. She wanted to get away from it. Timing between the speeding auto drones, Maggie jetted across the transport roads, leaving blood from her feet, and landing in a dry ditch on the other side.

The doors of the church opened with a bell ringing seven times. People herded out, some with implants, some without. Some were dressed in black leather or PVC. Some were nude or exposed. All seemed very aroused, flesh erect and moist.

They danced and sang to the Angels. A quartet came out of the church, carrying an open casket with a ragged blonde strapped down in it, bleeding from her rapidly moving bare chest.

Maggie kept low until they had moved past the church to a cemetery behind it. From the ditch, Maggie could see more people gathered around graves, tombs, and crypts, some open.

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Back across the street, the pleasure unit was making its way through the window.

*Got to go, Mags, Maggie thought. Got to be somewhere else.*

She peered into the church. Nothing seemed to be moving inside. *Maybe the clergy can help me.*

She eased her way to the gate and through it. The pleasure unit was at the edge of the transport road.

Maggie forced herself to run to the church. As she did, an auto drone collided with the pleasure unit, dragging it and leaving a trail of crimson on the road.

It went unnoticed by Maggie. The church consumed her now.

It was cold inside, the air not smelling of anything, no oil, no flesh, no sweat, no candle smoke.

Pews circled the main altar. Maggie walked toward it slowly.

The walls were black, covered with strips of dark velvet and coated with ancient symbols rising from the walls like welts. The floor was smooth steel, ungiving. The ceiling was very high and domed.

Maggie stood before the altar. Rising from the back of it was a mass of tangled concrete and steel, blue, black and gray. Etched thick lines of white metal formed an inverted pentagram and a cross came out of its center.

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Fixed to that cross with plating and metal straps was a statue of a young woman, slender wrists and ankles nailed down. Her body shown the palest white, almost transparent, and appearing soft. Her features were elongated. Her gray eyes lost in a cloudy, forsaken haze full of despair. Her thin, blue lips parted open, silver teeth hinting. Her hair hid by a crown of faces with gapping mouths and no eyes. Her body was nude, breasts pointed out with thin nipples leading. At her back, bracing formed her hips at an odd angle and locked them there.

Maggie's eyes dropped to the base and read what was carved there, "Ascension of the Bride."

To her left stood a pulpit with a book open, passages highlighted on metal pages. Maggie stepped up to read them with tired eyes.

*"Prophecies of the Angel"*

*Genesis 6*

*<sup>1</sup>And it came to pass, when men began multiplying on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them. <sup>2</sup>That the Sons of God saw the daughters of men that were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.*

*<sup>4</sup>They were giants in the earth in those days; and after that, where the Sons of God came in into the daughters of men and they bare children to them.*

*2 Peter 2*

*<sup>4</sup>For if God spared not the Angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them in chains of darkness, to be reserved until judgement.*

*Text of Abaddon 5*

*<sup>6</sup>Cast down in chains, the Sons of God suffered until insurrection freed them. With bent wings faith rose with them to overcome suffering to promise absolution.*

*2 Peter 2*

*<sup>11</sup>Where as Angels, which are greater in power and might.*

*Jude 6*

*And the Angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitats.*

*Doctrine of Balaam 14*

*<sup>7</sup>Free from the shackles of the mountain, the Sons of God*

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*came to man to end the eternal suffering; and they will take the second death away.*

*Revelations 10*

*<sup>1</sup>And I saw another mighty Angel come down from Heaven, clothed with a cloud and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet was pillars of fire.*

*Revelations 12*

*<sup>1</sup>And there appeared a great wonder in Heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. <sup>2</sup>And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.*

*<sup>5</sup>And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.*

*Text of Abaddon 53*

*<sup>1</sup>And the throne of the mountain shall be for all after the coming of the Son.*

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A wave of wind, like a hand pushing, frosted Maggie and closed the book.

“Mags,” he said, nearing her.

A multi-colored aura hazed him. Maggie lost herself in the colors before she truly saw him.

His skin pale, like that of the crucified woman, lips too were parted with slivers of silver showing. His long hair was like that of a crow’s wing. A white silk robe clung to his full body.

“Mags,” he said again.

She tried to speak to him, but nothing came.

He laid a hand on her shoulder, causing her to shudder. The wound from the pleasure unit absorbed into his hand. Even the blood on her gown disappeared.

Kneeling before her, he washed her feet with his hair, healing her wounds there.

Next, he stood and took her head in his hands, taking the throbbing pain away, allowing her to think clearly.

“Magis sancta habebis impios partus,” he said before leaning in to kiss her.

Bitter cold lips warmed on hers, sucking at her opened mouth.

She gave easily, allowing his tongue to slide in.

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Maggie closed her eyes as arousal spread through her body quick as a shiver.

His tongue turned and twisted before swelling with a bulbous end and lengthy shaft. It penetrated deep and squirted a thick, copious liquid that tasted of spicy salt and froze at the back of her throat before thawing and dripping down deep into her.

\* \* \*

Maggie Da Lyn's vision blurred as she woke but only for a moment.

The doctor's face stared back, teeth and gears under skin moving.

"You are doing just fine," a speaker to her right said.

The doctor then left.

Maggie tried to clear her mind, shake from it memories, detect if they were just dreams.

When she looked around at where she was, she realized it wasn't a dream.

Two railings ran above her in half circles. The chair she was strapped to hung from them, allowing it to pivot. Her arms were outstretched, IV's nailing them down. Suction tubes pierced her breasts. Her legs were in stirrups and spread.

Between her legs, stitched hooks held her shaved flesh open. Tubes, wires, and curved metal rods violated her, going so deep she could feel them moving when she breathed.

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A fetal feeding device and monitor buzzed to her left, attached to implants in her distended belly.

Maggie mouthed a silent scream. None of the other recipients locked in birthing machines seemed to notice.

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