

## SECRET RECORD AT PINK MOUNTAIN

Spiro and TAB3 had not been her only children, of course. Far from it. Her misunderstood, misbegotten brood littered the Earth as well as known space, populating both halves of many irreconcilable differences. Keeping war in the family, but diversifying the investment. The more, she figured, the merrier. Change your name and spread the blame. At least one of her offspring was bound to benefit from this security—through obscurity—in numbers.

TAB3 had been unique in that Maude had done the impregnating. When they'd finally well and truly fucked, TAB2 (the father) had put forward some unusual requests. Sure, why not, Maude had thought. It wouldn't be any stranger than some of that shit Odin had asked her to do. And he *really had* been asking for it. Nine months later TAB2's baby had been born in a Manhattan apartment. Just don't tell his wife how it all really went down.

Imagine Maude's surprise when she discovered a detailed account of these misadventures written down on a scroll, well up the mountain, stuffed into a crack in the men's room wall of Plinth's shrine on Mars, several decades before any of it was due to actually happen. Of course she had pocketed the scroll.

TAB2 had still been a kid.

But in that economy? She didn't let it distract her.

741.5

"Bureau of Kami Affairs, ma'am. We have reason to believe you may be in possession of certain documents pertaining to unauthorized religious activities at a government facility."

The man was already leaning halfway in the apartment door. He produced a replica pamphlet, quickly flipping through its brightly colored, computer generated pages by way of some kind of explanation, re: his inquiry. His badge looked real enough in the frankly inadequate resolution of her visor. Maude buzzed him in, illuminated his path to the kitchen.

"That elevator makes some strange sounds."

"Squash it," Maude said, tiring of the preamble. "Let's get naked and make a deal."

She kicked closed the kitchen closet and unzipped her shirt.